

## Learner Support Fund Policy 2025-2026

# LEARNER SUPPORT FUND

### Do you need money to help with college?

**STUDENT SERVICES** Barnet Southgate College

If your household income is £27,295 or below, you may be able to get help to pay for:

- Travel
- Meals
- Books
- Stationery
- Printing credit
- Uniforms and course kits
- UCAS fees and more



### How to apply?

To make an application on Pay My Student, go to the following link:

[barnet.paymystudent.com/portal/](https://barnet.paymystudent.com/portal/)

or scan the QR code



SCAN ME

To see if you are eligible for learner support funding, check the college website:

[www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk/learner-support-fund](https://www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk/learner-support-fund)

Your attendance must be 80% or higher to receive payment.

Email: [learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk)

If you need advice or help applying for the Learner Support Fund, visit your campus' Learning Resource Centre (LRC) where you can book an appointment for support.

You can also contact the Student Bursary Helpline: 0203 7644360

**LRC opening times**  
 Barnet & Southgate:  
 Mon - Fri, 8.30am - 5.00pm  
 Colindale:  
 Mon - Fri, 9.00am - 5.00pm

The Learner Support Fund policy outlines the colleges guidelines on how to make an application for financial assistance, who may be eligible to access support and how the funds are allocated.

The Learner Support Fund is made available to support students cover the financial costs to attend college in line with the guidance set out by the funding bodies, Department for Education (DfE) and the Greater London Authority (GLA), which enables the college to support the needs of students on a low household income.

Barnet and Southgate College aims to comply with the Equality Act 2010 when setting the eligibility criteria to make sure the funding is accessible to those who are vulnerable and are most in need of support to participate in and access education.

## CONTENTS

1. Availability of Funding	Page 3
2. Assessing Eligibility	Page 3
3. Confirmation of Eligibility for the Bursary	Page 7
4. Payments	Page 7
5. Appeals	Page 8
6. Policy Review	Page 8
7. Confidentiality	Page 8
8. Key sources of Information and Guidance	Page 9

## 1. Availability of Funding

There are five available funding bursaries which are:

- 16-19 Discretionary Learner Support Fund
- 16-19 Free College Meals Fund
- 16-19 Vulnerable Learner Support Fund
- 19+ Learner Support Fund
- Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

Applications made for the Learner Support Fund (LSF) are assessed after 31<sup>st</sup> August and throughout the academic year by the Learner Support Fund Team.

To access financial assistance, students must make a new application each academic year and as soon as enrolment on a course is confirmed, as required by the funding agencies, Department of Education (DfE) and Greater London Authority (GLA).

Financial awards are calculated based on individual circumstances; therefore, students are encouraged to consider any financial commitments they take on prior to the Learner Support Fund eligibility being confirmed and awarded.

To comply with the funding agencies, Barnet and Southgate College may need to amend and/or cease support in the event of changes made to the funding rules set by the DfE and/or GLA.

## 2. Assessing Eligibility

All students must make an online application for the Learner Support Fund using the Pay my Student online portal. This can be accessed in the following link: <https://barnet.paymystudent.com/portal/>

[For guidance on how to complete an online application click on this link](#)

To assess eligibility for the Learner Support Fund, students must provide evidence of their household income and other supporting evidence (except for progressing 16-18 students, who received LSF the previous academic year).

The LSF assessors are unable to assess an application without the declaration being signed, for audit purposes. For more information on the assessment process, go to the following [link](#) to view the DfE checklist used by the college to assess bursary applications.

The eligibility criteria and evidence required for the different fund types do vary and is detailed below and in appendix A of this policy.

Types of evidence used to assess eligibility are:

- Education Health Care Plan
- Jobseekers Allowance letter (Dated within the last 3 months)
- Income Support letter (Dated within the last 3 months)
- Universal Credit (x3 monthly award notices)

- Employment Support Allowance letter (Dated within the last 3 months)
- Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living allowance letters (Dated within the last 3 months)
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Most recent Working Tax Credit award letter (we cannot accept annual review letters that state “renew now”) (Must submit all pages)
- Child Tax Credit Award letters (Must submit all pages)
- Housing Benefit Letter (Must submit all pages for current year)
- Pay slips (Dated over the last 3 months)
- P60 (Dated for last financial year)
- HMRC Tax Return (Dated for last financial year)
- BAIL 201 Letter (issued by Home Office)
- Aspen Card (with letter it came with)
- ARC Card
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Supporting letter from Local Authority stating Looked After Child or Care Leaver Status
- Carers allowance (Dated in the last 3 months for students 16-19 only)

Evidence **must** clearly state the students full name and full address. If the evidence has a name and address which is different to the student, additional evidence of the family/carer/parent link **must** be provided as supporting evidence. (For example, Child Benefit letter or Birth Certificate which shows child’s name and parents name).

To ensure applications are assessed timely, it is important that evidence is uploaded at the time of application by the student/or parent/carer/social worker to the, Pay my Student portal. Delays in providing evidence could impact on securing funding, as applications are assessed on a first-come first-serve basis.

The following groups are **not eligible** to receive LSF funding:

- Students on an Apprenticeship Programme or waged training
- Students whose financial needs are already met and/or have no financial costs to participate in education and are supported financially by their partner
- Students participating on a waged Princes Trust team programme
- Students on a distance learning provision
- Adult students studying on course which is less than 3 hours per week over 4 weeks
- 16-19 students on a course less than 12 hours per week under 10 weeks
- Students who don’t meet the residency criteria
- Accompanied Asylum Seeker Children (under 18)

To ensure funds are assessed and allocated fairly to students who genuinely need financial assistance, students must state what support they need and explain why on their application. This will allow the college to evidence what has been awarded to each student as required by the DfE and GLA.

Fund Type	Support category	Eligibility Criteria
16-19 Discretionary Learner Support Fund	Travel (for university open days, to attend trips, work experience, etc) Meals Trips (£50 maximum allocation per trip) Book loan Course Materials, Kits Uniform Stationery Print Credits Care to learn top up for childcare cost UCAS Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household income of £27,295 and below</li> <li>• Be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31st August</li> <li>• Be aged 19 or over (“19+ continuer”) on 31st August and continuing on an eligible study programme they began aged 16 to 18</li> <li>• Have a bank account to receive payment</li> <li>• Have weekly attendance of 80% and above</li> </ul>
16-19 Vulnerable Learner Support Fund	Up to £1200.00 to pay for course related costs  Students will not automatically be awarded bursary if they do not need the full amount, or financial needs are covered from other sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31st August</li> <li>• Be in care or a care leaver</li> <li>• Be in receipt of Income Support, Universal Credit (accompanied with a tenancy agreement or utility bill) or disability benefits</li> <li>• Letter or email from Local Authority detailing current or previous looked after status</li> <li>• Be aged 19 or over (“19+ continuer”) on 31st August and continuing an eligible study programme they began aged 16 to 18</li> <li>• Have weekly attendance of 80% and above</li> </ul>
Free College Meals Fund	Meals (provided in college canteen only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household income below 16,190.00</li> <li>• Income support</li> <li>• Job Seekers Allowance</li> <li>• Employment Support Allowance</li> <li>• Universal Credit (gross income of £7400 and below)</li> <li>• Child tax credit</li> <li>• Working tax credit run-on</li> <li>• Guarantee element of State Pension Credit</li> <li>• Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</li> <li>• aged between 16 and 18 before 31<sup>st</sup> August</li> <li>• 19 to 25 before 31<sup>st</sup> August with an Education Health Care Plan</li> </ul>

19+ Learner Support Fund	Travel (for university open days, to attend trips, work experience, etc) Trips (£50 maximum allocation per trip) Book loan Meals Child Care Course Materials, Laptop loan Kits, Uniform) One off costs for accommodation or Fees for membership to professional bodies associated to your qualification Childcare Costs (maximum £200.00 per week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household income £27,295 and below</li> <li>• be aged 19 on 31st August</li> <li>• Have own bank account to receive payment</li> <li>• Have weekly attendance of 80% and above</li> <li>• Ofsted registered Childcare provider information</li> </ul>
Advance Learning Loans Bursary Fund	Residential Support Childcare Course costs (meals or travel) Learning Support	Rate 1 (£50 per Month) – low-cost learner support, not including childcare and residential Rate 2 (£150 per Month) – if students has recognised learning support needs Rate 3 (£250) –childcare support recognising the learner could have other learning support or learner support needs as well

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

- To secure assistance with travel costs students must live more than 1.5 miles from their main campus of study
- If you are under 20 years of age and would like assistance with childcare costs you can apply to the Care to Learn scheme at [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn). If childcare costs exceed the amount paid by care to learn, the college can top this up using the discretionary fund.
- Childcare support is paid directly to childcare providers and students are responsible for adhering to the childcare contractual agreement.
- Course kits, materials and equipment and their associated costs are agreed at departmental level.
- Students will need to provide proof of purchase of any mandatory uniform, kit or equipment and submit receipts (as proof of purchase).
- Any equipment (i.e. laptop, books, uniform or kits) bought using the LSF will need to be returned at the end of the course so it can be allocated to another student.
- Payment will be based on achievement of a set target of 80% attendance, reasonable academic progress and adherence to the positive behaviour policy.
- The panel retains the right to make one-off individual allocation in addition to bursary payments in extreme circumstances.
- Payment for discretionary meals is costed at £4.50 for days students are timetabled to be in college and when attending external trips and/or industry placements.
- Funding is finite and will be awarded on a discretionary basis, it is not guaranteed.

What the LSF Bursary **cannot** be used for:

- Pay for services such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring or support such as servicing laptops/tablets

- Pay for extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme goals and course objectives
- Support the costs of foreign/overseas trips where an alternative activity can be found within the United Kingdom and at a much cheaper cost.
- Support the costs of trips that are not an essential part of a student's study programme qualification/s or course objectives
- Support general household income and living costs (rent, bills, wi-fi ) as payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000 and can affect a student's eligibility for state benefits.

### 3. Confirmation on Eligibility

If you are eligible for LSF funding, a confirmation email and pay my student portal will provide a breakdown of what has been awarded, the amount and the dates of when payments are due to be processed. Students should expect applications to be assessed within 2-3 weeks after they have applied, or after 31<sup>st</sup> August.

To receive emails to your student college email address, students must complete a change of details form to update on all college systems.

In most cases, payments will be back dated from the start of the course; however, late applications can result in the full entitlement not being awarded.

For more information on the eligibility criteria, refer to the Eligibility Guide (Appendix A)

### Ongoing Eligibility for the Learner Support Fund

To remain eligible for the learner support fund, students are expected to follow the college Positive Behaviour Policy and **must** have a weekly attendance of 80% and above. However, payments can be authorised if attendance is low due to illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances. Payments authorised for exceptional circumstances must be requested by a Curriculum Manager and supplemented with evidence.

If attendance drops below 80% over four consecutive weeks or more, future payments may be stopped and re-allocated to another student who is in need. Students must inform the LSF team by calling the bursary helpline, emailing [learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk) or via the Pay my Student portal of any change in circumstances.

### 4. Payments

When an application has been completed and assessed, depending on eligibility, students can expect to receive a payment once a week, if attendance remains above 80%.

Where possible, students will receive payments in kind, rather than in cash. If eligible for LSF some payments **will not** be made directly to the student's bank account. For example:

- Kit and equipment will be bought by the college. Students are expected to return the kit and equipment at the end of their course.
- A topped-up oyster card will be issued, and students will be expected to return the oyster card at the end of their course.

- Meals will be provided from the college canteen using an active student ID card on the days students are timetabled to be in college.

Where it is not possible to provide in kind payments, financial awards will be made through BACS transfers into a student's bank account; except for looked after children, care leavers or students with complex needs, where an authorised next of kin or professional organisation can provide a bank account for BACS payments to be made.

## 5. Appeals

Students will be informed in writing the outcome of the assessment decision. If a student is unhappy with the decision, they make an appeal in writing, **within 5 working days** of their application assessment being completed. Students must include the reasons for their appeal, explaining their individual circumstances, what they need the funding for and why by emailing [learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:learnerfunding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk).

The appeal will be reviewed by a panel (the LSF Manager and a member of the Senior Leadership Team). Following this, the decision of the appeal will be provided in writing **within 10 working days** of the appeal being received. If for any reason the decision to not award is upheld, and the student still wishes to appeal they must do so by following the colleges complaints procedure. Link to [Compliments and Complaints Form](#).

## 6. Policy Review

- This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually in line with DfE and GLA funding rules.
- This policy may be reviewed following any issues or concerns raised as part of the appeals process.
- In all other circumstances the college conducts an annual self-assessment review of all concerns logged and reported. The review process will enable the college to continually develop and improve the process for assessing and approving the learner support fund.

## 7. Confidentiality

The college operates in line with the General Data Protection Regulation guidelines as detailed in the colleges Data Protection Policy.

The Learner Support Fund team understand the importance of confidentiality. However, there may be instances in which confidentiality and consent will be overridden to support the vital interests of young people and vulnerable adults. In these cases, appropriate information sharing will be prioritised and those who need to know communicated with. For more information refer to the [Information Sharing Advice](#), information for professionals.

Students who apply for the learner support fund must provide accurate and up to date information and sign the online application form declaration to confirm the evidence provided is correct and completed to the best of their knowledge and belief. Inaccurate and false information on an application will be deemed as gross misconduct and misuse of public funds, which can result in the college taking appropriate action and reporting to the relevant authorities.

Providing false or incomplete information that leads to an incorrect assessment or an overpayment of bursary funding, may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered.

For adult students in receipt of state benefits, it is their responsibility to tell DWP about any learner support they are receiving, as LSF payments may affect their eligibility to state benefits.

## 8. Key sources of Information and Guidance

- [Pay My Student \(Student Portal\)](#)
- [Student Guidance on Pay My Student](#)
- [Advance Learning Loan funding rules 2025-2026](#)
- [16-19 Bursary Fund Guide 2025 to 2026](#)
- [16-19 education: financial support for students](#)
- [Care to Learn](#)
- [Adult skills fund: funding rules 2025 to 2026](#)

### External Support

- [16-25 National Rail Discount](#)
- [Transport for London Travel Discount Offers](#)
- <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass>
- <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicard>

### [Local Authority Travel Funding](#)

- Students 16 and 25 with a Special Educational Need and/or Disability and is on a course of further education at a school, college or training provider can apply for transport support

### [Turn To Us](#)

- Turn2us is a national charity that helps people in financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services.

### [Migrant Help](#)

- Migrant Help can support students most in need and least likely to find support elsewhere, whilst aiming to bridge community gaps and bring services and support together.

Food Bank Directory Barnet <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/directories/food-banks>

Food Bank Directory Enfield <https://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/your-council/cost-of-living-support/help-with-food>

## Appendix A: Learner Support Funding Eligibility Guide

Do you meet the residency criteria?						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you a UK resident?</li> <li>Are you an asylum seeker/refugee granted full status or leave to remain</li> </ul>						
You will need to provide one piece of evidence below for your application to be successful.						
The boxes coloured green will be accepted as evidence to support your application.						
Evidence you need to provide:	16-19 Students (must be 19 before 31 <sup>st</sup> August)			19+ Students		
	Participating on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A DfE funded study programme</li> <li>16 to 19 traineeship programme</li> <li>Studying for a minimum of 12 hours per week and 10 weeks per year</li> <li>(19+ Continuing on 2-year course)</li> </ul>			Participating on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DfE and GLA funded course</li> <li>Studying on a course that is a minimum of 3 hours per week and 4 weeks per year</li> </ul>		
	Discretionary Bursary Fund	Vulnerable Learner Support Fund (Benefits in students name only)	Free College Meals Fund	Discretionary Learner Support Fund	20+ Childcare funding (Proof of parent link must be provided)	Advanced Learner Loan Bursary
EHCP	✓ Must be 19-24		✓ 19+ Continuing on a 2-year course			
Social Services Letter		Confirming in Care or Care Leaver status (dated within this academic year)				
Jobseekers Allowance (letter dated within the last 3 months)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Income Support (letter dated within the last 3 months)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Universal Credit award notices (last 3 months)	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below	✓ Must provide copy of tenancy agreement	✓ Gross income £7400.00 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below
Employment Support Allowance (letter dated within the last 3 months)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working Tax Credit (letter dated for current financial year)	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below		Working Tax Credit run-on (only) Gross income of £16,190 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below
Child Tax Credit (letter dated for current financial year)	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below		✓ Gross income of £16,190 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below		✓
Payslip x 3 months	✓ Gross income of £27,295			✓	✓	✓ Gross income of £27,295

				Gross Income of £27,295 and below	Gross Income of £27,295 and below	
P60 (dated for last financial year)	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below			✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295
Tax return letter from HMRC (dated for last financial year)	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below			✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross Income of £27,295 and below	✓ Gross income of £27,295 and below
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	✓		✓			
Aspen Card (including letter it came with)				✓ Must have original letter which came with the card	✓ Must have original letter which came with the card	
ARC Card				✓	✓	
BAIL 201 Letter (issued by Home Office)	✓			✓	✓	
Pension credit – Guarantee Element	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Council Tax Benefit	✓			✓	✓	✓

**For the evidence below you will need to provide both pieces of evidence:**

Evidence	Discretionary Bursary Fund	Vulnerable Learner Support Fund (Benefits in students name only)	Free College Meals Fund	Discretionary Learner Support Fund	20+ Childcare funding (Proof of parent link must be provided)	Advanced Learner Loan Bursary
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or		✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)		✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)	✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)	
Personal Independence Payments (PIP)		✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)		✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)	✓ <b>DLA OR PIP ALONE ARE NOT VALID</b> (must produce ESA or UC alongside evidence)	

# Care to Learn

[www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)

## Childcare support for young parents

  
Education & Skills  
Funding Agency



**DO YOU WANT TO STUDY AND NEED HELP WITH CHILDCARE COSTS? IF YOU ARE UNDER 20 THEN CARE TO LEARN MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR YOUR CHILDCARE NEEDS.**

For more information on Care to Learn, visit our website at [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn), email [caretolearn@studentbursary.education.gov.uk](mailto:caretolearn@studentbursary.education.gov.uk) or call our helpline on 0800 121 8989