



Student Fees and Financial Support Policy

Process

Responsibility of:	Director of Finance
Inclusivity Assessed Date:	21.01.2019
Quality Impact Assessed Date:	21.01.2019
Supported by: Executive	18.01.2019
Approved by Corporation:	16.01.2019
Review Interval (unless statutory changes apply)	1 Year
Current Revision Date:	07.01.2019
Next Revision Date:	06.01.2020
Published as: Website Pdf Edition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved by Principal	Click here to enter a date.
Electronic Edition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hard Copy Edition *	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Available in a range of different formats and languages on request

Amendments Since the Last Revision			
Section Number	Title	Amendment Summary / Reference	Date

Contents

Process.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Compliance: Legal, Statutory and Internal Regulations.....	4
Scope:	4
Student Fees Policy	5
1. Administration Charges.....	5
2. Tuition Fees.....	5
3. Examination Fees	5
4. Fee Remission.....	5
5. Instalments	6
6. Late Enrolments.....	6
7. Exceptions	6
8. Refunds	6
Student Financial Support Policy	7
Bursary and Free Meals Guidance.....	8
Introduction.....	8
1. Vulnerable Bursary (Priority Group)	8
2. Discretionary Bursaries.....	10
3. Exceptional Circumstances:.....	11
Appeals:.....	12
4. Free College Meals.....	12
5. Care to Learn.....	13
6. Additional Bursary and Free College Meals Information.....	14

Introduction

St Mary's College Corporation Executive are committed to operating in an ethical and principled way.

By honouring and practicing our values we will build a climate of trust and mutual respect.

St Mary's College aims to ensure fees charged in relation to learning are:

- Responsive to the Education, Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding and fee assumptions
- Maximise fee income yet remain competitive
- Simple to apply and easily understood
- At least cover all costs where learning aims are full cost recovery.

We aim to provide information, advice and application guidance relating to the following Government funded initiatives in order to help support the financial costs of participating in learning:

- 16 - 19 Guaranteed Bursary
- 16 - 19 Discretionary Bursary

Compliance: Legal, Statutory and Internal Regulations

The Student Fees and Financial Support Policy is underpinned by the following legal / statutory / internal regulations:

- ESFA Funding Guidance and Regulations
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Local Authority Funding Guidance
- St Mary's College Financial Regulations
- St Mary's College Freedom of Information (Publication) Scheme
- St Mary's College Equality Policy & Procedures
- GDPR 2018
- Equality Act 2010

Scope:

The Student Fees and Financial Support Policy applies to all students wishing to participate in a study programme that is not eligible to be fully funded by a funding body and / or students meeting the eligibility criteria for any funding initiative available to St Mary's College and repeals all previous policies in relation to fees, financial support, bursaries, grants and loans.

Specific accountabilities of parties are:

- The Director of Finance holds ultimate accountability to ensure Government funded initiatives are applied in accordance with current ESFA Funding Guidance and College Policies and Procedures.
- The Business Manager has responsibility to ensure the fees policy meets contractual guidance and is applied accordingly
- The Senior Student Wellbeing Officer has responsibility to ensure that bursary and free meals procedures and protocols are applied, monitored and revised as required

Student Fees Policy

1. Administration Charges

Type of Funding	Administration/Registration Fee
Fully funded	None
Co-funded	Course registration/exam fee
Full cost recovery	None

2. Tuition Fees

Learning Aims Funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

- Fully funded study programmes only apply to individuals under 19 or individuals aged 16-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (see Fee Remission).
- The tuition fees for other study programmes / individuals will be determined by reference to the fee element of the ESFA Funding Formula. For 2018 / 2019 the tuition fee assumption is 50% of the learning aim funding. Any deviation from a 50% contribution must be agreed by the Executive.

Learning Aims Funded on a full cost recovery basis

- The tuition fee for each learning aim will be determined using a formula approved by the Principalship. Any deviation from the formula must be agreed by the Executive.

3. Examination Fees

- All students resitting examinations will be charged an examination fee.
- Former students are accepted as external candidates where the College is able to offer examination entry for a current subject. Such entrants will be subject to an examination administration fee of £40 (or more if appropriate) plus the appropriate Awarding Body examination fees.

4. Fee Remission

Learning Aims Funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

No compulsory tuition, enrolment, registration or examination fees shall be charged to:

- Students aged 16 years and under 19 years of age on 31st August 2018.
- Students aged 19 years of age or over on 31st August 2018 on a continuing programme of study where that programme of study commenced before the student reached 19 years of age.
- Students aged 16 -24 years on 31st August 2018 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) and have additional Learning Support (ALS) needs over £6,000.

Note: A programme of study comprises all of a students' activities that lead to a set of outcomes agreed with the individual student as part of their initial advice and guidance.

Learning Aims Funded on a Full Cost Recovery Basis

- Tuition fees will be charged in all cases. Remission will not be applicable.

5. Instalments

Students may pay fees by instalments. The threshold to be able to pay by instalments is £200.

- Total fees of £200-£499 may be paid in three equal instalments. The first instalment, plus a one-off arrangement fee, must be paid on enrolment. The remaining fees must be paid in two equal monthly instalments by standing order, no interest is charged.
- Total fees over £500 may be paid in four equal instalments again the first on enrolment with the one-off arrangement fee and the balance paid in three monthly instalments by standing order.

6. Late Enrolments

- Full fees as applicable will be charged for ESFA funded courses.
- Fees in relation to learning aims (courses) supported by the Local Authority, or Full Cost Recovery, will be calculated on a pro-rata basis from the start of the previous half term.

7. Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances a variation from the standard fee may be charged outside of the Student Fees Policy. The individual must submit an application in writing to the Business Manager, who will consider the application and authorised if appropriate.

8. Refunds

- A full refund will be given if a course is cancelled.
- Where a student cancels an enrolment up to 5 days prior to the commencement of the learner aim (course) a refund is provided excluding 10% to cover administration cost up to a maximum of £25.
- All other requests for refunds or credit notes must be in writing to the Business Manager within a maximum of 4 weeks of withdrawing from the course. Only exceptional circumstances will be considered. Credit notes will only be valid until the end of the following academic year.
- No refund/credit note will be issued after the start date where the course is based on full cost recovery.

Signed:

Jenny Singleton

Title:

Principal and CEO

Date:

18.01.2019

Student Financial Support Policy

St Mary's College is committed to promoting and guiding the application of financial assistance to those entitled in order to help support the financial costs of participating in learning.

16-19 Bursary Support Funds and 19+ Adult Discretionary Support Funds are allocated by the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The purpose of the funds is to reduce the financial barriers associated with study for students aged 16 and over with proven financial hardship. The funds support students to meet the costs of participating in courses, to attend regularly, achieve and progress.

The Bursary Support Fund supports students who are between 16 and 19 and assessed as being in need of financial assistance. St Mary's College complies with the 16-19 Bursary Funding Guidelines issued by the ESFA. Young people must satisfy the residency criteria as stated in the document ESFA Funding Guidance Funding Regulations.

In order to further support students St Mary's College, offer an Exceptional Circumstances Bursary to assist with unexpected changes to circumstances and / or exceptional financial difficulty.

Free Meals will be offered to eligible individuals and will be administered following ESFA compliance guidance.

All support fund initiatives are administered in accordance with current ESFA Funding Guidance and St Mary's College Policies and Procedures.

Signed:



Title:

Principal and CEO

Date:

18.01.2019

Bursary and Free Meals Guidance

Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary and Free Meal Application Procedure supports the Student Financial Support Policy. St Mary's College aims to ensure that any opportunities for financial support are promoted and guidance and support is provided to those entitled in applying for financial support to participate in learning.

The Bursary Fund is available to support students who face the greatest barriers to continue in education and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education.

The Student Financial Support Procedure sets out the arrangements for how St Mary's College will prioritise and administer the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2018/19, ensuring funds are used to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, achievement and success rates.

This procedure complies with Funding Compliance Guidance 2018/2019 provided by the Education, Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and relates to Guaranteed and Discretionary Bursaries

Minimum standards include:

- Promoting the opportunity to apply for a 16-19 Bursary to all 16-19-year-old applicants
- Assessing the eligibility of applicants against the ESFA criteria
- Ensuring rigour and consistency in the administration of an application
- Ensuring ESFA administration, monitoring and audit compliance
- Security of and restricted access to data processed and retained
- Providing access to individuals with regard to their own personal data

What is the Bursary Fund?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a means tested bursary available to support transport costs, books and equipment, trips or other College related activities. There are two types of bursary funds:

- Vulnerable Bursary Funds
- Discretionary Bursary Funds

1. Vulnerable Bursary (Priority Group)

A Vulnerable Bursary of £1200 per year is available to all students who fall into one of the vulnerable groups identified below:

- Students in care
- Care leavers - young people aged 16 and 17 who were previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

- Students who are aged 18 or above who were looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16
- Students in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- Students in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right (Child Benefit to parent will cease if learner successfully applies for Employment Support Allowance)

Note:

Income support is paid to young people such as teenage parents, young people with severe disabilities, teenagers living away from their parents, young people whose parents have died and unaccompanied asylum seeking children, where a financial need is established.

Students awarded Universal Credit to pay for housing costs (in place of housing benefit) will not be eligible for a vulnerable bursary unless they are also receiving another eligible benefit.

Vulnerable Bursaries are paid monthly subject to meeting attendance and behaviour criteria.

Eligibility Evidence for Vulnerable Bursaries:

Student Criteria	Eligibility Evidence
Students who are in care or a care leaver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written confirmation of current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority
Students in receipt of Income Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the Income Support award notice. Student must be entitled to the benefit in their own right and the evidence must confirm that the student can be in further education or training (some young people in receipt of benefits are not allowed to participate)
learners in receipt of Universal Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the Universal Credit Award notice. Learner must be entitled to the benefit in their own right and the evidence must confirm that the learner can be in further education or training. Learners must also provide additional documentation to confirm their independent status, for example a tenancy agreement in the learner's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
Students receiving Universal Credit/Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP (UC claimants will be able to print off details of their award from their journal). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided

2. Discretionary Bursaries

St Mary's College will award bursaries to students from the categories below whose family household income falls below **£17,000** per year.

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 years of age on 31st August 2018
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2018 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2018 and continuing on a programme enrolled on aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- Students who have been resident in the UK or EEA for three years preceding 31 August (verified before enrolment)
- Student enrolled on a Government funded course

Discretionary Bursaries are paid monthly, in arrears, direct to the student's bank account and will constitute a minimum of £10.00 per week (term-time only) subject to meeting attendance and behaviour criteria.

Bursary Application:

- Complete a 16-19 Bursary Fund Application Form answering all questions to avoid any delays in processing – forms can be downloaded from the College Website www.stmarysblackburn.ac.uk
- Attach the required evidence (please send in photocopies and not the originals)
- Submit your Application Form, in person or by post, no later than 30th October 2018* to:

The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer
St Mary's College
Shear Brow
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB1 8DX

* Applications received after this date may be considered but will not be backdated for payment.

All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence as detailed above and on the Application Form. All evidence will be treated as confidential and only used for the purposes it is provided.

Where students are in receipt of qualifying benefits – the evidence must confirm that the student can participate in further education or training.

Note: Students may apply for Bursary Fund consideration anytime during the year, should their circumstances change.

Consideration Process:

- The Bursary Fund Panel will test the application against the eligibility criteria and check the evidence and assess the need for funding. The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer may discuss the application with the student, if required.
- The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will notify students, in writing, of the outcome of their application within 14 working days of receipt. However, in September the processing time may be longer as most applications are received at this time.
- If the student is eligible for an award, the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer Student Welfare Officer will process the application within 10 working days.
- Initial Awards will normally be issued within 4 weeks of the course start date.
- Any application that requires special consideration will be discussed by the Bursary Fund Panel, who will consider the application and decide the level of any award. This is normally completed within 4 weeks of the application.
- The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will arrange for the award to be paid via a bank transfer directly to the student's bank account.
- The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will retain financial records of all awards made for a period of six years. Records will be securely destroyed thereafter.
- Students awarded a Guaranteed or Discretionary Bursary will sign an Agreement with St Mary's College undertaking to meet the College's conditions, accepting the amount and basis on which it is to be paid.

3. Exceptional Circumstances:

Bursary Applications for students who are eligible for Government funding, but whose household income is in excess of the stated threshold and are experiencing financial difficulty due to a significant and unexpected change in personal circumstances during their time at St Mary's College, may be considered for the Bursary Fund Emergency Payments.

The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer may, at their discretion, also award a Bursary to any student who faces genuine financial barriers to remaining in education, such as a young carer who is providing care to a sick or disabled relative.

St Mary's College will operate a contingency fund providing one-off payments to help students who are experiencing exceptionally challenging circumstances, attend school trips, interviews etc.

Confidentiality:

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential shared only with the 16-19 Bursary Fund Panel, and in the event of an appeal, the 16-19 Bursary Fund Appeals Panel. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during processing, payment and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the student and/or their parent/ carer(s) will be informed of the reasons why this is necessary prior to sharing any information further.

Appeals:

Applicants have a right to appeal. If any students or their parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of their Bursary Application, they should appeal in writing to the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer within 10 working days stating fully their reasons why they wish to appeal.

The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will call a Bursary Fund Appeals Panel within 14 working days of receiving the appeal. Final decisions for appeals will be made by the Bursary Fund Appeals Panel.

The applicant will be informed of the panel's decision within 10 working days of that meeting. The Bursary Fund Appeals Panel decision is final.

Bursary Payments:

Payments will be subject to satisfactory attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress in line with the St Marys College Student Attendance Procedure.

Where a student absence from College without authorisation, the Bursary Fund payment will be suspended for the full week.

St Mary's College discourages students taking time away from study for holidays during term time therefore holidays in College term time will be recorded as unauthorised. In the event, you choose to take a term time holiday, a letter confirming this decision from parent/carer must be must be forwarded to The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer. In all such circumstances, Bursary Funds will not be paid whilst a student is on holiday

4. Free College Meals

Some students may be eligible for the free College meals. The College will fund the free meal to all eligible students via an electronic credit or a voucher which can only be redeemed on-site to the value of £2.41 a day. The emphasis is to provide healthy meals for breakfast / lunch.

Eligible students who are off-site undertaking work placement or on educational visits may be offered cash at the discretion of the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer.

Eligibility Evidence for Free College Meals:

- Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2018 to be eligible for a free meal in the 2018 to 2019 academic year. Students who turn 19 during their study programme will remain eligible for a free meal until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 years old.
- Students aged 19 or over at 31 August 2018 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Students aged 19 or over at 31 August 2018 and continuing on a programme enrolled on aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers').
- Students must have been a resident in the UK or EEA for three years preceding 31 August (verified before enrolment).

In addition, students or their parents / carers must be entitled to one of the benefits listed below to qualify for the free meals:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- State Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 as assessed by HMRC
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Where Parents / carers are in receipt of Universal Credit (Self -Employment) evidence of the following must be provided:

- Universal Credit by providing their Universal Credit award letter
- Self - employment by providing a copy of their company registration or tax return form
- Monthly net earnings not exceeding the threshold - please complete the Self-Declaration Form

Free College Meals Application:

- Complete a Free College Meals Application Form answering all questions to avoid any delays in processing – forms can be downloaded from the College Website www.stmarysblackburn.ac.uk
- Attach the required evidence (please send in photocopies and not the originals)
- Submit your Application Form, in person or by post, 30th October 2018* to:

The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer
St Mary's College
Shear Brow
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB1 8DX

* Applications received after this date may be considered but will not be backdated for payment.

Free College Meal Payments:

Free College Meals will only apply on the days the student is in College, participating in a Work Placement or Educational visit.

5. Care to Learn

Information is available from The Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer

6. Additional Bursary and Free College Meals Information

The fund will be distributed in a consistent and fair way and in accordance with guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Student eligibility will normally be determined through an income-related assessment together with an assessment of the actual need for support. Where possible and appropriate, awards will be calculated using a standard formula. This process will be managed by the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer.

Where, in the view of the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, special circumstances apply, the application will be assessed and non-standard awards will be made where appropriate.

In cases where emergency support is required, support may be arranged by the Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, to reflect the immediate needs of the student.

The budget for the Bursary Fund is limited. Students who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it. If demand exceeds the available funds, reduced awards may be awarded.

In its administration of the Bursary Fund, St Mary's College will not discriminate against students on any basis as defined in current equalities legislation.

Students enrolled on a two-year study programme, will be required to re-apply for financial assistance at the beginning of their second year. Awards made in the second year may differ from first year awards.

All awards are dependent on the student achieving and maintaining satisfactory progress and attendance in all their classes / lessons. Bursary payments will cease if attendance and / or progress is deemed unsatisfactory.

If false or incomplete information is submitted, or if parents / carers do not declare any part of their income that is relevant, it may result in a referral to the Police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.