

2025-26 Student Bursary for 16-18 year olds



Who should read these guidelines?

The Young Person who will be attending Stockport College as a student in September 2025 and Parent(s)/Carer(s)/ or other Adult(s) who are mainly financially responsible for the Young Person.

What is the Student Bursary?

The Student Bursary is money which has been given directly to the College by the Government to help 16-18 year old students who face financial barriers in continuing in full time further education.

Who is eligible to apply for the student bursary?

Applicants must have applied for, been offered or have accepted a place on a full time further education course of at least 12 hours per week. Applicants must be aged over 16 but under 19 at 31st August 2025 or aged 19-24 at 31st August 2025 and have an EHC Plan (Educational Health and Care Plan)

Young People whose residency status is that of overseas student or who have a UK student visa or a UK visitor's visa will not be eligible to apply for a Student Bursary. Students on apprenticeship programmes are not eligible for the 16-18 Bursary.

Will the Stockport College Student Bursary be Income Assessed?

Yes – the Student Bursary will be assessed on the household income of the student's parent(s)/ carer(s) or adult(s) mainly financially responsible for the student and with whom they live.

Applications from Students who are Young Carers and who are registered with a local carer's organisation will be assessed on household income. (A young carer is a young person who looks after a family member because they have an illness or disability or has a drug/alcohol addiction).

Applications from students who live with foster parent(s)/ carer(s) within a private foster care arrangement will be assessed on the household income of their foster parent(s)/ carer(s).

If the student lives with a spouse or partner – the household income of both will be assessed.

We will look at the student's income only if the student lives independently and is supporting themselves.

What is the Income threshold?

To be eligible to apply for a Stockport College Student Bursary household income must be:

£40,000 (before tax) per year or less.

What income is taken into account?

All taxable earnings, income and benefits are taken into account. Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independent Payment, Universal Credit and Tax Credit payments are not counted.

Please note that any funding you may receive from the 16-18 Bursary does not affect your receipt of means tested benefits.

'Our Pass' Travel Scheme

'Our Pass' is a free bus travel scheme for 16-18 year olds who live and travel within the Greater Manchester area. Visit www.ourpass.co.uk for more information on the scheme and to apply.

Please apply as soon as possible so you will have your Our Pass for when you start your college course. 'Our Pass' replaces bursary financial assistance for bus travel for students within the Greater Manchester area.

Please note: if you use an 'Our Pass' for journeys to and from college, you will not be eligible for a travel contribution from the bursary.

The pass can be used from the 1st September following your 16th Birthday until the 31st August following your 18th Birthday (or until 31st August if this is 31st August)

An 'Our Pass' will cost £10 and this fee will be reimbursed by the College to all students who are applying for an 'Our Pass' for the first time, if you are eligible for the bursary, live more than 1 mile from the college, and use an 'Our Pass' for your college journeys.

If you are a returning student who had an 'Our Pass' last academic year, you can continue to use it again this academic year and will not receive a further refund. If you live outside the Greater Manchester area, are not eligible for an 'Our Pass' or have to use alternative transport methods you may be eligible for financial support for travel.

Concessionary Scholar's Pass

If you live in Greater Manchester but are not eligible for an 'Our Pass' or have to use the Metro you can apply for a Scholar's Pass once you are enrolled at College which will give you concessionary travel rates on buses and trams. Visit <https://tfgm.com/tickets-and-passes/scholars-pass> for more information.

What sort of financial help is available to successful applicants?

There are 3 types of bursary depending on your circumstances.

1. Discretionary 16-18 bursary

For eligible students, help is available towards:

- Travel if you live more than 1 mile from your college campus (outside of Our Pass Area or are not eligible for an 'Our Pass' or using other mode of transport e.g. train/tram)
- Essential equipment and uniform
- Discretionary College Meals
- Compulsory Trips (where this has been agreed between your curriculum area and The Learner Services Manager)

2. Registered Young Carer's Discretionary Bursary

Students who are Young Carers and who are registered with a local carer's organisations and who have a household income of £40,000 (before tax) per year or less.

The above Students may receive (subject to assessment of study related financial need not met by another source):

A weekly Bursary (subject to satisfactory attendance) to help you pay for your costs whilst at College such as:

- Travel
- Food and Beverages whilst you are attending your College campus
- Course costs such as stationery and printing credit
- In addition, your bursary will cover required equipment and uniform costs and compulsory trips (where the trips have been agreed between your curriculum and The Learner Services Manager).

Please note: Uniform/equipment and compulsory trip costs may be paid as a lump sum out of your bursary to enable purchase at the beginning of the academic year either to the student or their curriculum area depending on the usual policy of the curriculum area.

3. Vulnerable Bursary

This fund supports students with a financial need relating to costs whilst studying at College who meet at least one of the criteria below:

Students who receive Employment and Support Allowance or Universal credit in their own right as well as Personal Independence Payments or Disability Living Allowance.

Students who receive Universal Credit or Income Support in their own right because they financially support themselves and live independently or financially support themselves and someone living with them such as a child or partner.

Students, who are in the care of the Local Authority or are care leavers or living with foster parents (but not a private foster care arrangement).

The above Students may receive (subject to assessment of study related financial need not met by another source):

A weekly Bursary (subject to satisfactory attendance) to help you pay for your costs whilst at College such as:

- Travel
- Food and Beverages whilst you are attending your College campus
- Course costs such as stationery and printing credit
- In addition, your bursary will cover equipment and uniform costs and compulsory trips (where this trips have been agreed between your curriculum area and The Learner Services Manager).

Please note: Uniform/equipment and compulsory trip costs may be paid as a lump sum out of your bursary to enable purchase at the beginning of the academic year either to the student or their curriculum area depending on the usual policy of the curriculum area.

Free College Meals

The College has a statutory duty to provide a Free College Meal to eligible students on the days they are timetabled to be in College. The College will use the 16-18 Bursary application and administrative processes to identify eligible students and notify them of their entitlement.

Free college meals are available for students who live independently or who are living with parent(s)/ carer(s)/ adult(s) mainly responsible for them, OR who live with a spouse or partner who are in receipt of any of the means tested benefits listed below:

- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding £7,400 p.a.
- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Based Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit ONLY (and NOT eligible to receive working tax credit) with an income of £16,190 or less,
- Support Under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999.
- (N.B. these are the same criteria which would entitle a school pupil to free school meals, and will be the criteria the College uses to identify statutory eligibility for Free College Meals)

Important notice regarding availability of funding

The total amount of funding the College will receive from the Government is finite. Application and eligibility is not a guarantee that an award will be made.

The College will aim to help as many eligible students as possible and is recommending that all students who have identified that they are eligible to apply should do so as soon as possible.

However, should there be a shortfall in funding and if the College is unable to make awards to all eligible applicants, the College will prioritise eligible students on a case by case basis according to individual's needs and circumstances.

When can I apply to the Bursary Fund?

We would encourage all prospective and returning students who think that they might be eligible to apply for assistance to complete and submit the Student Bursary application form as soon as possible. Application forms and guidance notes are available to collect from Learner Services at each campus from enrolment onwards, to print off from College website or by emailing **bursary@stockport.ac.uk** to request that one is posted out to you. Early application will help us ensure that any assistance awarded can be put in place as close as possible to the start of the September term.

Applications can also be made throughout the year.

Do I need to submit evidence with the application form?

Yes, it is very important that the correct evidence is submitted with the application. The evidence required for each type of earnings, income and benefit is clearly specified on the application form. Photocopies are preferred but financial support staff will photocopy and return evidence if required.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARE IN RECEIPT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT: In order to assess for eligibility for FREE MEALS, we need your three most recent Universal Credit Full Award Statements which state your monthly income (for example: earnings reported by your employer) and any deductions.

If the correct evidence is not submitted the form cannot be assessed and an award cannot be made. If this is the case, we will write to or email the student to inform them of what further evidence they need to submit. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they do this promptly.

How will students know if they have been successful?

We will write to or email all students informing them of the outcome of their application. Successful students will get an **award notice** which tells them what their award is including where applicable if they are entitled to free college meals.

We will also communicate all unsuccessful students informing them of the reasons for the College's decision.

How and when will payment be made?

Please note that your bursary award is based on course costs identified by your curriculum area, your assessed mode of travel and whether you are entitled to free or discretionary College meals. This means that for some students their bursary award **may be a one-off bacs payment ONLY** or may be paid to the College with **no direct payment to the student**. In some cases, a student may be assessed as having no costs or the monetary value of the award may be small.

Where payments are made directly to the student, they will only be issued once the student is enrolled on and has been attending their course for at least two weeks.

The Vulnerable Bursary and the Registered Young Carer's Discretionary Bursary will be paid by weekly BACS credit transfer into their bank account.

Discretionary Bursary travel payments will be made by monthly BACS credit transfer into the student's bank account.

Payments for equipment and uniforms will be by BACS credit transfer once confirmation has been received that the item has already been purchased by the student.

If items have been purchased or costs met by the College on behalf of the student, the Bursary Fund will reimburse the College.

Please note that no guarantee can be given that the full cost of an item will be reimbursed.

Students eligible for Free or Discretionary College Meals will be able to access prepaid meals in the College's Canteen.

Bank Details

As outlined above, some payments will be made by BACS credit transfer directly to a bank account and as part of our application form we have included a request for bank details and would ask that all students fill in this section with their bank details.

Please note payments can only be made into the student's own bank account.

Are there any other conditions for receiving assistance from the Bursary Fund?

Yes, any payments will be conditional on good attendance, good behaviour, and satisfactory academic progress (for example completing and handing in work set on time). These conditions are the same as those outlined in your Learner Agreement which you will sign when you enrol at Stockport College.

What should I do if I am not happy with any decision that has been made regarding my application?

Students can appeal against any decisions made regarding their application using a 16-18 Student Bursary Appeal form or in writing to the Learner Services Manager of Student Services.

Students can request an appeal form and a copy of the appeals procedure by contacting the Financial Support Officer at **bursary@stockport.ac.uk**.

Initial assessments of applications and initial award decisions are made by the Financial Support Officer. In order to ensure impartiality, appeals will be investigated by The Learner Services Manager who has no part in the original decision making.

Changes in Circumstances

Students may submit further evidence should a change occur in their circumstances which may result in them being assessed for a higher level of assistance. Except for Vulnerable Bursary students and where eligibility for Free College Meals has been identified, all other further awards will be subject to availability of funding. Students are also required to disclose any change in circumstances – personal, financial or educational that may make them ineligible for funding. Failure to do so may make the students liable for the cost of funding already received.

Equality and Diversity Statement:

The Learner Services Manager, the Financial Support Officer and the Student Support Team will:

1. Take positive action to ensure that all students can apply for financial support thus widening participation and providing learning opportunities for under represented groups.
2. Ensure that no applicant to the Bursary Fund receives less favourable treatment which cannot be justified in relation to individual financial/personal circumstances.
3. Ensure that all Student Support Bursary Fund literature, marketing and publicity materials are free from stereotypes, discriminatory assumptions, images and language.
4. Monitor and review the effectiveness of the support on a regular basis.
5. Ensure that this form is available in other formats if required.

Confidentiality

Applications and evidence of income are only seen by staff involved in the delivery of the Student Bursary Scheme. All ticked sections on the form are treated in confidence.

GDPR

Stockport College (part of the Trafford and Stockport College Group) is a data controller committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Finance Support Team collect data requested on the bursary application form and use it to assess your eligibility to access learner support funds. Data is inputted onto our electronic systems to allow us to make payments.

Application forms and associated evidence is stored securely on campus: for learners studying off site this data will be stored at one of our main sites.

Your data may be shared with relevant government departments or their agencies for the purpose of quality assurance and compliance.

For those learners accessing Free College Meals we must inform our external catering service to allow you to access this entitlement.

Our Data Protection Policy is available on our website if you require further information.

**Is there anyone I can talk to if I need help with any aspect of my application?
Yes, you can contact the College's Financial Support Officer at:**

bursary@stockport.ac.uk

All applications can be returned during enrolment to Learner Services or **by post** to our Stockport Campus using:

FREEPOST Stock College

You do not need to pay postage. Please address the envelope exactly as above - DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING ELSE ON YOUR ENVELOPE.

If possible, please send photocopies of evidence, however any original evidence documents will be returned if you have clearly indicated that you want them returned.

These guidelines and application form are available in other formats on request.

* The information in these guidelines is correct at time of printing however the College reserves the right to make any necessary changes in order to comply with the Department of Education (DfE), Government or College Policy.