

Trinity Specialist College

16-24 BURSARY FUNDS POLICY/FREE COLLEGE MEALS FUND 2019/2020



Policy reviewed	Sep 2019
Date for next review	Aug 2020
Signed by Chair of Trustees:	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy provides guidance on how Trinity Specialist College will Administer Bursary Grants that will be used to help maintain a young person in Education who might otherwise be unfairly disadvantaged or excluded. The Policy operates in line with the Government's guidelines on the 16 - 24 Bursary Funds allocation for young people aged 16-24.

The Bursary is to be used to help Learners experiencing greatest financial need When wishing to access their educational provision. Our aim is to support Learners who would otherwise be financially disadvantaged in some way when Accessing their learning through Trinity Specialist College. Money should be spent in a way that removes barriers to education.

1.2 This policy also provides guidance on how Trinity Specialist College will administer Free College Meals in line with the requirement of the 1996 Education Act which states that maintained school and academy sixth-forms provide free meals to disadvantaged Learners who are aged over 16. In the 2014 to 2015 academic year this requirement was extended to disadvantaged Learners following FE courses at the range of FE funded institutions. Funding Agreements have been amended to place a legal duty on institutions to comply with this requirement.

1.3 Decisions will be based purely on financial needs and no account will be taken of Individual characteristics such as gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, Sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment or marital or Civil partnership status or any other individual characteristic. Age will be taken Into account as detailed in this policy.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Trinity Specialist College 16 - 24 Bursary Fund

Discretionary entitlement. Trinity Specialist College 19 - 24 Bursary Fund is entirely a discretionary entitlement with a focus on ensuring Learners can access their educational provision.

2.2 This Policy applies to all Learners at Trinity Specialist College who are aged between 19 - 24 and are continuing learners and have an EHC Plan in place.

Free meals and the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Additional funding for free meals for post-16 Learners at further education funded institutions was introduced in the 2014 to 2015 academic year.

The ESFA removed the ring fence between the free meals in further education allocation and the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund discretionary bursary allocation in the 2016 to 2017 academic year. This flexibility remains in place for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

2.3 Objectives

2.3.1 That Trinity Specialist College responds, within its remit, to the financial needs of individuals wishing to engage in an educational programme at the college.

2.3.2 That Trinity Specialist College responds to and recognises the value of an individual's choice, the diversity of access needs and the needs of the community when educational preference is made for a place at Trinity Specialist College.

2.3.3 To fulfil the role of education in recognising the importance of adequate resource provision for promoting economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

2.3.4 To accurately allocate funding to those Learners who demonstrate sufficient need.

2.3.5 That Trinity Specialist College provides appropriate financial support to meet the changing needs of individuals, promoting equality and fairness of access.

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR 16 – 24 Discretionary Bursary

3.1 This Bursary allocation is only available to Learners aged 16 to 24 enrolled full Time at Trinity Specialist College. These young people are deemed to be financially disadvantaged and may need further financial support to assist their expenses at college (primarily to meet transport costs or for college learning resources) which in turn helps them to remain in college.

3.2 The Learner's household income is proven to be less than £25,000 per year (evidence required). Income bands will be in place to help prioritise Learners who live-in low-income households.

The Income bands will be as follows:

Below £20,000

£20,000 - £25,000

The criteria for applying for a 16 - 24 discretionary entitlement are as follows:

- That the Learner is in receipt of Personal Independence Payment/ Universal Credit/Individual payments ***in their own name*** during college time (proof of original letter required)
- An asylum-seeking young person.
- Are continuing on a study programme they began aged 19 years
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan in place (EHCP)

4. Eligibility for Free College Meals

4.1 To be eligible for a free meal in the 2019 to 2020 academic year, Learners aged 19 or over are only eligible for a free meal if they:

- are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

4.2 Eligible benefits

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged Learners. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as Learners being in receipt of, or having parents/carers who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7400

5 APPLICATION

5.1 A letter will be issued at the start of the autumn term (September) to all Learners and their families about the opportunity to apply for a Bursary and/or Free College Meals award and what they are required to do.

5.2 A Learner or their family/guardian applies for the relevant Bursary for which they maybe entitled and must submit applications and supporting evidence by the Specified closing date as disclosed in the letter.

5.3 Trinity Specialist College will hold a Senior Management Meeting that allocates money or 'money in kind' to Learners. The bursary will be calculated, some bursaries may cover 100% of the costs but not in all cases. This will be dependent on Trinity's allocation and the number of applications.

6 MONITORING

6.1 Once all Bursary Funding is agreed and confirmed (subject to a satisfactory Enrolment process), then payments will be distributed each term.

BACS payments will be paid to the Learner's bank account directly.

If a Learner is allocated 'money in kind' (for transport costs or materials, etc) this will be allocated in full at source to the relevant department to purchase the Service/materials by the Finance Officer.

6.2 Ongoing payments are conditional on a Learner meeting satisfactory standards of attendance **and** behaviour whilst on their enrolled courses.

Formal action will be taken by Trinity Specialist College to stop further Bursary payments if attendance reaches an unacceptable level during the duration of the course. Attendance lower than 85% will trigger a review.

7. APPEAL AND COMPLAINTS

7.1 A Learner can appeal a funding decision made by the Senior Management Team. A request must be received in writing by the Chief Executive Officer within 7 working days of unsuccessful notification; the letter requesting an appeal must clearly state the grounds of that appeal.

7.2 Any complaints about the process of handling the bursary must be addressed Through Trinity Specialist College's complaints procedures.

8 FINITE NATURE OF THE BURSARY AWARDS

8.1 Trinity Specialist College has a limited amount of funds to support claims under the 16-24 Discretionary Bursary Funds and applications will be looked at by the Senior Management Team for Learners whose have the greatest need in relation to barriers to participation.

8.2 Once the annualised fund is allocated, no further discretionary applications will be received regardless of eligibility criteria being met.

8.3 A Learner can apply for a further award in subsequent years of study as long as they meet the eligibility criteria as specified.

9 FRAUDULANT CLAIMS

9.1 Trinity Specialist College will ask for proof of income to support bursary claims.

Should false information be presented to gain a bursary, any money and/or goods paid for by Trinity Specialist College as a result will be claimed back from the family and the police involved to investigate the matter.