

TRAINING & EDUCATION  
POLICY  
TE029 16-19 Bursary and Free Meals

## 1. PURPOSE

At Hoople Further Education we are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, and ensuring that every young person participates in, and benefits from, a place in education and training.

## 2. SCOPE

We are dedicated to:

- Distributing bursary and free meal allocations to students aged 16-19 students enrolled on a Study Programme. Bursary (19+ students with an Educational Healthcare Plan) via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring the information regarding application and eligibility process is publicly available.
- Widening access to, and participation in education and training.
- Monitoring and reviewing our policies to ensure effectiveness.
- Setting high targets and objectives to develop a culture of continuous improvement.

## 3. APPLICATION

This policy should be applied to Hoople Ltd Study Programme.

## 4. PRINCIPLES

To be responsible for setting eligibility criteria for students, and setting conditions for receiving the bursary, such as regular attendance, and engagement. Arrangements for applying for bursaries and free meals will be straightforward and confidential.

The needs of each student who applies for the 16-19 bursary, and free meals will be assessed by the setting and evidence will be obtained to support each application. The setting will claim vulnerable bursaries from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) for each eligible student. Data on students eligible for free meals will be submitted to ESFA via ILR data capture.

See TE0029b Appendix A for 16-19 Bursary and Free Meals application and assessment and TE029B Appendix B for examples of financial support available

The setting will claim vulnerable bursaries from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) for each eligible student. Each student will be assessed to determine amount claimed.

Students eligible for free meals will be recorded to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) through Individual Learning Record data returns.

Records will be kept by the setting of all assessments and payments. The application process will maintain confidentiality.

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The setting will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when setting its criteria and will not discriminate against students because of their protected characteristics.

The setting will inform the ESFA of the total amount of any unspent funds (not previously reported from any year). Recycling unspent money from the previous year.

The setting will aim to pay all funding in-kind, using cash payments only where necessary. In-kind payments may include for example travel passes, vouchers for meals, or required books or equipment.

Where in-kind payments are given to students within the vulnerable groups, the setting will explain the value of these payments to the student and how these have been deducted from the total £1200.

Where payments are made to students, rather than in-kind, the funding will be paid by BACS transfer to the students own bank account.

Payments will not be paid into another person's bank account unless exceptional circumstances mean that a student is unable to administer their own account. If a student cannot manage their own funds, the setting will consider who can manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

The setting has the right to determine how often payments are made- when doing so, the following will be considered:

- The reason the bursary was awarded
- The students circumstance
- Local arrangements

The setting has the right to insist that the students only spend bursary payments on the support that has been identified as necessary to help them access education, e.g. to pay for travel costs.

Where a vulnerable student is on a course lasting 30weeks or more, and is participating full-time, they will be eligible to receive up to £1200 students on a study programme of less than 30weeks will receive a pro-rata amount the setting will consider the number of hours involved in eligible students study programmes when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

The setting may pay a student in a vulnerable group more than £1200 if it believes the student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be paid from the setting's discretionary bursary allocation or its own funds. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the setting's auditable records.

The setting will only pay students the amount they need to access education, based on individual assessment. Students will not automatically receive £1200 or a set amount of funding unless this is in line with their actual financial need.

The setting will only submit a funding claim to the SBSS once sufficient evidence has been provided and the setting has confirmed that the student needs financial support to participate.

The institution will be responsible for assessing whether students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

The institution may decide that, although a student may be eligible for a bursary, as they fall within one or more of the vulnerable groups, the bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support. If financial needs are already met and there are no other costs or they do not require the maximum award, the institution may decide not to allocate a bursary to the student. For example, where:

- A student undertakes a distanced learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation e.g. no travel or food costs.

Where the setting has decided that a student is ineligible for funding in accordance with the above criteria, the setting will explain to the student and/or the student's guardian the aim of the bursary funding and why it is appropriate to not award any in this instance.

The setting will ensure its bursary application form is clear about the possibility of no award or a reduced award.

The setting will assess the needs of each student who applies for the bursary or free meal, and evidence will be obtained to support each application.

The setting will recycle unused funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

See Appendix A TE029a Bursary and Free Meals Letter, Application and Assessment.

#### DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

Study programme students are eligible to apply to receive a bursary, provided they meet eligibility requirements.

- Students living in a low-income household with an annual household no greater than £30,000.
- Personal circumstances to receiving bursary.

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students in low-income households. The setting will use household income, to help establish the amount of support awarded to the student if possible.

Students who apply will be assessed individually. This assessment will be documented and evidence to support the claims will be obtained and retained for auditing purposes.

The assessment will be based on a student's financial needs and the setting will consider any unearned income, such as shares or investments, savings and rental income.

In individual cases of severe hardship, the bursary fund will be used where appropriate to provide food support for a student attending their programme of study. Food support will be provided where a setting believes the student to be in real need and will not require checks on household income or other evidence gathering that would usually be required. Where food support is provided, copies of the following records will be retained for audit purposes:

- The total number of students provided food support
- The number of days this support is given to each student
- The total value of support given to each student along with the rationale for its provision
- Signed confirmation of receipt funding by the student or actual spend receipts.

The setting has the right to insist that the students only spend bursary payments on the support that has been identified as necessary to help them access education, e.g. to pay for travel costs.

#### VULNERABLE BURSARY

The settings eligibility criteria for receiving a vulnerable bursary will include students who are:

- LAC (this includes those classed as unaccompanied asylum-seeking child)
- Previously LAC (PLAC)
- Receiving universal credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner.
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Where a vulnerable student is on a course lasting 30 weeks or more, and is participating full-time, they may be eligible to receive up to £1200. Students on a study programme of less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata amount the setting will consider the number of hours involved in eligible student's study programmes when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

The setting may pay a student in a vulnerable group more than £1200 if it believes the student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be from the setting's discretionary bursary allocation or its own funds. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the setting's auditable records.

The setting will only pay students the amount they need to access education, based on individual assessment. Students will not automatically receive £1200 or a set amount of funding unless this is in line with their actual financial need.

The setting will only submit a funding claim to the SBSS once sufficient evidence has been provided, and the setting has confirmed that the student needs financial support to participate.

The setting will be responsible for assessing whether students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

The setting may decide that, although a student may be eligible for a bursary, as they fall within one or more of the vulnerable groups, the bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support. If financial needs are already met, and there are no other costs or they do not require the maximum award, the institution may decide not to allocate a bursary to the student. For example, where:

- A student undertakes a distanced learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation e.g. no travel or food costs.
- Where the setting has decided that a student is ineligible for funding in accordance with the above criteria, the setting will explain to the student and/or the student's guardian the aim of the bursary funding and why it is appropriate to not award any in this instance.

#### FREE MEALS

The settings eligibility criteria for receiving free meals will include students who are in receipt of, or the students' guardian are in receipt of:

- 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 guaranteed 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))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

The institution will be responsible for assessing whether the students are eligible to receive a free meal.

The setting will only provide students with free meals the days they are attending college, or work placement provisions.

The free meal allocation for academic year 2526 is £2.61 per day. Each student will be assessed individually, and a plan put into place for the student to receive the meal. If the setting determines it is necessary to enhance the amount, the setting has discretion to do

so either through discretionary bursary or the settings own funds. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the setting's auditable records.

## 5. COMPLIANCE

Hoople will comply with all relevant DFE guidance, regulations, and standards. Hoople employees will keep abreast of developments in legislation disseminating this throughout the Training and Education team in addition to performing regular reviews to ensure compliance.

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Hoople's disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from your line manager.

## 6. REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Policy review will be undertaken by the Hoople Senior Management.

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Guidance approved by	TANDEM	Date approved	July 2024
Implementation date	Immediately	Review date	Annual

## CHANGE LOG

	Date	Description of changes	By	Reason for change	Pages affected
	July 24	Creation	SHS/FE	-	-
	July 24	Approved	TANDEM	-	-
V1	29/07/25	Minor changes annual household income, 2526 free meal rate, and claim on assessment of student.	FE	Review	Pages 1,3,5
V1	Sept 25	Approved at TANDEM	TANDEM	-	-
V1.1	Nov 25	Rebranding and reformatting of document	FE	Rebrand	All

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