



Financial Assistance & Free College Meals 2016/17

**A Guide to Support,
Eligibility & Application**

ABOUT THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE

The purpose of the Financial Assistance funding, which includes both Government and College funds, is to provide support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so that they can remain in education.

Please use this guide to help you when making an application.

As a member of Strode's College, students aged 16 - 18 can apply for three types of financial assistance (bursaries) and all applicants will be automatically reviewed for eligibility of Free College Meals as well as being able to apply for this support separately.

By submitting an application, the College will look at your earned income and income from the eligible benefits that you receive (see list in the 'Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility' section for each type of assistance) to determine the highest level of assistance that can be offered.

The three types of financial assistance are:

- **The Discretionary Bursary** – a means assessed scheme used to support the cost of travel and compulsory course related costs
- **The Vulnerable Bursary** – a grant of up to £1,200 a year for young people who have been defined by the Government as being in vulnerable groups (see definitions below)
- **The Strode's Foundation** – A discretionary sum of funding given to the College by the trustees of the Strode's Foundation to help support those that fall outside of the above two categories and find themselves in extreme hardship.

Plus

- **Free College Meals** - £3.00 a day to spend in the College's on-site student café, Ed's Kitchen.

Below you will find information about each of the strands of financial assistance that will help your application in addition to a summary table in Appendix 1 of the document that details the eligibility criteria for each.

Please note, applicants must be aged 16 to 18 on 31st August 2016 and must be enrolled at the College on one or more EFA funded course(s). Adult Learners (those 19 and over) should contact the Director of Adult Learning for more information on support for adults.

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## MAKING AN APPLICATION

The application form for financial assistance is available from the following:

- The College website - <http://www.strodes.ac.uk/Admissions/FinancialAssistance>
- Via email request to [welfare@strodes.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@strodes.ac.uk)
- Via telephone request on 01784 228606
- In person from Student Services in the Student Centre

Parents/carers should support students in completing the application forms and provide the requested evidence as detailed at the end of each bursary section. Forms along with the supporting evidence should be returned to Student Services in the Student Centre. Please address postal applications to:

Student Operations Manager  
Strode's College  
High Street  
Egham  
TW20 9DR

## APPLICATION DEADLINES AND INFORMATION

### Early Application:

The deadline for early applications is **4.00pm on Friday 1 July 2016**. Fully evidenced, eligible applications submitted by this time will be guaranteed a September payment.

### Other Applications:

Applications received after this date will be processed in order of receipt.

We will accept applications throughout the year however financial assistance is subject to availability, it is not an entitlement. The College will endeavour to provide support to the highest value wherever possible ensuring that awards are fair and proportionate to the needs of our students.

Failing to provide sufficient support evidence may delay your application and any subsequently awarded payments.

Please be aware that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect or overpayment of awards may result in stoppage of future payments and the recovery of any funds that have already been paid.

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## 1. THE STRODE'S FOUNDATION

The Strode's Foundation Support Fund is a discretionary sum of money awarded to the College by the Trustees of the Strode's Foundation. These monies are used to support students who are facing extreme hardship. Any student, parent or guardian is entitled to make an application in writing to the Student Operations Manager.

The letter should include an outline of the particular difficulty, why the money is needed and what it would be used for. Detail of the circumstance (such as a redundancy) should also be included. Further evidence may be requested.

All students who have applied for financial support but are not eligible for the Discretionary Bursary, will automatically be considered for a lower level support under the Strode's Foundation, subject to them demonstrating a household income of below £30,000.

### Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility

You must supply evidence of your household income. For the purposes of the assessment for financial assistance, household income includes earned income (wages) and any form of awarded benefits (whether received directly or paid on a claimants behalf).

For the purposes of evidence, please provide the following:

- A P60 for the last financial year or your last three pay slips or if you are self-employed, your most recent tax return.
- Copies of the full and most recent benefits award letters for all benefits received

Benefits the College consider as included within household income include:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit
- Job Seeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments

## 2. THE DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

### General Information

- The Discretionary Bursary is split into two elements, travel costs and general costs. The level of financial assistance that the College can offer will be dependent on the total funding received from the EFA and the number of applications received.
- The Discretionary Bursary is means assessed based on household income. Please note that the College considers certain benefits within this calculation. A full list can be found in the 'Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility' section on page 5.
- For the travel element of the Discretionary Bursary, the College pays a pre-determined amount depending on the distance of your home (primary abode) from the College. The amount payable does not normally cover the full cost of travel but is a contribution. A list of example travel bandings can be found in Appendix 2.
- The College advise students to contact Student Services or to look on the Financial Assistance section of our website for advice and guidance about the cheapest travel options for young people.
- Support for general costs will be awarded for education items such as books, equipment, kit, exam costs and educational trips. The College does not fund university visits from the Discretionary Bursary but will consider eligibility on a case by case basis from the Strode's Foundation (see page 3). For equipment needs, students are advised to contact Student Services before purchasing items as many items can be sourced at a 'corporate or educational' rate by the College on a student's behalf.
- Any items purchased by students themselves will only be reimbursed if:
  - The item / exam / trip is a compulsory requirement of the course.
  - The cost is not prohibitive or excessive and be proportionate to the purpose. The College will normally only pay an equivalent rate to which it could have sourced the item internally.
  - A valid receipt or purchase order is provided.
- Students will receive a payment plan if they are assessed as being eligible, which will outline the payment that they can expect to receive each month. Payment amounts for all students will be assessed based on the funding available throughout the year and where it is later determined that additional funds are available, the College will look at whether it is appropriate to increase all student's funding rewards.
- Strode's College is a full time educational institution and as such payment schedules are calculated on this basis. If a student's programme is later reduced to less than full time, the College may assess students again to ensure that the same level of need is still reflected in their award. This may result in future payments being reduced. The College will confirm any changes to students in writing. Full time students are those that study a minimum of 540 planned learning hours across the academic year. This information is determined by each student's learning agreement with the College.
- All Discretionary Bursary payments are subject to minimum attendance requirements, a breakdown of which can be seen in Appendix 1. Students who fail to meet these attendance levels will receive a reduced payment. Attendance levels are determined using authorised absence taken as an average across all subjects for the previous month. The College may as a discretionary measure in exceptional circumstances agree to waive this requirement for a short period of time where it is felt that doing so is in the interest of the learner and in keeping with the principles of the bursary scheme.

- Payments are made directly into student's bank accounts via BACS on or after the 22 of each month.
- The College may on a case by case basis, top up individual students awards, subject to funding availability, if it is felt that there are extenuating circumstances that create significant barriers to students attending.
- It will be at the discretion of the Student Operations Manager as to whether any award should be backdated to the beginning of the academic year if the delay in application was due to failure to submit the correct level of evidence to the College. For applications received after the end of the Autumn term, any awards will commence from January 2017.

### **Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility**

Applicants must supply evidence of household income. For the purposes of the assessment for financial assistance, household income includes earned income (wages) and any form of awarded benefits (whether received directly or paid on a claimants behalf).

For the purposes of evidence, please provide the following:

- A P60 for the last financial year or your last three pay slips or if you are self-employed, your most recent tax return.
- Copies of the full and most recent benefits award letters for all benefits received

Benefits the College consider as included within household income include:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit
- Job Seeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments

### 3. THE VULNERABLE BURSARY

#### General Information

- To be eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary, students must be in one of the Government defined vulnerable groups. These are:
  - Students who are in care
  - Students who are care leavers
  - Students in receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right.
  - Students in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP), in their own right.
- Students do not need to live independently from parents in order to apply for the Vulnerable Bursary.
- If students in receipt of the Vulnerable Bursary are facing significant need / hardship over and above the support already provided, the College may be able to provide additional funding, subject to availability. Please contact Student Services for more information.
- 'In care' is defined as:
  - Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis, or under a care order. This also includes young people placed with a foster carer by the local authority.
- 'Care Leavers' are defined as:
  - A young person aged 16 or 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), beginning after the age of 14 and ending before the age of 16OR
  - A young person age 18 or above who was 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 will receive up to £1,200 which will be divided across the academic year in monthly instalments. Students will receive a payment plan if they are assessed as being eligible, which will outline the payment that they can expect to receive each month.
- Strode's College is a full time educational institution and as such payment schedules are calculated on this basis. If a student's programme becomes reduced to less than full time, the College will assess students again to ensure that the same level of need is reflected in their award. This may result in payments being reduced if it means that support at the previously agreed level is no longer required. The College will confirm any changes to students in writing. Full time students are those that study a minimum of 540 planned learning hours across an academic year. This information is determined by each student's learning agreement with the College.
- Payments are made directly into student's bank accounts via BACS on or after the 22 of each month.

#### Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility

- If an application is being made because students are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, the student must supply a full copy (all pages) of their confirmation of award letter from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- If an application is being made because a student is in care or is a care leaver, the College must have written confirmation of the current or previous looked after status from the local authority. This can be in the form of a letter or email.

## 4. FREE COLLEGE MEALS

### General Information

- Free College Meals are available to eligible students aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2016 and are targeted at certain students who meet the eligibility criteria below.
- Students will receive £3.00 for each day that they are timetabled to study in College. This is automatically uploaded onto the student ID badge and can be used through our cashless catering systems in the student café, Ed's Kitchen, based in the Student Centre.
- The free meal can be used to purchase breakfast and / or lunch and can be supplemented with the student's own money by either online or cash (notes) top-up.
- Students are actively encouraged to make healthy choices wherever possible from the selection of available foods and the College will periodically monitor usage to ensure it is being used for its intended purpose.
- Any unused part of the £3.00 daily top-up will be removed at the end of each day once the café has closed. E.g. If a student spends £2.70 of their £3.00 allocation, 30p will be removed and a new £3.00 added at the start of the following day.

### Evidence Needed to Determine Eligibility

To be eligible for a free meal, students must be in receipt of, or have parents in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- 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 you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- During the initial roll out of the benefit, Universal Credit

You must supply the College with the most recent and full copy (all pages) of your award letter for one of the qualifying benefits above.

## WHO TO CONTACT FOR ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

If you have any issues, concerns or would like further clarification on any element of this policy, please contact:

Carole Bazeley (Student Services Officer – Administration)  
Naomi Brokenshire (Student Operations Manager)  
Telephone: 01784 228606  
Email: [welfare@strodes.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@strodes.ac.uk)

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## YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

If your application is unsuccessful or if you would like the College to consider increasing any assistance you already receive due to exceptional circumstances you have the right to submit an appeal.

All appeals should be submitted in writing within ten working days of the decision to:

Naomi Brokenshire (Student Operations Manager) – [nbrokenshire@strodes.ac.uk](mailto:nbrokenshire@strodes.ac.uk)  
Strode's College  
High Street  
Egham  
TW20 9DR

If unsuccessful at appeal level, a further appeal can be made in writing to Bernadette Joslin, Assistant Principal (Student Services).

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## ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING

### Grants Search Engine

A grant search engine with information on charitable funds tailored to postcode areas is available at [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

### Egham United Charity

Educational grants - [www.eghamunitedcharity.org](http://www.eghamunitedcharity.org)

### Richmond Parish Lands

Students who live in postcodes TW9, TW10 or SW14 may be able to receive help from this charity. Application forms can be obtained from the charity by calling 020 8948 5701 or visit the website for more details at [www.rplc.org.uk](http://www.rplc.org.uk)

### Egham Education Trust

The Trust helps students who live in Egham who are in particular need of financial assistance to meet the costs of their studies. Financial help is also available for students undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

### Barnes Workhouse Fund

Students who live in the SW13 postal area of London can apply for a grant relating to education. Visit the website [www.barnesworkhousefund.org.uk](http://www.barnesworkhousefund.org.uk) for more information.

### The Datchet United Charities

Students who live in the parish of Datchet can apply for help with travel expenses, books, etc. Call 01753 541883 or email [gwennahoward@btinternet.com](mailto:gwennahoward@btinternet.com) for more details.

## APPENDIX 1: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION GRID

|                                            | Discretionary Bursary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                   | Vulnerable Bursary                                                                                          | Strode's Foundation                                                                                                         | Free College Meals                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | Travel Costs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | General Costs                                                                     |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                             |                                                                     |
| <b>Assessed household income threshold</b> | £25,000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | £25,000                                                                           | Not applicable - Benefits assessed (see Vulnerable Bursary section)                                         | £30,000                                                                                                                     | Not applicable - Benefits assessed (see Free College Meals section) |
| <b>What is covered?</b>                    | Students are paid a monthly amount which is determined based on the distance of their home from the College                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Compulsory course related books, kit, equipment, exam costs and educational trips | Students receive a fixed sum of £1,200 paid evenly in monthly instalments over the duration of their course | Travel, compulsory course related books, kit, equipment, exam costs and educational trips                                   | Daily allowance of £3.00 via cashless catering                      |
| <b>Conditions</b>                          | <p>Paid in tiers based on attendance.</p> <p><b>Full payment</b> – authorised attendance of 90% and above</p> <p><b>Half payment</b> – authorised attendance between 75% and 90%</p> <p><b>No payment</b> – authorised attendance of below 75%</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No specific conditions. Up to 100% will be paid as a one-off cost                 | No conditions                                                                                               | All students not eligible for Discretionary Bursary will be automatically assessed in addition to those in extreme hardship | No conditions                                                       |
| <b>How will it be paid?</b>                | Monthly BACS into student's bank account                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Monthly BACS into student's bank account                                          | Monthly BACS into student's bank account                                                                    | Monthly BACS for travel awards or one-off BACS for other payments                                                           | Daily top up to student ID badges                                   |
| <b>NOTES</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you have a household income of above £30,000 and are experiencing severe hardship, please contact Student Services on 01784 228606, email <a href="mailto:welfare@strodes.ac.uk">welfare@strodes.ac.uk</a> or ask your student to visit us in the Student Centre, to see if we can help. Alternatively, please check the 'Sources of Alternative Funding' information below.</li> <li>▪ Financial assistance is subject to availability, it is not an entitlement. The College will endeavour to provide support to the highest value wherever possible ensuring that awards are fair and proportionate to the needs of our students.</li> </ul> |                                                                                   |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                             |                                                                     |

## APPENDIX 2: TRAVEL BANDINGS

| BAND | AREAS                                                                                                                                                      |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Egham, Staines, Hythe, Wraysbury, Thorpe, Englefield Green, Virginia Water                                                                                 |
| 2    | Old Windsor, Windsor, Chertsey, Datchet, Sunningdale, Ascot, Stanwell, Heathrow, Eton, Ashford                                                             |
| 3    | Slough, Uxbridge, West Drayton, Hounslow, Feltham, Teddington, Sunbury-on-Thames, Weybridge, Walton-on-Thames, Woking, Bracknell, West Byfleet, Maidenhead |
| 4    | London, Twickenham, Richmond, Brentford, Kingston, Reading, Wokingham, High Wycombe, Wembley, Ruislip                                                      |

The above list is an illustration of common home locations of Strobe's College students. If your home area is not listed above, please contact Student Services who can advise of the band for your location.