EMBS Community College

Bursary policy 2026–2027

1. Scope

EMBS Community College operates a bursary fund to provide financial support to learners who have barriers to participation in education. The Department for Education sets the framework for how colleges distribute bursary funding in its 16–19 bursary fund guidance.

This policy applies to sixth form learners at the college in the 2026–2027 academic year.

Bursary payments are provided to support learners with essential costs that would otherwise prevent them from studying, such as travel and equipment costs. Bursary funding is paid on the basis of each learner's individual circumstances and actual needs, not as a default entitlement. These needs vary from learner to learner and depend on factors such as household income, travel distance and requirements of the study programme. The college has to assess these needs and costs for each learner.

Bursary payments are almost always paid in-kind (by providing travel passes, equipment etc.) rather than as cash transfers.

2. Bursary eligibility and evidence

Bursary funding is available primarily to learners aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August 2026. Learners who are aged 19 but continuing a study programme they began the previous year, and learners who are aged 19 or over who have an Education, Health and Care Plan, can also receive bursary funding. Learners under 16 may receive bursary funding in special circumstances.

Asylum seeking children who are accompanied by an adult relative or partner are not eligible for bursary funding, but the college can provide books, equipment or a travel pass. Asylum seeking children who are not accompanied by an adult relative or partner are entitled to bursary funding.

The college can provide bursary funding to two types of learners.

2.1. Vulnerable learner bursary

Learners are entitled to bursary funding if they meet one of the following criteria:

- learners who are cared for by the local authority under the Children Act 1989, s 20 or s 31

- learners who are care leavers
- learners who are receiving Universal Credit or Income Support because they are financially supporting themselves
- learners who are receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit

In the case of cared for learners or care leavers, the college must receive a letter or email from a social worker or the local authority confirming that status. In the case of learners receiving Universal Credit or Income Support because they are financially supporting themselves, the college must receive a copy of the award notice in the learner's name, and also evidence that the learner is responsible for their own finances, such as a tenancy agreement or utility bill in their name. In the case of learners receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit, the college must receive a copy of their Universal Credit award notice and evidence that they are receiving DLA or PIP.

2.2. Discretionary bursary

The college provides support from the bursary fund to learners in low-income households. Learners in households with less than £25,000 in income with a parent or carer who is receiving benefits will be considered for bursary funding.

The college will need to assess evidence such as free school meals eligibility letters, benefits award notices and statements, P60s, payslips or self-assessment tax returns. If such evidence is not available, learners may demonstrate financial difficulties through other means, such as letters from the local authority or social services confirming household circumstances or bank statements.

Learners may also be able to use other evidence of special circumstances, such as letters from professionals or evidence of sudden changes in circumstances.

2.3. Additional requirements

Learners will not receive bursary funding unless they continue to adhere to the following conditions during their studies:

- maintain good attendance (set at 80% but individual circumstances will be considered)
- adhere to the learner code of conduct
- follow any other conditions set out in their bursary assessment

3. Application process

The college has a bursary application form which will be available to learners during enrolment. The college accepts enrolments throughout the year and does not have a deadline for bursary applications.

Learners applying for bursary must provide evidence as indicated above along with their bursary application form.

The college will assess the bursary application form and supporting evidence and produce a bursary assessment which will be shared with the learner. After the bursary assessment is provided, the learner will be entitled to the support specified in the assessment.

Learners whose circumstances change during their studies may apply for a bursary at any point.

All bursary funding decisions are subject to review by the Vice Principal and may be cancelled if the Vice Principal considers them to have been wrongly decided. Learners whose bursary applications have been refused may submit an appeal to the Vice Principal.