

# **BSIX Brooke House Sixth Form College Policy Document**

## **Fees Policy 2019-20**

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Person Responsible:	Vice Principal – Finance and Resources
For Action By:	Staff involved in enrolment
For Information To:	Staff/students/ general public

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## **Introduction**

This fees policy sets out the general guidelines under which the College operates its management of fees. It includes a Fees Table at Appendix 1, which is updated annually to reflect changes in funding body policies, market forces and inflation.

The fees set out at Appendix 1 must be applied unless the written approval of the Principal or Vice Principal - Finance and Resources to waive or reduce fees has first been received.

## **Setting and approval of fees**

The fees that the College charges for the courses it provides are to be set each year by the Principal in conjunction with the relevant managers under delegated authority from the Corporation. Any changes to the fees policy in general should also be considered at this time.

## **Tuition fees**

The College's policy is to charge the recommended rates for the courses funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Tuition fees for full cost courses must be sufficient to provide a satisfactory contribution after taking account of both direct and indirect costs bearing in mind the likely learner numbers. The proposed fees for all new full cost courses should be initially reviewed with the Vice Principal - Finance and Resources in line with the course costing and approval process.

Fees for learners under the age of 16 will also be reviewed annually.

## **Exam and registration fees**

The College's policy is to pass on the charge made by the awarding body, except to those learners who are 16-18 years old, adult learners who are being fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency, and those who may from time to time be exempted. No instalment payments are available for examination or registration fees.

The College will charge the full cost of the exam fee to learners for re-sits, (irrespective of their age or the exam that they are sitting except for Functional Skills exams which are free of charge) on the following basis:

### *16-18 learners' examination fees for resits*

Where examination fees are not charged, this exemption will only apply to the initial attempt at an examination or qualification. Each subsequent attempt or re-sit is subject to a £12 administration fee and the awarding body charges being paid by the learner before they are entered for the examination.

### *19+ learners' examination fees for resits*

19+ learners who are not fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency will pay for their initial attempt at a qualification. In addition, each subsequent attempt or re-sit is subject to a £12 administration fee and awarding body charges being paid by the learner before they are entered for the examination.

The College may charge a learner (of any age) for examination fees in the following circumstances:

- Where a student fails to sit an examination without good reason, or
- Where a minimum required attendance or completion of work has not been achieved (this will be published by the end of the Autumn term preceding the examination), or
- Where a student re-sits to achieve a marginal improvement in grades (this excludes English and maths re-sits where a grade < 4 has been achieved).

### **Charges for materials**

16-18 and 19+ learners who are fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency should not be charged any fees relating to materials, uniform or tools where, without them a learner cannot complete and achieve their learning aim. All other learners on courses where the cost of materials, uniforms and tools is significant may be charged for a contribution to these costs. Any such charge must be published and prospective learners must be advised of the cost before they enrol.

### **Educational visits**

The College's policy is to charge the actual cost on to the learners, which includes the transport, subsistence and entry costs etc. of any staff accompanying the visit.

### **Payment of fees**

All learners must be issued with an ID card before they may start a course. To obtain an ID card, a learner must either

- Pay in full / the first instalment, or
- Provide proof to enable remission / exemption, or
- Bring a letter from their employer/sponsor confirming that their employer will pay their fees.

16-18 year old learners (on 31<sup>st</sup> August prior to the start of the course) on ESFA funded courses and adult learners who are fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency are exempt from the payment of all fees. These learners must provide proof of age or evidence of eligibility to full funding at enrolment.

Other learners are expected to pay their fees in full when they enrol subject to the eligibility to pay by instalments as set out at Appendix 1.

Learners may pay in cash, by cheque, or by Master / Visa card. Cheques must be supported by a bankcard.

### **Payment by instalments**

The College expects all learners to pay their fees at the point of enrolment. In exceptional circumstances, learners may apply to pay by instalments as outlined at Appendix 2 – ***Payment Instalment Plan for Tuition Fees***.

There will be an administration charge of £12 for late payment of any instalments. Any learner who has a bad payment record, or who has a current debt to the College, will not be eligible for payment by instalments.

## **Refund of fees**

The rules governing the refund of fees are detailed at Appendix 2.

## **Re-sits and re-takes**

It is not generally possible to have learning programmes designed to enable students to re-sit or re-take examinations and assessments as these are not eligible for funding by the ESFA. However, where the College considers that there are exceptional circumstances (such as a learner's long-term illness or good educational reason), it might be possible for that learner to undertake a learning programme, which will then be funded by the ESFA.

## **Learners aged between 16 and 18 years and '19 year-old continuers'**

Where a learner is aged between 16 and 18 years on 1 August immediately preceding the start of their course, their learning is fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the learner is not required to pay any tuition or examination registration fees. This applies only to study programmes and students fundable by the ESFA.

In addition, where learners on a multi-year study programme and were eligible for funding from the ESFA for their first year of study, they will continue to be funded by the ESFA until that same study programme is completed, regardless of whether they become aged 19 years or above ('19 year-old continuers').

## Learners aged 19 years or over studying on further education courses

The government, acting through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), may fund specified learning for learners aged 19 years or over.

If a learner and course is fully funded, then the learner will not be required to pay tuition fees or examination registration fees. If a learner and course is co-funded then the ESFA will only provide partial funding and the learner will be required to pay a proportion of the tuition fees for that course. This proportion is typically 50% of the full tuition fee for the course.

If no government funding is available for a learner and their selected course, tuition fees for that course will be payable in full by the learner or their employer. In most instances advanced learning loans (also known as FE loans) are available.

The following table shows where funding is available for learners aged 19 years or over studying on further education courses.

Provision	19- to 23-year-olds	24+ unemployed	24+ other
English and maths (up to and including Level 2)	Fully funded*	Fully funded*	Fully funded*
Level 2 (excluding English and maths)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Fully Funded	Co-funded
Learning to progress to Level 2	Fully funded^ (up to and including Level 1)	Fully funded	Co-funded
Level 3	Fully funded* (first and full)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
	Loan-funded** (previously achieved full Level 3 or above)		
Traineeship <sup>#</sup>	Fully funded ( <i>including 16- to 24-year-olds<sup>##</sup></i> )	N/A	N/A
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning up to and including Level 2	Co-funded	Fully funded	Co-funded
	Fully funded – unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full Level 2 or above	Co-funded	Fully funded	Co-funded
	Fully funded – unemployed		

\*Must be delivered as one of the qualifications required for the legal entitlement.

^ Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility.

# Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level.

## 16- to 18-year-old learners must be eligible under the EFA's residency requirements.

\*\* Availability of loans at Level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first full Level 3.

Low wage flexibility may apply to co-funded provision

The following definitions apply in respect to the ESFA 19+ year-olds funding table.

### ***Unemployed***

For funding purposes a learner is defined as unemployed if one or more of the following apply.

- i. They receive Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only.
- ii. They receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the work-related activity group (WRAG).
- iii. They receive Universal Credit, earn either less than 16 times the national minimum wage / national living wage a week or £338 a month (individual claims) or £541 a month (household claims) (this is subject to change) and are determined by Jobcentre Plus as being in one of the following groups.
  - All Work-Related Requirements Group.
  - Work Preparation Group.
  - Work-Focused Interview Group.
- iv. They are released on temporary licence and studying outside a prison environment and not funded through the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service.

The College may also use its discretion to fully fund other learners if all of the following apply.

- i. The learner receives other state benefits and earns either less than 16 times the national minimum wage a week or £338 a month (individual claims) or £541 a month (household claims).
- ii. The learner wants to be employed (or progress into more sustainable employment, if they earn less than 16 times the national minimum wage a week or £338 a month (individual claims) or £541 a month (household claims).) and the College is satisfied that the learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.

### ***Learners in receipt of low wage***

The College may fully fund learners, who are employed and would normally be co-funded where:

- i. The learner is eligible for co-funding, and
- ii. Earns less than £15,736.50 annual gross salary

The College will need to see evidence of gross annual wages.

## ***Full Level 2***

Level 2 is the level of attainment which, is demonstrated by:

- i. a General Certificate of Secondary Education in five subjects, each at grade C or above, or grade 4 or above, or
- ii. Technical Certificate at Level 2 which meets the requirements for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 16 to 19 performance tables

If a learner aged 19 to 23 has achieved a Level 2 qualification, that was, at the time they started, or still is, classed as a full Level 2, then any subsequent Level 2 qualifications will be co-funded.

If the National Academic Recognition Information Centre has confirmed the authenticity of a qualification gained overseas and confirmed it is comparable/compatible with a regulated qualification in England, currently part of the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement, the individual will be deemed to have achieved their first level 2 and/or level 3 qualification.

## ***Full Level 3***

Level 3 is the level of attainment which is demonstrated by:

- i. a General Certificate of Education at the advanced level in two subjects, or
- ii. a General Certificate of Education at the AS level in four subjects, or
- iii. a QAA Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma at Level 3, or
- iv. a Tech level; or applied general qualification at Level 3 which meets the requirements for the 2018 16 to 19 performance tables

If a learner aged 19 to 23 has achieved a Level 3 qualification, that was, at the time they started, or still is, classed as a full Level 3, and wants to enrol on any subsequent Level 3 qualification, of any size, they will have to either apply for an advanced learner loan or pay for their own learning.

When a learner starts an AS Level qualification and intends to continue through to a full A Level in the same subject, the funding of both the AS and A Levels will be treated as if they were a single qualification. This must be set out in their learning agreement and the learning must be in consecutive funding years.

## ***Eligible qualifications***

Where the College delivers regulated qualifications and/or their components they must be eligible for AEB funding and available on the Hub.

Certain qualifications that meet statutory employer requirements or a licence to practice are eligible for unemployed learners that meet the set criteria.



***Provision not funded by the ESFA***

The ESFA will not fund any learning aim delivered at an employee's workplace and relevant to either their job or their employer's business, unless:

- i. the learner has an entitlement to full funding with regard to English and maths, or
- ii. the SSFA has confirmed a national level concession that responds to a significant negative economic impact for a specific industry

The SSFA will not fund any work placement or work experience, unless it is delivered as part of a traineeship, or the Prince's Trust programme.

The SSFA will not fund, outside of apprenticeship standards, end-point assessment which is subject to Ofqual external quality assurance and, regulated as a qualification.

## **INSTALMENT PAYMENT PLAN FOR TUITION FEES**

We expect all learners to pay their fees at the point of enrolment. In exceptional circumstances, learners may apply to pay by instalments as outlined below. Any learner who has a bad payment record, or who has a current debt to the College, will not be eligible for payment by instalments.

The College will not allow payment by instalments to any learner for tuition fees less than £500 chargeable in any one year. For the sake of clarification, a two-year course, for example, with fees of £250 payable in each year (£500 in total) would not be eligible for payment by instalments but would be payable at the point of enrolment for each year.

The College will offer payment by instalments to any learner for tuition fees of £500 or more on the following basis only:

1. The fee will be paid in two or three instalments for a two or three term course respectively. The initial payment of any staged payment is due at the point of enrolment, with the second instalment being payable at the end of the autumn term for a two term course and the second and third instalments being payable at the end of the autumn term and spring term respectively for a three term course. For roll-on roll-off courses, a schedule of instalment payment dates is held by the Finance Office.
2. The instalment will be paid either:
  - in cash, cheque or Master / Visa card or
  - by direct debit for each of the two/three terms, the dates of which will be the end of the relevant previous term.
3. If a learner fails to pay for any term, he/she will be excluded from any further tuition and from the use of any College facilities, and will not be eligible to sit any relevant exams until such time as all overdue fees have been paid in full.
4. Any default in payment will be pursued by the College using all legal avenues available to it.
5. If any fees are paid late, there will be a charge of £12.

### **Notes:**

The instalment payment start point is set at £500 for 2019/20 and is based on the ESFA's requirement for colleges to charge a tuition fee of 50.0% of the National Base Rate. In subsequent years the start point will be adjusted for changes in the Retail Prices Index plus any increase in the ESFA's assumed fee payable by learners.

Payment terms in relation to employers Work Based Learning fees are subject to the College's normal credit terms of 30 days. Longer credit may be negotiated, in exceptional circumstances, on the approval of the Vice Principal - Finance and Resources.

## **FEES REFUND POLICY**

1. The College will fully refund a learner if the course on which they have enrolled is withdrawn by the College for whatever reason.
2. The College will not give a refund if a learner withdraws from the course on which he/she has enrolled, if the withdrawal is less than 7 days before the start of the course. The exam fee may in certain circumstances be refunded, see 6 below.
3. The learner will be encouraged to enrol on a more suitable course if the reason for withdrawal is the unsuitability of the original course, despite appropriate advice and guidance by the College. In this case, provided the transfer is made within the year, any fees already paid for the original course will count towards the fee payable for the new course. If the fees for the new course are higher, the learner will be required to pay the extra; if lower, the learner will receive a refund.
4. Refunds of the course fees if a learner is not satisfied with the quality of a course will only be considered after completion of an investigation, which upholds the learner's complaint, as part of the College's complaints procedure. Refunds will not normally be entertained if a small number of classes have been cancelled during a course if suitable arrangements have been made to maintain the required level of study.
5. Registration fees are non-refundable.
6. Examination fees are non-refundable unless payment has not been made by the College to the examining body, or the fees have been refunded by the examining body.
7. Residential and materials fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances.
8. Any student, who pays their fees at enrolment and subsequently qualifies for fee remission, will be given a full refund.
9. Administration charges in respect of refunds will apply.