South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Higher Education
Financial Assistance Policy
2023-24

Prepared by:	Jo Kear
Job Title/Role:	Director of Higher Education
Ref. No: **Q/P 227**	**Date of this version:** 1st September 2023 **Review date:** 1st September 2024 (Subject to any legislative changes) **Upload to College website?** Yes **Upload to e-Campus?** Yes
Approved by:	SLT
Date of Approval:	21st July 2023

MANDATORY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENING	
I have read the guidance document: Completing a Policy Impact Assessment?	✓
If this policy raises equality, diversity or inclusion concerns, the Inclusion Committee has been consulted?	✓
If this policy raises environmental or sustainability issues, the Estates Team have been consulted?	✓
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick to confirm that the initial impact screening has also been reviewed:	✓

Please list each College Strategic Priority that this policy is designed to address/implement:	

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
Characteristic	**This policy seeks to:**
Age	Supports staff and learners to recognise abd challenge discrimination on the grounds of age
Disability	Treat with equal dignity, all learners and staff; and monitor participation, performance and progress of learners and staff with disabilities and act to address inequalities.
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact
Gender	No appreciable impact
Race or Ethnicity	Provide opportunities for the advancement of persons of minority race or ethnicity
Orientation	No appreciable impact
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact
Economic disadvantage	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of social and economic factors. Supporting learners and staff, both academically and pastorally in order for all to be successful
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact
Marriage	No appreciable impact
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact
Carers & care leavers	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of being in care or a care leaver. Supporting learners both academically and pastorally in order to be successful.
Vulnerable persons	Use available resources to identify and address any issues of inequality as a result of being a vulnerable person. Supporting learners both academically and pastorally in order to be successful.
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	Section 3
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:	Section 3
Is there any possibility that this policy could operate in a discriminatory way? ☐ ✗	If you have ticked yes (red), which characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item.
If yes please confirm that the Policy has been sent for a full Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and note the date: ☐	Click or tap to enter a date.

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS	
Which United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right does this policy most protect:	Art. 28 Right to education Choose an item. Choose an item.
Which Human Right (HRA) does this policy most protect:	Art. 6 Right to a fair trial Choose an item.

DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING	
Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will not result in the collection, storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	✓
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	☐

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT		
Does this policy relate directly or indirectly to any legal, regulatory environmental or sustainability standard(s)?	Yes ☐	No ☒
If so, please list them:		
Will any aspects of this policy result in:		
Reduced miles travelled or provide / improve / promote alternatives to car based transport (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling car sharing, the use of low emission vehicles, community transport, environmentally friendly fuels and/or technologies)	Yes ✓	No ☐
Reduced waste, environmental hazards and/or toxic materials for example by reducing PVC, photocopier and printer use, air pollution, noise pollution, mining or deforestation? Or increase the amount of College waste that is recycled or composted?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Reduced water consumption?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Reduced instances of single use plastic?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Reduced use of natural resources such as raw materials and energy to promote a circular economy?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Improved resource efficiency of new or refurbished buildings (water, energy, density, use of existing buildings, designing for a longer lifespan)?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Will this policy improve green space or access to green space?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target an improved environment:		

Will any aspects of this policy result in:		
The promotion of healthy working lives (including health and safety at work, work-life/home-life balance and family friendly practices)?	Yes ✓	No ☐
Greater employment opportunities for local people?	Yes ✓	No ☐
The promotion of ethical purchasing of goods or services for example by increasing transparency of modern slavery in our supply chain?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Greater support for the local economy through the use of local suppliers, SMEs or engagement with third sector or community groups?	Yes ✓	No ☐
The promotion of better health, increased community resilience, social cohesion, reduced social isolation or support for sustainable development?	Yes ✓	No ☐
Mitigation of the likely effects of climate change (e.g. identifying proactive and community support for vulnerable groups; contingency planning for flood/snow, heatwaves and other weather extremes)?	Yes ☐	No ☒
The promotion of better awareness of sustainability, healthy behaviours, mental wellbeing, living independently or self-management?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target improved sustainability:		

What is the *estimated* carbon impact of this policy (in terms of tCO2e)	Increased (+tCO2e) ☐	Decreased (-tCO2e) ☐	Net Zero CO2 ☐

Mandatory initial impact screening completed by:	Jo Kear
Date	01/08/2023
Initial impact screening supported by (Please list each individual)	

Financial Assistance
Policy & Procedure 2023-2024

1. Policy Intent

1.1.   South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS) recognises that the availability of a Financial Assistance Fund may be important to supporting students to remain in education and continue with their studies; positively impacting upon their educational, social and personal development and enabling personal and social mobility.

1.2.   The Financial Assistance Fund is intended to enable students to have access to funds to support, when appropriate, their living expenses, travel costs and to fund, in whole or part, the cost of essential learning equipment (this list is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive).

2. Scope

2.1.   The Financial Assistance Fund is available to Higher Education students who are enrolled on their Higher Education programme with SGS between September 2023 and September 2024.

2.2.   Students must enrol onto a regulated full-time or part-time 25% FTE Higher Education programme (on part-time programme pathways pro-rota rates apply).

2.3.   Students must have a UK bank account. Under no circumstances will the Financial Assistance be issued to a third party or paid in cash.

2.4.   Students must be able to produce financial evidence to support their application to the Financial Assistance Fund; this evidence should include the last three months' worth of their bank and savings statements. Payments of over £100 may require further explanation.

2.5.   Students must evidence attendance of at least 80% or above or be able to evidence valid extenuating circumstances to explain any non-attendance which must be supported by extenuating circumstances documentation.

3. Procedures

3.1.   Students who are experiencing financial difficulties need to complete the Financial Assistance Application Form and return the completed form to hefinancialassistance@sgscol.ac.uk.

3.2.   The Higher Education Coordinator will arrange a meeting via Microsoft Teams or in person to go through financial evidence to support your application.

3.3.   Applications are assessed on an individual basis by an internal panel comprised of the Head of Higher Education Student Recruitment and Experience, the Head of Admissions, Data and Insight and the Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager, using strict eligibility criteria.

3.4. This fund is for emergency use only and is open to all Higher Education students, although this fund is limited.

The Financial Assistance Fund is available for two applications per academic year (one calendar month apart).

The maximum payment per academic year is £600 (on part-time programme pathways pro-rota rates apply).

3.5. If an application is successful, the Higher Education Coordinator will write to your college email notifying you.

3.6. The Higher Education Coordinator will raise a request for the Director of Higher Education to authorise payment. All payments will be made via BACs within five working days.

3.7. If an application is unsuccessful, students may appeal against decisions by contacting the College Principal. The decisions of the Principal are final and binding.

3.8. Financial Assistance funds are non-repayable.

4. Policy Implementation

4.1. The Higher Education Coordinator is responsible for implementation of the Financial Assistance policy working alongside the internal panel consisting of the Head of Higher Education Student Recruitment and Experience, the Head of Admissions, Data and Insight and the Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager.

4.2. A BACs payment will be raised by the Higher Education Coordinator and payment will be issued by the SGS Finance Department.

5. Enforcement

5.1. Students who receive support from the Financial Assistance Fund, must be fully committed to completing their programme. If for any reason this does not occur, then the student may be required to repay any funds paid to them from the Financial Assistance Fund.

5.2. The College will terminate the award of a Financial Assistance Fund for any student who ceases to be an enrolled student of SGS, for whatever reason. Students may be required to repay any payment made within that term as a result of withdrawing.

6. Related Policies, Procedures, Charters, Plans, Guidance and Legislation

6.1. SGS College Access & Participation Plan.

6.2. Higher Education Attendance & Engagement Policy

6.3.   Higher Education Student Code of Conduct

6.4.   SGS Inclusion Policy

6.5.   SGS Financial Regulations

7. <u>Impact</u>

7.1.   The Financial Assistance Fund is to enable our Higher Education students to access financial support to sustain their progress on their programmes and enable them to reach their potential. The financial support is not intended to provide financial benefit or advantage.