

**Southport Education Group**

**FE Fees Policy 2025-26**

## **TUITION FEES**

### **1 PURPOSE**

1.1 Fees are set to ensure that when public funding is taken into account, the College is able to at least cover the full costs of each programme of study.

1.2 The Corporation is committed to a transparent fee structure that informs individuals and companies about the costs of study and examinations and also any exemptions to payment of fees.

### **2 SCOPE**

2.1 Southport Education Group charges tuition fees in the following categories:

- Department for Education (DFE) co-funded courses
- Learners aged over 19 starting on Level 3 and above (unless studying their first level 3 legal entitled course or Free Courses for Jobs Offer)
- Learners Under 16 (fee charged to institution responsible for student)
- Apprenticeships (no charge to apprentices, charge to employers)
- Full cost/commercial courses

### **3 DETAILS OF POLICY**

3.1 To operate at all times in line with the guidance supplied by the relevant funding bodies eg. to waive tuition and initial examination fees to all learners funded by the DFE aged between 16-18 years of age who are following full or part-time courses including maths and English.

3.2 To ensure that the learner is aware of the full annual and total cost of the course on enrolment. This will include tuition, materials, examination, registration and any relevant costs such as residentials. Costs for trips, visits or other optional expenditure will be levied directly at the relevant point in the course when the student would be expected to pay for them.

3.3 No change to the policy is to disadvantage any individual learner part way through an agreed programme of study, eg. where a DFE funded course is for a period of two years, the tuition element of the fee in the second year will not increase from that in the first year (inflation excepted) provided that the nature of the course has not materially altered.

3.4 To provide facilities for staged payment through direct debit arrangements where the total cost is in excess of £150. The number of instalments is to be determined by the duration of the course, in that the final instalment will be made three months before the expected course end date.

3.5 To realise for the Corporation a fee income in pursuit of corporate objectives.

3.6 To ensure that fee levels are linked with the College policy on learner financial support/hardship.

3.7 To set fee levels that are market related in line with the College's mission and values.

3.8 Learners are ultimately liable for the payment of their tuition fees, whether invoiced or not, including where sponsorship agreements have been approved. The College will seek to recover fees directly from learners, where payment from other approved sources is not forthcoming.

3.9 The College reserves the right to pursue defaulters through the courts if deemed necessary and, where applicable, seek to recover any costs thus incurred.

3.10 No element of the policy is to change more than once a year except where significant changes in Government policy will impact on the delivery of a programme of study.

#### **4 FEE PRINCIPLES**

By category of learner

Category of learner    Fee (including exam/EPA fees)    Materials, educational visits or other fees such as PPE

14 – 15 year olds - By individual arrangement. Charged at course level

16 – 18 year olds - Free. Charged at course level for optional additional activities

FE 19+ learners who are fully funded - Free. Charged at course level for optional additional activities

FE 19+ learners who are co-funded\* 50% of published unweighted rate as per Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS) rate. Charged at course level for optional additional activities

FE learners who are funded via loans\* 100% of published weighted rate as per Learning Aims Reference Service (LARS) rate. Charged at course level for optional additional activities

Apprentices - No charge to apprentices. The total apprenticeship training and assessment charge is agreed with employers in advance via the apprenticeship service. For non-levy employers 5% of the agreed training and assessment charged. 19+ professional body fees (e.g. AAT) to be paid by the learner

Full cost/commercial courses Fees charged – paid in full by the learner Charged at course level

Tailored Learning Fees charged – paid in full by the learner. Charged at course level

\* The College reserves the right to discount or reduce these fees, which will be authorised by the Vice Principal Finance

## **5 PAYMENT OF FEES, INCLUDING TUITION, MATERIALS AND OTHER FEES**

5.1 All fees payable to the College will be due at enrolment.

5.2 Course Fees can be paid in one of the following ways:

5.2.1 During main enrolment fees can be paid by:

(i) bank card (to the enrolment team)

(ii) electronically via bank transfer

5.2.2 After main enrolment, fees can only be paid by bank card, or electronically via bank transfer.

5.2.3 No cash or cheques will be taken after main enrolment, except very exceptionally and as approved by the Director of Finance.

5.2.4 Invoice to employer – a letter from the employer must be provided at enrolment which must be supplied on company letterhead with a Purchase Order Number.

5.2.5 Instalments – provided that a direct debit is in place and a 20% deposit is paid on enrolment. For those applying for Advanced Learner Loans, a £500 refundable deposit is required if loan is not already in place before the start of the course.

5.2.6 Instalment plans are not available to overseas learners except for homestay

5.2.7 The final instalment is to be made three months prior to the completion of the course.

5.2.8 Learners must not have an outstanding balance from previous years or have previously defaulted on payment arrangements.

5.2.9 Learners who withdraw from their programme remain liable for full fees until they formally withdraw and will be charged as described in Section 6.

5.2.10 Instalments will be collected starting at enrolment. Any payments that are unsuccessful on the prescribed date of collection will still be collected, following a notice period of seven days from the original scheduled date. Where the College is unable to collect payment, the learner may be asked to leave their programme of study but will remain liable for payment of any outstanding fees.

5.2.11 Instalment plans outside the above terms must be approved by the Director of Finance.

5.3 Places on a course are not confirmed until payment has been received.

## **6 WITHDRAWALS AND REFUNDS**

6.1 If the College cancels a course then a full refund will be given and no administration fee will be charged.

6.2 Students will be compensated for any expenditure they may have incurred prior to the course being cancelled by the College including any travel, accommodation or maintenance costs and any costs that may be incurred where a student is transferred to another provider or course. Such claims must be substantiated by evidence of the costs.

6.3 All other requests for refunds must be made in writing to the Director of Finance. All refunds are made at the discretion of the Director of Finance.

6.4 Refunds are normally only made in the first term and if a student does not attend because of, or withdraws due to, exceptional circumstances, eg. certified prolonged sickness. Evidence of entitlement to a refund may be requested.

6.5 As noted in Section 6.4, in cases of sickness in the first term, a full refund may be given less any examination or registration fees incurred by the College. In any other circumstances, a minimum non-refundable fee charge of £75 plus any examination and registration fees incurred by the College will be payable.

6.6 If a student is withdrawing due to dissatisfaction with the course provision or any other aspect of the College, the complaint will be passed on to the Complaints Manager who will investigate in conjunction with current Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy and Procedure and advise Finance on the level of refund to be given.

6.7 Each withdrawal is subject to the completion of a withdrawal checklist, encompassing measures to support students to continue studying wherever possible. This is approved by the relevant member of the Senior Management Team being passed for processing. All students remain liable for the full fees if they do not attend, withdraw or in the event of non-payment of invoice from their sponsor or loan unless there are exceptional circumstances (eg. certified prolonged sickness, for which evidence may be requested). Fee adjustments not covered in 3.3 above or exceptional circumstances also fall under Financial Regulation 3.6.6 and 3.6.7. The Principal & CEO shall be required to authorise debt write off where the sum exceeds £5,000 but does not exceed £15,000, having received a report from the Director of Finance.

6.10 Refunds in respect of the above must be authorised by the Director of Finance.

## **7 EXAM AND EPA RESIT FEES**

7.1 Each case will be reviewed on its own merits.

7.2 EPA resit fees will be payable by the employer.

## **8 CHANGE IN MODE OF STUDY**

8.1 If a learner decides to change their course or mode of study (for example from part-time to full-time), their fees will be reviewed and they may be required to pay a different fee. The College is obliged to report changes to external agencies, for example the Home Office for learners on student study visas, partner universities and the Learner Loans Company. These external agencies have their own regulations which may limit the changes that can be made. This may include changes to:

- (a) Course
- (b) Mode of attendance
- (c) Length of study – increased by repeat years of study
- (d) Withdrawals, terminations, and exclusions

## **9 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

9.1 Learners who consider this policy has not been correctly applied or who have a concern about the accuracy of the fee they are being charged, may bring an appeal under the College's Complaints Procedure.

## **10 REVIEW OF FEE POLICY AND CHARGES**

10.1 The College will review the Fees Policy annually.

## Appendix 1

### Learners Under 16

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 The College currently aims to base fees for under-16s on what would have been around the Department for Education (DFE) LA national rate had the learner been eligible for DFE funding.

#### 2 Formulation of Cost

2.1 The rates that the College intends to charge schools for learners studying at the College are as follows:

- £90 per hour for group classroom activities.
- £7 per hour for part time Infill Rate.
- £3,932 per student per annum for full time Infill Rate where the programme GLH upon which the learner is enrolled are greater than 485 GLH.

2.2 If learners leave part way through the year then the school/sponsoring body is responsible for continuing to pay the fees for that student to the end of the relevant course of learning. If a learner leaves during the first term, then with the course leader's agreement it may be possible to substitute a new learner.

2.3 Transport and additional learning support are all to be paid over and above the tuition fee from the organisation that sends the learner.