

Dear Parent/Carer

Subject: Money Matters – Course Costs and Financial Support

Some courses at Varndean Sixth Form College involve additional costs to support students' learning. These costs vary by subject and may include textbooks, small resources, educational visits or specialist materials.

We work hard to keep costs as low as possible. We also offer financial support to eligible students and families who may be experiencing financial hardship.

A full course-costs document is available on our website.

There are three types of course-related costs:

1. Smaller subject-based costs

Some departments may recommend students to purchase a specific textbook, piece of equipment or small resource.

These costs are managed by individual departments. Departments will provide students and families with information about any required or recommended items, including details of what needs to be purchased and how much it will cost.

2. Trips and educational visits

Some courses include educational visits. Depending on the course and the nature of the visit, trips may be either:

- Compulsory, because they form part of the course.
- Optional, because they provide additional enrichment or learning opportunities.

The trip leader will write separately to students, parents and carers before each visit. This communication will include the relevant trip details, whether attendance is compulsory or optional, the cost and the payment arrangements.

3. Specialist materials fees

Some courses require students to pay an additional materials fee. These charges apply where students need substantial or specialist materials to complete their course, particularly where they retain the finished work or materials.

The confirmed specialist materials fees for the 2026/27 academic year are listed below.

A Level Art | £200 |
A Level Drama and Theatre Studies | £20 |
A Level Graphic Design | £70 |
A Level Photography | £200 |
A Level Textiles | £200 |
A Level 3D Design | £200 |
BTEC Performing Arts Level 3 | £25 |
CTEC Creative Media: Film Production Level 2 | £25 |
CTEC Film Production Level 3 | £40 |
Education and Early Years T Level 3 | £96 |
GCSE Graphic Design – one-year course | £75 |
GCSE Photography – one-year course | £100 |

The list above covers standard specialist materials fees only. It does not include small subject-based costs or the costs of trips and educational visits, which will be communicated separately where applicable.

Payment and deadlines

Please pay all confirmed specialist materials fees by **Friday 2 October 2026**.

Payments can be made through either the Parent Portal or the Student Portal, details of which will be provided to you after enrolment. Alternatively, you can pay by telephone on **01273 508011**.

If you would like to pay in installments, please contact the Finance Team as soon as possible to discuss the available arrangements.

Financial support

Means-tested financial support may be available through:

- The Discretionary Learning Grant (DLG).
- Free College Meals.

We encourage families to apply as early as possible through our [website](#) or by emailing financialsupport@varndean.ac.uk.

College Fund contribution

The College Fund supports enrichment activities that are not covered by government funding, including sports, music and special-interest clubs.

We ask families to consider making a voluntary contribution of £40. UK taxpayers may be able to increase the value of their contribution by 25% through Gift Aid, subject to eligibility.

If you have any questions or concerns about course costs or financial support, please contact the Finance Team at financedept@varndean.ac.uk or on **01273 508011**.

We are here to support every student's success, both academically and financially.

Kind regards

The Finance Team
Varndean Sixth Form College