

Sixth Form - Bursary

DRAFTED BY:	SFI	STATUS:	
APPROVED:		GOV. PANEL:	
ISSUE:		NEXT REVIEW:	

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1. Background

1.1. A key priority for the Government is to close the gap in attainment between those from less fortunate and more affluent backgrounds. In addition, Government also want to ensure that every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16 to 19 education or training. The Department for Education [DfE] established the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2011. The aim of the Fund is to help 16-to-19 year old students continue in education where they might struggle for financial reasons. It enables students to access additional funds to support:

- learning
- participation in activities to enrich their learning experience
- pursue applications to Higher Education.

1.2. Five percent of the Bursary allocation is retained by the school for administrative purposes in line with ESFA guidance. The named contact at the school for all 16-19 Bursary support/enquiries is the Sixth Form Support Officer.

2. Bursaries Available

There are three types of Bursary available:

2.1. DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

There is no limit to how much a Discretionary Bursary can be as long as an institution stays within its budget [ESFA]. The take up of Free School Meals does not reflect the need in the school and when students enter the Sixth Form many more apply and are eligible for the Bursary than actually claim Free School Meals. Put simply, a large number of students claim a relatively small Bursary Fund. The school receives a fixed allocation from the Government to distribute to its students and cannot apply for more funding.

2.2. VULNERABLE BURSARY

£1,200 per successful application.

2.3. HARDSHIP BURSARY

The school allocates approximately 20% of the 16-19 Bursary Fund to a Hardship Contingency Fund, to respond to exceptional or circumstantial in-year changes. A Review takes place towards the end of the Spring Term to distribute any remaining funds to eligible young people.

2.4. Applications to the 2024-25 16-19 Bursary Fund are only for students aged 16, 17 or 18 at 31 August 2024 and meet the residency criteria in the ESFA Funding regulations for post 16 Provisions. They are not open to young people aged under 16 or over 19 at 31 August 2023. Our eligibility criteria comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We will not discriminate against students, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of their protected characteristics.'

2.5. Students receiving any of the above Bursaries will also be able to claim for additional assistance if they are taking part in certain courses with high expenditure such as Art and Geography.

3. Criteria To Claim Discretionary Bursary

The school uses household income that is below £26,500 as its main eligibility condition. However, the following are also taken into account:

- some students from low-income households get more support depending on their needs such as bus or train passes, money for educational visits, money towards exam re-sits and contributions to the costs of university open days and interviews.
- wider family circumstances, including whether the student is from a single parent family or where the student is a career, or where there are a lot of other children in the family.
- eligibility for free school meals - students are not automatically entitled to a bursary, but it is a good indicator of family income.
- We allow Universal Credit award notice, a P60, or 3-6 months' worth of bank statements as evidence. The date range for applying this year will be the 2022-23 financial year beginning in April 2022 and ending in March 2023.

4. Criteria to Claim the Vulnerable Bursary

- 4.1. Young people in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.
- 4.2. Young care leavers.
- 4.3. Young people receiving Income Support or the equivalent Universal Credit [UC] in their own right.
- 4.4. Young people getting both Disability Living Allowance [or the new Personal Independence Payments] and Employment Support Allowance [ESA] [or Universal Credit as a replacement for ESA] in their own right.
- 4.5. Exceptional family circumstances.

5. Criteria to Claim Hardship Bursary

Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to exceptional reason or circumstance change can apply to access the contingency funds on an individual basis by submitting a written application.

6. Evidence Required to Claim The Bursary

- 6.1.** All written applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence shall be retained by the school to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential and destroyed within one year of the young person leaving the school. Information will also be processed in-line with updated General Data Protection Regulation 2018 [GDPR regulations] to ensure the privacy of your information at all times.
- 6.2.** Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Discretionary Bursary are:
- A full T602E Tax Credit Award Notice [TCAN] for the young person's household. This document from HM Revenue & Customs details entitlement to Universal Tax Credits and shows the total income for the year. This should be for the period April 2023 to March 2024.
 - Other Income Support or Universal Credit award letters that show evidence of income.
 - P60 End of Year Certificate for all adults in the young person's household who contribute to household costs. This certificate is a statement of earnings from an employer. It must be for the correct adult(s) and for the correct Tax Year [to 5 April 2024]. The income will be shown as 'Total for the Year'.
 - Payslips from the previous three months.
 - Self-Assessment Tax Calculation [SA302]. This is the equivalent of the P60 for self-employed people. It must be for the correct adult(s) and for the correct Tax Year [to 5 April 2024]. The income will be shown as Total for the Year.
 - Evidence of other benefits, pension awards, etc.
 - Confirmation from the Local Authority of entitlement to Free School Meals [FSM].
 - Confirmation of Universal Credit. This can be printed out from the online service.
- 6.3.** Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Vulnerable Bursary are:
- Statement from the Local Authority confirming the young person's current or previous looked after status.
 - Recent entitlement or award statement setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled, and confirming that the recipient can be in further education or training.
- 6.4.** Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Hardship Bursary are:
- Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to exceptional reason or circumstance change can apply to access the contingency funds on an individual basis by submitting an application in writing.
- 6.5.** In order to ensure consistency across different types of benefits school may remove any benefits from household income in order to access applications in a fair and consistent manner

7. Application

- 7.1.** Applications for a Bursary must be made using the online portal available via [this link](#) and should be submitted by the end of October. Applications made after this date will be considered provided sufficient funds are available. However, once the Bursary Fund has been depleted, it will not be possible to consider further applications.
- 7.2.** To ensure that parents/carers can access the bursary fund application form, Applicaa provide a 'How to Apply using Bursary 16+' handout. You can [view this document online](#).
- 7.3.** Learning Coordinator support will be available to assist any young person in making an application where they are unable to do so due to a level of learning difficulty and/or disability.
- 7.4.** Consideration will be given to assisting any young person in making an application where they are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from their parent/carer(s).

8. Process

- 8.1.** The 16-19 Bursary Application Panel that assesses all applications for a Bursary, comprises of:
- One Assistant Headteacher i/c of Post-16 education / Head of Sixth Form
 - One Post-16 Learning Coordinator / Deputy Head of Sixth Form
 - One Sixth Form Support Officer

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- One member of the Finance team

8.2. The panel will review the application, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence. Young people will be notified of the outcome by mid-November for initial applications and within two weeks of receipt for any subsequent applications.

8.3. Once students' applications have been accepted, they will receive an email confirmation from the Finance team. Then, they need to place orders through the 16-19 bursary online portal (Applica) link available via the school website

9. Qualifying Condition Requirements

9.1. Eligible young people will need to complete a qualifying learning period of six weeks before they are able to receive Bursary payments. However, any eligible young person can make an application ahead of the six-week qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship, consideration will also be given for payment in advance of the six-week period.

9.2. All young people in receipt of a Bursary must meet weekly punctuality and attendance requirements of 95% to ensure continued support. In addition, all young people in receipt of a Bursary must behave appropriately and submit work of an appropriate level as well as to required deadlines. If the young person does not meet these conditions, the School reserves the right to withdraw or suspend Bursary payments.

9.3. Students in receipt of a Bursary are expected to attend Private Study lessons in the Sixth Form Centre in the event of teacher absence. This will ensure that attendance figures are correct.

9.4. Students qualifying for a Bursary must have a current bank account into which the bursary must be paid. We are unable to pay any monies for the bursary into parents' accounts

9.5. Subject to meeting these conditional requirements, payments will be made via a bank account in the name of the young person. The young person must have a valid account in their name. We will not write a cheque in the parent's name unless there are exceptional reasons.

10. Payments

10.1. Students in one of the defined vulnerable groups may receive a payment of up to £1,200 for the academic year, payable in regular instalments. If IT/specialist equipment or bus passes are required, then the School will purchase this and the cost deducted from the student's overall award. Where a carer has responsibility for the young person's finances, meetings should be set up with them to decide how payments should be made. Additionally, all students who qualify for a Vulnerable Bursary will be offered financial budget training from the Deputy Head of Sixth Form and / or Welfare Manager to help ensure the young person's Bursary delivers the maximum benefit. The majority of discretionary bursary allocation payments will be 'in kind', based on their needs, which may include but are not limited to:

- Essential books and equipment
- Bus pass
- IT/specialist equipment such as for Art or Science
- School trips
- Clothing to meet the dress code of the Sixth Form in exceptional circumstances
- Travel to open days or university interviews.

10.2. Dependent upon individual circumstances, the Bursary Fund may pay the full cost or only a proportion, with the balance being paid by the student. Any student who is in receipt of Free School Meals will continue to be entitled to Free School Meals under the Bursary scheme. Where cash payments are being made to students, payments will be made directly to students via BACS transfer and receipts for all expenditure will need to be returned to the Sixth Form Team.

10.3. When orders are received the school needs to ensure that funds spent represent value for money. In doing so we ensure that the bursary fund can support those who need it. Therefore, we have produced guidelines that limit but no restrict spending on certain items.

REQUESTED ITEMS	MAX VALUE PER REQUEST	REQUESTS PER YEAR
Scientific Calculator	£30.00	1
Stationary	£20.00	3
School-branded sportswear		
(For sports courses)	£150.00	2
Suit (2 piece)	£150.00	2
Shirts	£20.00	3
Ties	£10.00	3
Course recommended textbooks	No limit	No limit

11. Declaration

Students and their families must be aware that if false or incomplete information is submitted, or if they do not tell institutions about any part of their income that is relevant, the matter may be referred to the Department for Education, the Department of Work and Pensions or the Police. The student could face prosecution and we will seek to recover any payments the student is not eligible for. [ESFA Bursary Fund Guide]

12. Appeals

If any young person or their parent/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application they should write to the Assistant Headteacher i/c of Sixth Form. Within their appeal the student should clearly outline the reasons for their appeal. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, then a complaint can be made through the School's published Complaints Procedure.

13. Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during processing, payment and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the young person and/or their parent/guardian/carer(s) will be told the reasons why this is necessary, prior to sharing any information further.

14. Change Of Young Person's Circumstances

14.1. FINANCIAL

Any young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform the School if their financial circumstances, or those of their parent/guardian/carer(s) change [e.g. increase in household income, Free School Meals being withdrawn for a sibling]. This does not automatically mean any future Bursary payments will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped and the funds redistributed.

14.2. TRANSFERRING

14.2.1. Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers out of the School to another education/training provider in-year, the School will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete the learning aims.

14.2.2. Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers in to the School from another education/training provider in-year, the School will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete the learning aims.

14.3. WITHDRAWING

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary withdraws from the School, and does not transfer to another education/training provider, Bursary payments made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled payments to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

15. Further Information and Working In Partnership

15.1. In addition to this Policy two documents will be used in the 16-19 Bursary process:

- Application Form
- ESFA Bursary Fund Guide 2024-25

15.2. Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found on the Education Funding Agency website: [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2024 to 2025 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year)

15.3. This policy will be shared on the school website; it is also summarised on posters and shared at open evenings/expectations evenings.

15.4. The policy is also signposted at enrolment events prior to joining the Sixth Form. Any young person who attends a pre-enrolment interview gets a card with brief information on the bursary and pointers directing them to the full information on the college's website. In addition, social workers who work with the most disadvantaged young people help the college to identify those who may be eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

15.5. The school will also work with local support services.

An appendix can be found on the next page.

16. Appendix 1 – Flowchart

