

# 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

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## **Preamble:**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is intended to offer targeted support to financially disadvantaged students in Y12 and Y13, in order to help them meet the costs of staying in education beyond the age of 16. Bursaries are available to students in defined vulnerable groups, as well as those facing the greatest financial barriers to participation.

There are three categories of bursary available. These are the: Vulnerable Student Bursary, Caring Responsibility Bursary and Discretionary Student Bursary. Each bursary is intended to support students in different contexts and has its own eligibility criteria and payment process, the details of which may be seen below.

## **Vulnerable Student Bursary:**

The Vulnerable Student Bursary is available to certain designated vulnerable groups, including those who are:

- Looked after (in care)
- Care leavers
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (this includes those receiving other benefits that are being replaced by Universal Credit. Full details may be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>)
- Disabled and in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments

The Vulnerable Student Bursary is set at a maximum total of £1,200.00 for each student per year if the course being studied lasts for a minimum of 30 weeks, or a proportional amount for courses lasting less than 30 weeks. This will be broken down into 10 regular payments of £50.00 made directly to the students, with all payments being made on the first day of the month, starting from 1 October. These payments are not intended to provide general support with living costs, but rather to assist with the essential costs of participating in education, such as travelling to and from school or purchasing essential learning resources.

If the student's overall attendance percentage for the academic year sits below 90% at the point the payment for a given month is being processed, the payment for that month will be reviewed and may be reduced by £10.00. However, individual context will be taken into account before any reduction is imposed. This may include issues such as:

- Bereavement
- Mental health concerns
- Serious illness or injury
- Illness or injury to a family member

In addition to these regular payments, students eligible for the Vulnerable Student Bursary are also entitled to apply for additional funds up to a maximum value of £700.00. These funds may be used to pay for specific educational expenses, such as textbooks and educational trips or visits. Any balance remaining from the £1,200.00 total at the end of the academic year will be retained by the school within the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The school is responsible for identifying students who are eligible for the Vulnerable Student Bursary. Evidence must be collected from the student at the start of each academic year and retained for audit, with due consideration being given to confidentiality. Appropriate evidence may include the following:

- A letter setting out the benefit to which the student is entitled, ideally confirming that the terms of their benefit entitlement allow them to participate in further education or training (institutions should be aware that there are circumstances in which a young person on benefit is prohibited from participating and should take steps to ensure this is not the case).
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

Where students are eligible for the Vulnerable Student Bursary, the school will apply for this as standard, rather than allowing individuals to make a choice to go onto the Discretionary Bursary instead.

### **Caring Responsibility Bursary:**

The Caring Responsibility Bursary is available to students who are registered as Young Carers.

The Caring Responsibility Bursary is set at a maximum total of £1,200.00 for each student per year. This will be broken down into 10 regular payments of £50.00 made directly to the students, with all payments being made on the first day of the month, starting from 1 October. These payments are not intended to provide general support with living costs, but rather to assist with the essential costs of participating in education, such as travelling to and from school or purchasing essential learning resources.

If the student's overall attendance percentage for the academic year sits below 90% at the point the payment for a given month is being processed, the payment for that month will be reviewed and may be reduced by £10.00. However, individual context will be taken into account before any reduction is imposed. This may include issues such as:

- Bereavement
- Mental health concerns
- Serious illness or injury
- Illness or injury to a family member

In addition to these regular payments, students eligible for the Caring Responsibility Bursary are also entitled to apply for additional funds up to a maximum value of £700.00. These funds may be used to pay for specific educational expenses, such as textbooks and educational trips or visits. Any balance remaining from the £1,200.00 total at the end of the academic year will be retained by the school within the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Students who are eligible for the Caring Responsibility Bursary will be responsible for identifying themselves. This may be done as part of the enrolment process prior to the start of Y12, when all students will have the opportunity to speak to the Finance Officer with their parents / carers. Students may also visit the Finance Officer or communicate with the Finance Officer using their

school email to make themselves known, seek advice or apply for the Caring Responsibility Bursary at any other point during term time. In order to receive the Caring Responsibility Bursary, students will need to provide evidence that they are registered as a carer.

Where students are eligible for the Caring Responsibility Bursary, the school will apply for this as standard, rather than allowing individuals to make a choice to go onto the Discretionary Bursary instead.

### **Discretionary Student Bursary:**

The Discretionary Student Bursary is available to any students experiencing significant financial hardship. Free School Meals (FSM) and Pupil Premium (PP) are the primary criteria used by the school to identify students who are eligible for the Discretionary Student Bursary.

When official notification of FSM eligibility is received from the local authority, the relevant students will automatically be approved for receipt of the Discretionary Student Bursary. If a student believes they may be eligible for FSM, but have not registered for this in the past, they must apply through their home borough. If they successfully register for FSM, bursary payments may be backdated.

Students who are not eligible for FSM or PP may still apply for the Discretionary Student Bursary if they are experiencing significant financial hardship. Students may do this by visiting the Finance Office and speaking to the Finance Officer, who will be able to supply them with the relevant application form. Students may be required to provide evidence of their financial hardship, which may include:

- Bank statements
- Wage slips
- Letters from parents / carers (explaining individual / family context)

All applications for the Discretionary Bursary Fund will be assessed by and will need approval from the Head of Sixth Form. Funds are limited and all applications will have to be considered in the light of available funds.

The Discretionary Student Bursary is not set at a fixed total for each student per year and no regular monthly payments will be made. Instead, those in receipt of the Discretionary Student Bursary may apply for one-off payments to cover either the full or partial cost of learning resources. These ad hoc payments may be claimed for expenses such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Textbooks
- Revision guides
- Essential stationery
- Specialist equipment
- Essential ICT resources / software
- Educational trips / visits
- Revision classes
- Canteen credit

In order to apply for a payment, students will need to visit the Finance Office and request the relevant form from the Finance Officer. Once completed, the form must be returned to the Finance Officer. The claim will then be assessed by the Head of Sixth Form. Students in receipt of the Discretionary Student Bursary may claim up to a maximum of £400.00 per year.

Where possible, students are encouraged to apply for payments to be made on their behalf by the school directly, rather than incurring the cost themselves and requesting reimbursement. Where students do make a purchase directly, it is possible that their request for reimbursement may be declined, either in full or in part, depending on what has been purchased, the overall cost of the purchase and the total amount claimed by the student thus far.

In addition to the claims made by individual students in receipt of the Discretionary Student Bursary, some funds may be used to run programmes that are beneficial to the group as a whole. The details of any such spending will be reported to the Finance & Resources sub-committee of the Governing Body, along with details of plans to manage any remaining balance accumulated over previous years.

**Payments:**

Payments for all categories of bursary will be paid by BACS. Students must have a bank account in their own name to receive payments. All payments will be processed by the Finance Officer.

**Appeals:**

There may be certain occasions where students wish to lodge an appeal against decisions made in relation to the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Examples of such situations may include the following:

- An application to the 16-19 Bursary Fund has been declined
- A deduction has been made to a monthly payment for a student in receipt of either the Vulnerable Student Bursary or the Caring Responsibility Bursary
- An ad hoc payment or reimbursement has been declined, either in full or in part, for a student in receipt of the Discretionary Student Bursary

All appeals should take the form of a letter addressed to the Headteacher that outlines the grievance. The Headteacher will consider all appeals and may contact the student in question, or their parents / carers, to seek clarification or additional details before reaching a final conclusion. The decision of the Headteacher in relation to all such appeals will be final.

**Official Guidance:**

An official guide to the 16-19 Bursary Fund for the year 2024-25 academic year may be found online at the following location:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year#:~:text=Students%20who%20meet%20the%20criteria,of%20their%20specific%20financial%20needs.>