16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

Approved by:	Mrs C Ellis – Gage Head Teacher	**Date:** January 2026
Signed:		
Next review:	January 2027	
To be reviewed by:	Mrs C Ellis – Gage Head Teacher	

Contents

1. Aims....4
2. Guidance....4
3. Definitions....4
4. Roles and responsibilities....4
5. How we use the bursary fund....5
6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries....5
7. Application and payment process....8
8. Change in circumstances....9
9. Monitoring arrangements....9

1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the type of support that is available and the means of applying for it
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

3. Definitions

- 'In care' is defined as: children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- 'Looked after child' is defined as: a child in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions for more than 24 hours (section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- 'Care leaver' is defined as:
- A young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16, or
- A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

The senior leadership team (SLT) will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the head teacher of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

We use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

- Transport
- Specialist equipment needed for a student to be able to access the curriculum or to develop their independence in life skills (including equipment recommended by an OT or physio)
- Educational visits that support the curriculum, residential visits and other course-related costs.

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed **in addition** to the individual student's actual financial needs. No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.

6.1 Age

To be eligible students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2023.

Students aged 19 or over must either:

- be continuing on a study programme that they began when they were aged 16 to 18-years-old, or
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

6.2 Eligible education provision

- Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also fall into 1 of these groups:
- Be funded directly by the ESFA or by the ESFA via a local authority;
- Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund;
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA's list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19; or
- Be a 16 to 19 traineeship programme
- Students are not eligible if:
- They are on an apprenticeship programme; or
- Are on any waged training

Students who are studying via distance learning are eligible for either 16 to 19 bursary, but are likely to require financial help on a more infrequent basis. If this is the case, we will discuss with them the support they may need.

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

6.4 Asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner, and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education but are not entitled to public funds. If necessary, they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials.

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:

- Are the responsibility of the local authority;
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need

When these students reach 18-years-old, we will consider their immigration status. They will still be eligible for a bursary as a student from a defined vulnerable group if the asylum claim is in their favour and will be treated as a 'care leaver' until they reach the upper age limit.

6.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the above age and residency criteria can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (NB: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after);
- Care leavers;
- Receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves, or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner; or
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary. Students will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (for example, because their financial needs are met from other sources and/or because they have no relevant costs).

Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on a particular student's needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

If a student's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year.

- We will obtain the following **proof of eligibility** for vulnerable groups:
  - For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority
  - For students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit, a copy of their Income Support or Universal Credit award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training
  - For students receiving UC/Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their UC claim from DWP (UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account) **and** evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

- In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

- Level of household income/ receipt of certain benefits
- Whether the student has additional needs that may mean they need extra help or will incur extra costs as a result of that need.

- To assess household income, we will ask to see:
  - Proof of benefits letters (for example Income Support, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, guarantee element of Pension Credit
  - Child tax credit award notifications
  - Universal Credit award notices

We will consider additional requests where families are not in receipt of the above benefits/tax credits on a case-by-case basis.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

7. Application and payment process

7.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by the end of October to make sure enough time is allocated to assess the overall level of demands and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. This date will be clearly stated on the application form. However, as students' circumstances may change, the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or via letter) whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

7.2 Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

Where possible we will pay for services or equipment needed directly as a school from the individual student's bursary allocation.

If this is not possible we will reimburse parents or the young person by a BACS transfer into their bank account once proof of the expenditure (receipts, etc) has been received. **Any money to be spent by students/parents/carers and reimbursed must be agreed in advance.**

7.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Payments of the bursary are conditional on students maintaining regular attendance and following the sixth-form code of conduct.

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld, but we will always take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness or other exceptional circumstances.

If you leave the school and do not plan to return your Bursary will stop from the date you leave.

All parents/carers are required to sign a declaration on behalf of the student confirming that they agree to these conditions.

We reserve the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

We will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so.

8. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/carers must notify the school without delay.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Head teacher and / or the Head of Pathways every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.