



16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Purpose

To provide the principles by which all young people in post-16 education across the Learn to Live Federation will have equality of access to financial support through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This guidance should be read in conjunction with national EFA Guidance (see useful links below).

It should be noted that Bursary Funding is not an automatic entitlement. The aims and ethos of the scheme are to remove financial barriers to staying in education. It should be used to meet the costs of staying in education and providing equipment which is **essential** to study. These may include the costs of transport, learning materials and equipment eg Chef's whites.

Funds do not form part of delegated school funding from the Local Authority, they are distributed to the schools from the Learner Support Service and the Education Funding Agency.

Types of Support Available

1. Vulnerable Bursary – A bursary for defined vulnerable groups of UP TO £1,200 a year. Students should be in Key Stage 5, aged over 16 but under 19. Students need to meet any of the following criteria:

- Young people in care,
- care leavers
- young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit 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
- young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit, in their own right, and also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, in their own right

The vulnerable Students' bursary is to help with transport, books and equipment, educational trips and other course-related costs. The bursary can also support towards costs incurred from attending college/job interviews and open days.

1. Discretionary Bursary – A bursary can be awarded to meet individual needs for students, for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, to buy essential books, specialist clothing and equipment to support students to stay engaged with education and training. Students in receipt of Free School Meals or with a household income of less than £25,000 per annum are eligible to apply for a discretionary bursary. In exceptional circumstances, a student who has been affected

by sudden exceptional changes to their financial circumstances may be eligible. Each year the school is allocated an amount of money by the government for discretionary bursaries.

Passing the eligibility threshold for either bursary does not guarantee funding. The individual circumstances of all applicants, the funding available and the nature of the funding request will be considered.

Evidence of Eligibility

Vulnerable Bursary – students must meet one of the following bullet points:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, we require written confirmation of the current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after the student or provides their leaving care services. 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 and live independently. We require 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 in receipt of Universal Credit, we must also see a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- for students receiving Universal Credit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their Universal Credit claim from the Department for Work and Pensions (UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment must also be provided.

Defining in care and care leavers

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' 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) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'

A '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.

Discretionary Bursary:

- Students in receipt of Free School Meals do not need to provide further financial information.
- If the student is not currently in receipt of Free School Meals, evidence that the household income falls below £25,000 per annum should be provided. Applications must be supported by evidence (photocopies accepted) to enable an assessment to be made. Examples of types of acceptable evidence include P60, evidence of income from self-employment, benefit entitlement/award letters, tax credit award notice.
- Student who has been affected by sudden exceptional changes to their financial circumstances.

A copy of the evidence submitted will be securely stored within school. This will be processed by the school and destroyed six years after the application has been dealt with, in accordance with statutory financial regulations. The school must be informed immediately of any changes to status otherwise money may have to be paid back to the school. All unsuccessful applications will be shredded after a period of six months from the date of the receipt.

Please note, by applying and receiving bursary funding, this will not affect the benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Personal Independence Payment and Housing Benefit.

Application

Families will be alerted to the existence of the 16-19 Bursary Fund as part of the review process in the year preceding their Post-16 education. The Children's Services Co-ordinator and class teacher will liaise with families to support them in the submission of any application.

Application forms will be available from the school office, the school website and will also be distributed to Post 16 students at the start of the academic year.

Application forms must be submitted with any accompanying evidence of eligibility as listed in this document. All potential new and existing 6th Form students will receive an application to complete in the last half-term of an academic year for the following year. Students experiencing a change of circumstances during the course of the academic year may apply at any time. Late arrivals/applicants will receive a proportion of the bursary in line with the remaining time on the course.

Allocation of bursaries

A panel made up of the Senior Leadership Team. They will meet in summer term each academic year to process applications received for the following academic year. They will meet ad-hoc throughout the year for in-year applications. Of the total annual budget allocation - 10% will be held back as contingency, 5% will be retained for administration purposes, the remainder will be allocated in-year.

Awards will be made according to the following criteria:

1. Meeting the eligibility
2. Nature of the application – priority will always be given to essential curricular requests
3. The finances available within the fund
4. Exceptional unforeseen circumstances which would affect the Student's ability to participate in their programme of study

Please note that meeting the criteria for a bursary does not automatically mean funding will be given. There is no guarantee of an award, you may receive a full, partial or no award based on the outcome of the panel assessment of your application.

Students need only apply to the Discretionary Bursary once each academic year. Students may reapply each academic year, should they continue to meet the eligibility.

In some cases, a student might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary but their financial needs are already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award.

For example:

- a student in the care of the local authority whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority and does not require assistance with travel.
- The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

In these circumstances, we can refuse the student's application. We will write to explain to the student and/or the student's parent carers the aim of bursary funding and why we are not awarding any bursary.

A report on the number of awards made and the total value will be provided each year to the Governors' CBT Committee.

The school will have administrative procedures that record bursary applications and awards (including number, value, purpose and whether awarded or not and brief justification) so that all EFA audit and reporting requirements are satisfied.

Payment methods

The payment method used both types of bursary will be via 'in kind' payments at the discretion of the school and will be arranged to best meet the individual Students' needs and circumstances. Payments direct to families will only be made in exceptional cases to reimburse expenditure where authorised pre-payments have been made – this is in line with the EFA guidance. Bursary awards will only be given to meet participation related costs and will not be granted for holiday or weekend activities.

Claims may be presented at any time for contributions towards trips or other expenditure as agreed on the application by the panel. All awarded bursaries must be spent in the allocated academic year. Bursaries cannot be carried over to the next academic year.

Equipment

All equipment purchased under both schemes should be returned to the school at the end of the period of study unless they are personal in nature such as clothing or specifically adapted equipment.

Decisions & Appeals

Applications will be heard by the Senior Leadership Team. Students and their families will receive information about their application by letter no later than one month following the application being made. All documentary evidence will also be copied and returned by this date. Copies to be held securely on file.

Appeals will be heard by the Governors CBT Committee. At no point in the process will the circumstances of other bursary awards be discussed for reasons of confidentiality. Appeals must be made within two weeks of notification of the award decision.

Complaints will be dealt with in line with normal school procedure.

Policy on Fraud: Any incidents of suspected fraud will be reported to the police.

Monitoring & Review

This policy has been approved by the governing body and will be reviewed annually or in the light of new guidance from the Department for Education or the Local Authority.

Useful Links

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year>
[16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022-academic-year)