



16-19 Bursary Fund Policy 2022-2023

Created By:	Mike Nelson 2016
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Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a scheme set up by the government to help the most vulnerable young people aged 16-19 continue in full time education. Its purpose is to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation, so that they can remain in education.

Categories of Bursary

There are two types of 16-19 bursary

- **Vulnerable Student Bursary** This is a guaranteed bursary of £1200 per year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- **Discretionary bursary** – this is awarded at the schools discretion based on individual needs to cover specific costs such as transport, books or equipment, and other course costs. The school offers two levels of financial support based on household income. The thresholds for determining eligibility to claim are detailed in the eligibility section below.

Eligibility

The basic eligibility requirements of the scheme which are applicable to both vulnerable and discretionary bursaries are

- **Age** - students must be over 16 and under 19 on 31 August. If a student turns 19 during their programme of study they can continue to receive the bursary to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.
- **Residency** – students must meet the residency criteria in the EFA funding regulations for post 16 provision. This document sets out the evidence required to confirm eligibility and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>

The young person must then also meet the eligibility criteria for the category of bursary they are applying for:

Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students must fall into one of the categories below to be eligible for a vulnerable student bursary

- Young people in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Care leavers
- Young people personally in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled young people in receipt of both the Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (or the new Personal independence Payments)

The allocation of these funds is subject to audit so the School will require evidence that the application is genuine. The School will retain copies of evidence for a period of 6 years. All information will be treated in confidence.

Appropriate evidence includes

- A letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled, confirming that the terms of the benefit allow them to participate in further education.
- Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

Discretionary Student Bursary

Where a student does not meet the vulnerable student criteria, he or she may still be eligible for some support from the Discretionary Fund. The school has set two tiers of support based on household income

- **Tier A** – Students entitled to free school meals and students whose household income is less than £16,190. Where students are applying under the free school meal criteria, the School will need to be satisfied that the application is genuine following the standard procedures that are currently in operation for FSM application. *(Students claiming in this category will not normally be eligible to claim bursary funding for meals as they will be entitled to receive a free school meal at school).*

Where students are applying under the household income criteria the School will require the following evidence:

- A copy of entitlement to means – tested state benefit or Tax Credit Award Notice confirming household income of less than £16,190.
 - Universal Credit – your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
 - Evidence of total household income (including earned and unearned) of less than £16,190.
- **Tier B** – where there is a surplus of funds after the allocation to students in tier A, students whose household income is less than £25,000, may apply for a lower level of support.

The following evidence will be required for students in this group:

- A copy of entitlement to means – tested state benefit or Tax Credit Award Notice confirming household income of less than £25,000.
- Evidence of total household income (including earned and unearned) of less than £25,000.

Students will be required to inform the school of any changes in their financial circumstances which may affect their eligibility for bursary funding.

Allocation of Funds

Vulnerable Student Bursary

The funding for the vulnerable student bursaries is held centrally by the Student Bursary Support Service. Whenever a new student meeting the criteria is identified the School must draw the funding down by completing and submitting a claim form via the SBSS online portal.

Discretionary Bursary

- 5% of the fund will be held back for administration.
- 10% of the fund will be held back for applicants who join later on in the year or whose personal circumstances change. Students applying under Tier A will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on their actual financial need.
- If there is still money in the fund after the allocation of funds to Tier A, students, applying under Tier B will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on actual financial need.

Conditions for receipt of student bursaries

The following conditions apply:

- Students must have a minimum of 95% attendance for the term, with no unauthorised absences. Parents/carers have the right to appeal should attendance fall below 95% criteria due to special circumstances
- Students must not break the terms of any school agreements or standards of behaviour
- The school reserves the right to stop payments immediately should a student's attendance or behaviour become unacceptable. Payments may be adjusted to reflect any unauthorised absence or broken terms to the school agreements/standards of behaviour.
- The school can request a full refund of any payments made should the student leave prior to the end of their studies.
- Funds are limited and will be allocated based on the criteria levels outlined
- Applicants will need to provide relevant official proof of household income/benefits. Failure to provide proof may result in applications being rejected.
- The school should be informed immediately if any parent/carer income/benefits circumstances change so that adjustments can be made accordingly.

Applications

Students are to be encouraged to apply for a Bursary fund as soon as possible at the beginning of each academic year. Application forms can be requested from the school office and will also be available to download from the school website.

Applications will be considered on an individual basis by a Remissions Panel for assessment and authorisation. Official proof of household income/benefits is required.

The school will write to parents/carers confirming if their application has been agreed within 28 working days upon receipt.

Late applications

Late applications will be considered at any point during the year for students whose financial circumstances change, or for new students joining the sixth form.

Awards for regular costs such as travel, or meals will only be payable from the time the student became eligible to the end of the course duration.

Payments will commence from the next scheduled instalment unless this would create undue hardship for the student.

Remissions Panel

Applications will be considered by the Remissions Panel, which consists of the School Business Manager and the St Georges Assistant Head.

7. Payments

Students will be paid in five equal instalments. The initial payment will be made during October half term, with the remaining four payments made during the third week of each subsequent half term (i.e Autumn 2, Spring 1 & 2, Summer 1)

Payments will be subject to the student meeting the required attendance, punctuality and behaviour targets as outlined above.

Where possible, payments in kind will be used by the school. This will always be the case for curriculum trips/activities paid for by the school.

Decisions and appeals

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with the decisions of the Remissions Panel, they should follow the school's established complaints procedure.

Data and Confidentiality

The School will treat all information supplied under this policy as confidential and in accordance with the School's data protection policy and records management policy.

For audit purposes all information must be retained for a period of 6 years.

Audit

The 16-19 Bursary fund is subject to audit so the School must retain all documentation relating to each claim, whether it was awarded or not and a brief justification. In particular documentation should include

- Application forms
- Evidence showing the student is eligible
- Evidence of payments received from SBSS (Vulnerable claims)
- Evidence of payments made to the students.
- Receipts for purchases made e.g. bus pass, book receipts.

All documentation must be kept for a period of 6 years.

Misuse and Fraud

The School has a duty to investigate instances of suspected fraud when a student is applying for bursary funds. When evidence is found that misleading or fraudulent information has been knowingly submitted by a student or parent, resulting in the student receiving a bursary that they should not have received, the School will attempt to recover overpayment from the student.

The matter may also be referred to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their parent or carer facing prosecution.