



The Ecclesbourne School

"Learning together for the future"

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Policy

September 2023

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 which is available and the means of applying for it.

2. Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. The fund is money given to post-16 providers by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Many will experience financial difficulties with costs such as transport, food or equipment. Eligibility is based on the student meeting residency requirements and being on a means-tested or disability benefit. This plan complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- I. Higher-priority claimants (Level 1) (defined vulnerable groups) who will receive a bursary of up to £1,200.00 per year from the school fund.
- II. Discretionary bursaries (Level 2) awarded to claimants to meet individual needs. For example, to help with the cost of transport, meals, books, equipment, field trips and other course-related costs.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the Head teacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy. In our school, responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy has been delegated to the Head teacher.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

3.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy consistently. The Sixth Form Administrator, in consultation with the Head of Sixth Form processes applications, any BACS payments or payments 'in kind'.

The Strategic Leadership Team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

3.4 Parents

If parents / carers have any queries regarding the administration of the bursary they should contact Carol Bilbie, Sixth Form Administrator at cbilbie@ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk

Parents are expected to notify The Head of Sixth Form or the Head Teacher with any concerns or queries regarding the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Age

To be eligible:

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2024

Students 19 or over must either:

- Be continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or
- Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

4.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assure quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also be either:

- Funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
- Funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund
- Publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19
- In a 16 to 19 traineeship programme
- Non-employed and participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme

Students are not eligible if:

- They are on an apprenticeship programme
- Are on any waged training

Students who are studying via distance learning may need infrequent financial help (e.g. travel to exams), if this is the case we will provide support in-kind (e.g. a travel pass)

4.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision](#).

4.4 Asylum seekers

Those under 18 with an adult relative or partner and those aged 18 and above:

- Are entitled to education
- Are not entitled to public funds
- Can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials

Unaccompanied children:

- Are the responsibility of the local authority
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups

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

4.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the above age and residency criteria, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups (higher-priority group – Level 1) of up to £1,200 per year.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

1. In care (see definition in 4.6)
2. Care leavers (see definition in 4.6)
3. Receiving 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
4. Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

We will look at individual cases for these students, based on needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

Students eligible for bursaries under this category will be given a pro rata bursary if their study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks.

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 in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- 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). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided.

4.6 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). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'

'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 of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16)

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

4.7 Criteria for discretionary bursary (Level 2)

Where a student does not meet the higher-priority group criteria (Level 1) the student may still be eligible for financial support from the 16 -19 Bursary Fund. Any student that requires financial support to purchase essential elements of their course may apply for support from the fund. All applications will be assessed using the criteria set out in 6.2

5. Applications

The 16 -19 bursary fund will be open for applications for the following academic year from July each year. Application forms will be available in electronic format from the school website and should be submitted by the deadline as advertised. However, the school will consider late applications from students if their financial circumstances change.

Funding is not guaranteed by the acceptance of an application form.

6. Allocation

6.1 All decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive are based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student and the below factors will be considered:

- Level of household income
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help

6.2 To assess household income, we may ask to see:

- Proof of benefits letters
- Tax credit award notifications
- P60s
- Pay slips
- Bank statements covering a certain period (e.g. the last 3 months)
- Universal Credit award notices (e.g. the most recent 3)

7. Conditions for Receipt of Student Bursaries

Payments are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

- Students are to arrive fully prepared for lessons, be punctual and maintain a minimum attendance of 93% and above.
- Students are to adhere to the Sixth Form dress code.
- Students are expected to behave in a mature fashion and to be respectful to others. Including considerate and appropriate use of social media.
- All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions.
- Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld.
- We will consider the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.
- We will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays, or if there is evidence that the student intends to return, or they are observing quarantine).
- As much as possible, we will avoid sanctioning a student to the extent that their bursary funding had been stopped for a whole term.
- 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.

Evidence that each student has agreed to these conditions will be shown by the signed declaration in the confirmation letter.

Each parent / carer is also asked to sign a declaration stipulating that the evidence that they have provided is accurate. Parents / carers are aware that a fraudulent application may result in bursary funding being ceased, over payments being recalled and the claimant could be referred to the police.

8. Payment

- The school may make direct weekly payments to student bank accounts via BACS to high priority students.
- The school will make use of payments 'in kind' e.g. course materials, travel passes and meals.
- Where payments in kind are not possible, the school can make use of BACS transfer for payment but receipts must be retained as proof of purchase.
- Payments will be contingent on the student meeting targets for attendance and punctuality (see section 6 above).
- Some of the money to cover an individual's curriculum-related activities such as field trips of special equipment may be held back.

9. Audit

The fund should be audited in line with the school's standard audit procedures.

10. Advertisement of 16 – 19 bursary

- The school will work hard to raise early awareness of the bursary fund with students, parents / carers. This policy is displayed on the school website and application forms are available year round.
- Announcements regarding the bursary are made in assemblies to every student in the Sixth Form.
- Letters are sent to parents / carers at the start of each year to raise awareness of the fund.
- The fund is advertised to parents / carers at the year 12 Information Evening in September and the Sixth Form Induction Day in June / July.

11. Identifying students

11.1 Identifying students eligible for bursaries high-priority, vulnerable groups (Level 1)

- The fund is advertised to all students, parents / carers (see point 10)
- Students joining the Sixth Form from Year 11 at Ecclesbourne deemed to be classed as high-priority (Level 1) will already be known to the school and this information is shared between the relevant school offices.
- Students joining the school from other providers are asked during their application if they meet any of the eligibility criteria for high priority (Level 1).
- The Sixth Form may also work with the local authority, looked after children's education services and care leaver services, to encourage students to apply for a bursary where needed.

11.2 Identifying students who may need support from the discretionary bursary (Level 2)

- The fund is advertised to all students, parents / carers (see point 10)
- Students joining the school from other providers are asked during their application / interview if they meet any of the eligibility criteria (Level 2).
- Students joining the Sixth Form from Year 11 at Ecclesbourne who were eligible for Pupil Premium Funding will be approached by their Head of Year / Progress Leader to have a discussion about our school's bursary criteria.
- Young people with caring responsibilities, for example, caring for a parent or other relative, may be reluctant to say so because of fear of being stigmatised. In this instance, when the school receives information that they are caring for a parent or relative we will also approach the student for a confidential conversation regarding the bursary.
- When assessing young carers' eligibility for support from the bursary, the Sixth Form will consider whether they have had a young carers assessment (which includes questions about the support they need for education), whether they access a young carers service, whether their GP could confirm their caring role or whether they receive 'Carers Allowance'.

12. Monitoring and Review of the Bursary Fund

The Head of Sixth Form will oversee the operation of the Bursary Fund, and establish clear monitoring of its operations through the school management structure.

This plan, and its operation, will be reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team at the end of each academic year to:

1. Review the allocations and criteria for awards for the 16-19 Bursary Fund
2. Monitor expenditure on a termly basis
3. Track student retention
4. Set and monitor service standards for the claimant