



Bursary fund policy (for Sixth Form)

Secondary Academies

July 2026

Due for review by end July 2027

This policy will be annually reviewed by the Trust's finance director and it is based on the 16 to 19 bursary fund guide for the academic year 2026 to 2027 and funding regulations for post-16 provision advice from the Department for Education (DfE).

www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2026-to-2027

www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance

We aim to: -

- have a clear and transparent process for the use and allocation of Sixth Form (16 – 19) bursary funds
- make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
- make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

What is a bursary?

A bursary is financial support awarded to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund which is intended to support students in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so that they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries: -

1. Bursaries for students in defined vulnerable groups; *and*
2. Discretionary bursaries

How we use the bursary

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

- Transport
- Books and course materials
- Field trips and other course-related costs

- Equipment necessary for completing the study programme can be provided by the school from bursary funds but must be returned once the study programme is completed
- Some students may need items of clothing or footwear to be able to access further education and continue to participate. Such items may be eligible for exceptional support from the bursary fund, but any such expenditure must be genuinely and directly about the student accessing their education provision. Evidence of expenditure (along with receipts) must be retained for audit purposes, including the rationale, amount and purpose.
- Other discretionary

Some definitions

The following terms are referred to in relation to bursary eligibility.

- **In care**
A child looked after by a local authority either 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**
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**
This can be either: -
 - 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.

Eligibility criteria

Before applying, you should check you are eligible. For both types of bursary, students must: -

- be at least 16 years old¹ but under 19 years old² on the 31st August prior to the academic year commencing in September.
- satisfactorily met the conditions of our Attendance policy and Behaviour policy (available on both the [Sixth Form](#) and [Policies](#) page of our website).
- have the legal right to be UK resident at the start of the study programme and be likely to complete it (as per the ESFA [funding regulations of post-16 provision advice](#))
- be able to provide evidence of their own, personal bank account (as any payments can only be made directly to the student)

¹ In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to them. However, if they are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible.

² Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

In addition to above the student must meet the following eligibility criteria and provide the additional evidence for each respective bursary application: -

Defined vulnerable groups	
Eligibility	Additional evidence
In Care* (not privately fostered) or Care Leaver*	Letter from Key Worker or Social Worker confirming care status
or In receipt of their own Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) or Disabled and in receipt of their own Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) <u>and</u> their own Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC)	Copy of own IS or UC award notice dated within last 6 weeks Evidence of DLA or PIP dated within last 6 weeks Evidence of UC award notice dated within last 6 weeks
Additional information	
Students who meet these criteria are not automatically entitled to a bursary. They 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). We are aware that Universal Credit has replaced Income Support and other benefits listed above. *Unaccompanied asylum seekers may fall into these categories as clarified in the section below	

Discretionary	
Eligibility	Additional evidence
Has qualified for receiving Free School Meals or Family total annual income of £25,000 or less <u>including</u> all employment income and benefits for the year.	n/a Universal Credit Award notices for the last 3 months; or Tax credit award notification from HMRC for 2025/26; or Other Benefit Letter from HMRC or Job Centre Plus dated less than 3 months old CONTACT THE HEAD OF SIXTH FORM IF YOU FEEL YOU MEET THE CRITERIA BUT DO NOT HAVE THE ABOVE EVIDENCE
Additional information	
Students who do not meet these criteria but are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may apply for a discretionary bursary. In assessing an application we will consider: - • level of household income • distance to travel between the student's home and the school (or placement) • number of dependent children in the student's household • requirements of their study programme • whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help	

Asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education are not entitled to public funds. 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 seekers

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are: -

- the responsibility of the local authority;
- 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.

Application and decision process

If students feel they are eligible and wish to apply, they should complete the application form which can be found on the sixth form financial support page of the school website.

www.heronhallacademy.org.uk/Sixth-form-financial-support

Eligible students must apply for a bursary each year

For the main application intake, the form must be completed and all evidence provided to the Head of Sixth Form by **25th September 2026**

Decisions will be made by **23rd October 2026** and successful applicants will be provided with a Bursary Award Letter which will give detail of the amount awarded and how it can be claimed.

We recognise that student circumstances may change so applications can be made throughout the academic year. Decision dates will vary depending on application date.

Whilst any rejected application will be accompanied with an explanation and rationale, students may appeal the outcome of their bursary application by contacting the Head of Sixth Form in writing and explaining why they feel the decision is incorrect. We aim to respond to any such appeal within 10 school days.

How bursary amounts are decided

Where a bursary is provided: -

Defined vulnerable groups

The amount awarded is based on individual circumstances and the amount a student actually needs up to a maximum of £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more (pro-rata if less than this taking into account the number of study hours)

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, and provide more than £1,200 per year if it were necessary in all the circumstances for the student to remain in education.

Any such additional payment will be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

Discretionary

The total funding available for disbursement is limited to the total amount awarded to the School by the Department for Education (DfE).

We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstance, their actual financial need and the total funding available.

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

Successful applicants

Conditions for the receipt of payment

We will always take the individual circumstances of the student and any impact into consideration however continued bursary payments will be dependent on: -

- good attendance in line with the sixth form attendance policy
- student adherence to our behaviour policy

Failure to meet these conditions may mean payment is withheld.

We may stop payments where a student is absent for a period of four consecutive weeks (not including holidays).

We reserve the right to reclaim any money where it has not been spent for the reasons it was awarded.

Any decision with regard to suspension or cessation of payments will be confirmed to the student in writing.

All students will be expected to sign a declaration form confirming that they have read and understood these conditions.

Payment process

Payments will usually be: -

- in-kind payments (such as equipment, travelcards or books and materials); *and / or*
- by BACS transfer only to the student's own bank account on presentation of an approved bursary expenses claim form and a valid receipt showing the expenditure has taken place.

Changes in circumstance

If there are any changes in students circumstances which may affect the students eligibility for a bursary, applicants and / or their parent / carer must notify the school without delay

Records management

For audit purposes, we are required to keep records of any bursary awarded, our decision making, details of payments / reimbursements issued during the bursary and both details and copies of any evidence provided as part of the application process. This information will be kept securely for 6 years in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Defined vulnerable groups

- the funding claim sent to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS)
- evidence of eligibility
- evidence of payments received from SBSS (for example bank statements and remittance advices)
- a copy of the individual assessment of actual financial need
- receipts for purchases or in-kind support provided to the student

Discretionary

- evidence used to assess eligibility and determine household income
- the individual assessment of actual financial need, including a breakdown of the calculation that has determined the amount
- receipts for purchases or in-kind support provided
- evidence to support the value of any cash payments made to the student
- attendance evidence to support payments where applicable

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

Additional information

Free School Meals

Eligibility for Free School Meals is one of the factors which may be considered for those applying for a Discretionary Bursary (as outlined in the sections above) and you will not have to provide any additional evidence,

If you have not previously applied for free school meals but think you might be eligible then all the information parents need to check and apply can be found on our website.

For a student to receive Free School Meals, it is their parent who needs to apply.

www.heronhallacademy.org.uk/FSM

Even if you do not wish to receive Free School Meals it is always worth checking to see if you are eligible as the academy will receive additional funding from the government for anyone who is.

This can support teaching and learning through additional resources and equipment and really helps make a difference.

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