# 16-19 Bursary Policy AY 25-26

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| **Formally adopted by the Head:-** | **Sidestrand Hall School** |
| **On:-** | **15.5.25** |
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# 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 and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it

# 2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) – 16 to 19 bursary fund guide 2025 to 2026 academic year.

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)

# 4. Roles and responsibilities

## 4.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has responsibility for approving the 16-19 bursary policy.

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

## 4.2 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently and in line with the ESFA guidance.

## 4.3 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

# 5. How we use the bursary fund

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, Books, Equipment, Trips, Emergency meal support
    - Other items not listed above that meet the intentions of the fund - but we must see evidence of need

# 6. Eligibility criteria

## 6.1 Age

- To be eligible:
    - A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025
- Students 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups but can apply for a discretionary bursary but must either:
    - Be continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or
    - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

## 6.2 Eligible education provision

- Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assure quality (e.g. Ofsted) and funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority.
- 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)

## 6.3 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the above age can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 per year.

- The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:
    - In care (those who are privately fostered are **not** classed as looked after)
    - Care leavers
    - 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
    - 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.

The school reserves the right to pay more than the £1200 with the difference being met from the discretionary bursary allocation.

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, from the relevant local authority that is looking after them or provides their leaving care services.
    - 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

### 6.6 Discretionary bursaries

- In assessing an application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:
    - Level of household income. We are unlikely to provide a bursary where the household income is over £29000
    - The number of dependent children in the student's household
    - Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help
- To assess household income, we will ask to see:
    - Proof of benefits letters
    - Tax credit award notifications
    - P60 from the end of the 2024/25 tax year
    - Pay slips (most recent 3)
    - Universal Credit award notices (3 most recent monthly award statements)
    - Bank statements
    - Evidence of Personalised Travel Scheme payments and expenses

The school reserves the right to retain up to 5% of the discretionary bursary fund for admin costs and to retain a small emergency fund to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year that impact on their ability to participate.

## 7. Payment

### 7.1 Process

Payments are made using the following process:

In kind payments eg direct payments to NCC transport, to trip accounts or for books

Termly payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account (or parents/carers account if the student doesn't have a bank account) where in kind payments cannot be made but please note our preference is to make in kind payments.

Applications should ideally be submitted by 2nd July 2025 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.

Payments will only be made once the school has received the monies from the ESFA.

The School Business Manager will apply direct to the Department for Education for vulnerable bursary funding when they have seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is eligible and ensured the student needs financial support to participate.

### 7.2 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

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

- Attendance above 95%
- Adherence to the sixth form code of conduct

All students are required to sign the declaration on the application form 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).

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.

Pastoral leads will monitor the conditions of payment on a termly basis . Payments will not be made until agreed by them.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher annually.