



Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,  
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**

# 16-19 BURSARY POLICY





## Document control

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## Introduction

1. All publicly funded schools with a sixth form provision receive allocations for a 16-19 Bursary Fund, under arrangements set out by the Secretary of State in section 14 of the Education Act 2002. The funding is designed to close the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education and training.
2. This policy explains the two different types of 16-19 bursaries that are available to pupils and their associated eligibility criteria, the conditions of award, how payments should be allocated, and how pupils can apply for the funding.

## Aims

3. To make post-16 education and training more affordable and accessible for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.
4. To advise schools on the types of bursaries available, how the funding should be allocated and the conditions of award.
5. To establish clear eligibility criteria for each type of bursary and advise schools on how to assess whether a pupil meets the stipulated conditions.
6. To offer guidance to schools on how to utilise the funding to incentivise good behaviour and attendance and secure pupils' sustained commitment to their post-16 studies.

## Who is responsible for this policy?

7. Star Academies has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the Local Governing Body and the Principal of each Trust secondary school with a sixth form provision.
8. The Local Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team at each Trust secondary school with a sixth form provision has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

## Types of bursary and associated eligibility criteria

### Guaranteed Bursary/Vulnerable Pupil Bursary

9. Guaranteed Bursaries (also referred to as Vulnerable Pupil Bursaries) of up to £1,200 are available to all vulnerable young people aged 16-19.
10. Funding for this type of bursary is held centrally by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and eligible pupils should apply directly to the school at the earliest opportunity to enable the funding to be drawn down upon at the start of the new academic year.
11. The ESFA has defined what constitutes a "vulnerable" pupil. Pupils will be eligible for the Guaranteed Bursary if at least one of the following criteria applies:
  - They are in or recently left local authority care;
  - They receive Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves;



- They receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their own name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit;
  - They receive a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name and either ESA or Universal Credit.
12. Pupils will be expected to supply supporting evidence of the benefits they are receiving by providing an up-to-date letter from the relevant Benefits Agency. The letter(s) in questions must be addressed specifically to them - not to members of their family - and should be dated within the last two months.

### **Discretionary Support Bursary**

13. The Discretionary Support Bursary is targeted at young people who are facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, uniforms, books, equipment, school meals, field trips etc. It is awarded entirely at the school's discretion and is tantamount to a "hardship fund."
14. As per the Guaranteed Bursary, this funding should be reserved for disadvantaged pupils whose families are not in a position to offer them much in the way of financial support. Examples include:
- Pupils who were entitled to free school meals in Year 11;
  - Pupils whose parents are currently claiming means-tested benefits [Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance, Child Tax Credit (where the annual gross income is no more than £16,190) or Universal Credit;
  - A pupil in Local Authority Care.
15. Schools are, however, free to expand on these criteria if a pupil puts forward a compelling case for discretionary funding.
16. Rather than offering a monetary award, schools are encouraged to use 'payment in kind' for the Discretionary Support Bursary e.g. to cover the cost of a bus pass, purchase of text books, free school meals, free uniform etc.

### **Additional eligibility criteria**

17. To be eligible to receive either of the two bursaries, pupils must be over 16 on 1st September and under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a pupil turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or to the end of the programme of study - whichever is sooner.
18. Pupils must also satisfy the residency criteria defined in the ESFA funding guidance available on the ESFA website. They must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that ensures quality (Ofsted) and is funded by the ESFA or via a local authority; funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund; or otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to Level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is pursuant to Section 98 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

### **Conditions of award**

19. Once eligibility has been established in accordance with the criteria outlined above, pupils will be expected to meet a qualifying period of study before they receive their first instalment of



- funding. The Trust recommends that a pupil is enrolled on their course for a minimum of six weeks before any initial payments are made (whether monetary or in kind).
20. Pupils must comply with the following conditions in order to qualify for the continuation of payment:
    - Pupils in receipt of the funding must not have any instances of unauthorised absence, and their overall attendance must be at least 95%;
    - If attendance falls below the specified target, pupils must provide a Doctor's Note to justify any periods of absence that exceed 7 days;
    - Pupils' behaviour must be exemplary and there should be no cause for concern i.e. no negative SIMS points;
    - Pupils subject to temporary or permanent exclusions will automatically lose their entitlement to discretionary funding;
    - Pupils must be meeting the required standards/targets in all of their courses.
  21. The proportion of Guaranteed Bursary funding awarded to a pupil may be reduced, or the Discretionary Bursary may be withdrawn entirely, if these criteria are not met.
  22. Schools should also consider the following when determining how much funding to award a pupil:
    - Whether pupils are on a full time or part time course (schools may wish to adjust the proportion of funding they are awarded accordingly);
    - Whether pupils have an alternative source of income (e.g. a part-time or evening job);
    - The day-to-day expenses pupils incur (i.e. a pupil who is living alone in rented accommodation versus a pupil who is living rent-free with their parents).

## Payments

23. Any monetary award must be paid by BACS direct to the relevant pupil's bank account. Schools should not issue cash payments. If a pupil does not have their own bank account, they should be advised to set one up.
24. For those in receipt of the Guaranteed Bursary funding, payments should be split into three equal sums and paid to the pupil each term (preferably at the beginning of each term, providing the funding has been received in time). This will ensure pupils have an incentive to continue with their studies and that schools are not left in a position where they are trying to reclaim money awarded to pupils who leave part-way through the academic year.
25. With this in mind, schools should retain a contingency to cover the cost of bursaries awarded throughout the academic year due to changes in the financial or domestic circumstances of individual pupils.

## Process for application

26. Applications for the award of a bursary should be made using the Bursary Application Form. Pupils will need to apply once per year (in Year 12 and Year 13 respectively).
27. All applications must be supported by appropriate evidence of eligibility, and completed in full.
28. Applicants will be notified in writing whether their application has been successful, together with the level of award.
29. If a young person feels aggrieved about how their application has been handled, they should follow the procedures set out in the school's Complaints Policy.



## Communication

30. Full details of the 16-19 Bursary Fund should be made available to all post-16 and prospective post-16 pupils via the school website, 6<sup>th</sup> form assemblies, tutors and notice boards. Pupils must be aware that the funding exists and be given the opportunity to apply for it from the start of their study programme.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review

31. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all Trust secondary schools with a sixth form provision.
32. The Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy at each Trust secondary school with a sixth form provision.
33. The Trust will review this policy every two years in consultation with each Trust secondary school with a sixth form provision.