LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL RUGBY

A Teaching School Hub

Bursary Policy (Sixth Form)

Review date	Autumn 2025
Review period	Annual
Next Review date	Autumn 2026
Reviewed by	Teresa Mpofu/Tony Bedgood
Approving committee	Academic Strategy Committee
Policy type	Legislative
Other related policies	

The 16 to 19 bursary fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries and this policy refers to both:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Please note that access to the 16 to 19 bursary funds does not impact on other means tested benefits.

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)
- 'Looked after child' is defined as: 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' is defined as:
    - A young person aged 16 or 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

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Approving this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with relevant requirements

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure that staff are familiar with this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy
- Making sure the policy is being applied consistently
- Setting eligibility criteria for bursary funding and making sure these comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Promoting awareness of the 16 to 19 bursary fund to prospective applicants and their parents/carers

Finance Department

The finance department is responsible for ensuring that the bursary funding is accounted for accurately.

Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are also expected to notify staff or the headteacher of:

- Any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy
- Any change in circumstances that might affect eligibility for bursary funding

Students

Pupils are responsible for meeting the conditions attached to the receipt of any support from the bursary funding.

How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See below for details of our eligibility criteria.

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

We may use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Books
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Field trips essential to the course or are clearly linked to the programme of study or course
- ✓ Specialist clothing
- ✓ Suitable clothing that meets the school dress code
- ✓ Travel to and from university open days and interviews

We will provide support for students from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. It will not be provided as regular payments for living costs.

Please note that each application is decided on merit and eligibility to the fund does not mean that any student is automatically able to access all of the above. Decisions will be made based on need.

Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed **in addition** to the individual student's actual financial needs.

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year:

- Students must be between 16 years to 19 years of age on 31 August 2026.
- Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also receive public funding.
- Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria above can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (N.B. those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after)
- Care leavers
- Receiving Universal Credit (UC) 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 (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

Students will be funded to reflect the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have.

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary.

Students 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). Should we

refuse the application on this basis, we will discuss this with the student and their support worker/parent/carer where applicable.

Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on a particular student's needs.

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to provide more than £1,200 per year if it is necessary, in all the circumstances, for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from the school's discretionary bursary allocation or the school's own funds.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

- Post 16 students who are eligible and registered for Free School Meals
- If you are NOT in receipt of Free School Meals but your household income is below £25,000 and your household is in receipt of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit then you are also entitled to a discretionary bursary
- Students who do not satisfy any of the criteria listed in this section, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may still apply for a discretionary bursary.

Please note that in order to assess need you will need to provide documentary evidence of your household income with your application.

In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

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

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

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

Application and payment process

Applications

Applications should be submitted via to Mrs Fatania or Mr Bedgood in the sixth form office.

Applications should ideally be submitted by 1st October to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

Applicants will be notified in writing, usually via email, whether their application has been successful, and the level of support they will receive. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

Any enquiries about the application process should be directed to Mrs Fatania or Mr Bedgood.

Evidence

All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence, which we will verify. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:

- UC statements from the most recent 3 months
- Salary slips from the most recent 3 months
- Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bills
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority
- Parent or carer confirmation of how many dependent children live within the household

Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

Either

- in-kind payments such as books, equipment, travel passes, contribution to field trips
- Payments into the student's bank account on receipt of items approved by the school eg. a suit that meets the school dress code required in order to access school

Cash payments will not be made in any circumstances.

Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

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

- Attendance above 90% [subject to exceptional circumstances]
- Following your school expectations for punctuality, dress and behaviour
- Receipts for expenditure and purchases made with the bursary funding are provided [prior approval is required]

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, but we will always take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

If students have received in-kind support such as equipment or travel cards, they may be asked to return these if they fail to meet the conditions.

We will stop payments where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/carers must notify the school without delay.

Record keeping and audit

The school will maintain comprehensive and accurate records relating to the 16 to 19 bursary fund. These records will be kept securely and be readily available for audit purposes. Records will include, but are not limited to:

- Copies of application forms and supporting evidence
- Proof that students meet eligibility criteria
- Records of 'zero bursary' students
- Records of all payments made to students, including dates, value and purpose
- Copies of documents signed by students to give formal agreement to the conditions of payment
- Evidence of student attendance and progress monitoring

Records will be retained for 6 academic years after the end of the academic year in which the student completed their programme.

Unspent funds

Funding for the 16-19 bursary cannot be carried forward by the school for more than 1 year. Unspent funding must be reported to the DfE by the school using the customer help centre, specifying the amount of funding and the year(s) it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The DfE will recover all unspent funds.

Complaints or Appeals

Where any student or parent is unhappy with how we have managed their application for bursary funding or the support that has been provided, they are free to make a complaint or appeal as per the school's complaints policy which can be found on the school website.