



Bishop Wilkinson

Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

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1. Aims

Our schools aim 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)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>

This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

3. 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 Local Governing Committee

The Local Governing Committee has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The Local Governing Committee also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our schools, responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy has been delegated to the Headteacher/Head of Sixth form.

In our schools, monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Finance Committee if one is in place.

4.2 The Headteacher

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

4.3 Staff

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

The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 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 barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

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

- Transport to and from school
- Any educational visit (including costs of attending university interviews and open days) or Industrial/Work experience travel costs
- Books
- Equipment (including any specialist IT equipment)
- Uniform
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- Emergency meal support (for 2023/24 only) – see section 2.1 in ESFA guidance (link in Section 2 of this policy).

6. Eligibility criteria

6.1 Age

To be eligible:

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August at the beginning of the academic year.

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)

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). 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)

6.3 Residency

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

6.4 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

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

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.

6.5 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 of up to £1,200 per year (depending on financial needs).

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.

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

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award. In these circumstances, the student's application may be refused.

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

Institutions may make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

We will base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, eligibility based on household income, and actual financial need such as the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme.

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

- Level of household income. Any student from a household eligible for Free School Meals where income is below £22,700 where there is one child or £26,300 where there are two or more children, will be given first priority. Any further students where household income falls between these limits and £40,000 will also be considered. A student, whose household income is above £40,000, may be considered in exceptional circumstances in consultation with the CFO.
- 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

To assess household income, we will ask to see one or more of the following :

- Proof of benefits letters

- Tax credit award notifications
- P60s
- Payslips
- Bank statements covering a certain period (e.g., the last 3 months)
- Universal Credit award notices (e.g., the most recent 3)

All evidence of household income will be processed in the strictest of confidence.

7. Payment

7.1 Process

Payments are made using the following process:

Applications will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the considerations highlighted above. Where it is considered there is a need for bursary assistance, the school's bursary review panel will review each item for which support is requested and provide financial assistance in the way it considers most appropriate, this may vary from case to case. For example, this may be:

In-kind payments, such as provision of books, equipment or travel passes

Reimbursements for pre-approved expenditure as and when they arise, such as for uniform

Regular payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account

A payment schedule will be made available to those where BACS transfers are to be made.

Where payments are not in-kind, the school requires receipts or other supporting documentation to be submitted for any expenditure.

Initial applications should ideally be submitted by the date specified on the Application Form, to make sure enough time is allocated to assess the overall level of demands and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. However, as students' circumstances may change, the application process will remain open for the whole school year and additional requests from new and existing Bursary recipients will continue to be considered.

Expenditure before the application has been formally approved may be reimbursed retrospectively, though cannot be guaranteed e.g. Travel costs to open day, uniform

A student in receipt of any level of bursary must inform Sixth Form Student Support of any changes to family circumstances that may affect the support during the academic year.

7.2 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

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

- 100% attendance, subject to approved absences.
- Make progress towards learning goals identified
- Complete classwork, assignments and homework
- Sit all examinations entered
- Follow Sixth Form Code of Conduct

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).

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.

7.3 Appeals

Eligibility - Parents, carers and students will have the right of appeal to the Bursary Awards Panel in all cases if it is felt the application has been wrongly denied.

* Bursary Awards Panel will include a representative from the Sixth Form Leadership Team and Finance and Administration.

If the outcome of this appeal is considered not satisfactory, it should be escalated in line with the school's complaints procedure.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the head of sixth form every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the finance committee.

In line with the ESFA guidelines, any unspent bursary funds cannot be carried forward for more than one year. Unspent funds, not previously reported, up to and including the **2021/22** academic year must be notified to the ESFA prior to the 31st March each year.

The following is an extract from the ESFA guidelines:

Unspent funding must be reported using our [online enquiry form](#) specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to. We encourage institutions to do this as soon as they are aware however they must report it no later than 31 March each year. We will recover all unspent funds.



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Part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
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