

Ursuline College, Westgate-on-Sea

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy



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Policy owner:	Jonathan Joyce, Director of Sixth Form
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1. Aims and scope

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so that they can remain in education.

This policy applies to eligible students enrolled in the Sixth Form at Ursuline College, Westgate-on-Sea. It sets out how the College will administer the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund fairly, transparently and consistently.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary:

- bursaries for students in defined vulnerable groups; and
- discretionary bursaries.

This policy aims to:

- ensure that bursary funding is used to remove genuine financial barriers to education;
- make clear the support available to students and families;
- ensure that decisions are made fairly and consistently;
- explain how students and families can apply for support;
- outline the attendance, behaviour and progress expectations attached to bursary support;
- ensure that the College meets its responsibilities in relation to public funding, record keeping and audit.

The Bursary Fund is not intended to provide regular cash payments or general living costs. Support will be awarded according to assessed need and the actual costs linked to a student's programme of study.

2. Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education guidance on the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance - GOV.UK](#)

The College will review this policy annually, normally in June, to ensure that it remains in line with current Department for Education guidance and the level of bursary funding allocated to the College.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

In care means a young person who is looked after by a local authority, either voluntarily ([section 20](#) of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order ([section 31](#) of the Children Act 1989).

Looked after child means a child in the care of a local authority, or who is provided with accommodation by the authority for more than 24 hours ([section 22](#) of the Children Act 1989).

Care leaver means a young person who was previously looked after for the required period and meets the definition set out in current Department for Education guidance.

The current guidance stipulates:

- 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

Household income means the total take-home income of the parent(s) or carer(s) with whom the student lives predominantly, and any partner living in the household. The household address must match that recorded on our record. Household income includes that of a step-parent or parental partners where they live in the same household.

For the purposes of this policy, household income includes:

- earnings after tax and National Insurance;
- benefits, including Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance and Tax Credits;
- maintenance payments received;
- income from self-employment;
- rental income;
- dividends;
- any other regular income received by the household.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring that bursary funding is administered appropriately.

4.2 The Director of Sixth Form

The Director of Sixth Form has operational responsibility for the administration of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This includes:

- promoting awareness of the fund to students and parents/carers;
- overseeing the application process;
- ensuring decisions are made in line with this policy;
- ensuring that students understand the conditions attached to bursary support;
- reviewing cases where attendance, behaviour or progress concerns arise;
- ensuring the policy is reviewed annually.

4.3 Bursary panel

Applications will be reviewed by a bursary panel. The panel may include:

- Headteacher;
- Director of Sixth Form;
- School Business Manager or Finance Manager;
- Deputy Head of Sixth Form;
- Assistant Principal with responsibility for Key Stage 5;
- Governor with responsibility for Sixth Form.

The panel will consider applications, supporting evidence and the student's actual financial need. Decisions will be made fairly, consistently and with due regard to confidentiality.

4.4 Finance team

The finance team is responsible for ensuring that bursary funding is accounted for accurately and that payments or purchases are recorded appropriately.

4.5 Students and parents/carers

Students and parents/carers are responsible for:

- providing accurate information when applying;
- submitting the evidence requested by the College;
- notifying the College of any change in circumstances;
- ensuring that bursary support is used only for the purpose for which it was awarded;
- meeting the attendance, behaviour and progress conditions attached to the award.

5. How we use the bursary fund

The Bursary Fund is intended to support students with costs that are directly linked to their programme of study.

Eligible costs may include:

- transport to and from the College;
- bus passes for students from low-income families who live more than two miles from the College;
- train passes, where appropriate;
- daily travel, weekly or monthly passes;
- emergency transport;
- travel to university interviews or open days;
- travel to work placements;
- travel to essential course-related trips;
- travel to careers fair linked to next steps;
- textbooks and revision guides;
- stationery, folders and calculators;

- art and design materials;
- printing costs;
- course equipment;
- subject-specific clothing;
- DBS checks where required for a course or placement;
- emergency meal support;
- laptop/iPad loans where there is a demonstrated educational need.

Support will only be provided where the cost is directly related to the student's programme of study or participation in Sixth Form education. The fund will not normally support extracurricular trips unless they are an essential and direct part of the student's programme of study.

Where possible, the College will provide support in kind. This means the College may purchase items directly, provide travel passes, loan equipment or reimburse agreed costs following the submission of receipts. Direct cash payments will not be made.

Laptops or iPads purchased or provided through the Bursary Fund remain the property of Ursuline College. They must be returned at the end of the student's programme of study, or earlier if the student leaves the College.

6. General eligibility

To be eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, students must meet the age, residency and education provision requirements set out in current Department for Education guidance.

No student will automatically receive bursary funding. All awards will be based on assessed financial need and the actual costs the student faces in participating in education.

Students are not eligible if they are on an apprenticeship programme or in waged training programme. Students must be enrolled on a publicly funded course and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the DfE's [list of qualifications](#)

Age and Residency

For the 2026 to 2027 academic year, students must normally be aged at least 16 but under 19 on 31 August 2026.

Students aged 19 or over may be eligible for a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began when aged 16 to 18, or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [DfE funding rules for 16 to 19 provision](#).

Asylum Seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner, and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education but are not entitled to public funds. If necessary, they 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 asylum-seeking children are:

- o The responsibility of the local authority
- o To be treated as 'looked after' children
- o 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.

7. Bursaries for students in defined vulnerable groups

Students may be eligible for a bursary for defined vulnerable groups if they meet the general eligibility criteria and are:

- in care;
- a care leaver;
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves, or financially supporting themselves and someone dependent on them;
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Students who meet the criteria for a vulnerable group bursary are not automatically entitled to the full amount. The College will assess the student's actual financial need and the costs they face in order to participate in education.

Where a vulnerable group bursary is awarded, it will normally be up to £1,200 per academic year for a study programme lasting 30 weeks or more. The actual amount awarded will depend on assessed need. In exceptional cases, and where funding allows, the College may consider additional support where it is necessary for the student to remain in education.

Eligibility for a vulnerable group bursary will be reviewed each academic year.

8. Discretionary bursaries

Discretionary bursaries are intended to support students who face financial barriers to participation but who do not meet the criteria for a vulnerable group bursary.

Students may be eligible if their total annual take-home household income is below £35,000.

Household income includes:

- earnings after tax and National Insurance;
- benefits, including Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance and Tax Credits;
- maintenance payments received;
- income from self-employment;
- rental income;
- dividends;
- any other regular household income.

The College will require evidence of take-home household income, rather than gross income.

Support from the Bursary Fund is awarded on a sliding scale. This means that students from lower income households are normally able to receive a higher proportion of the eligible costs they apply for, subject to the available funding and the annual allocation received by the College.

A percentage of funding refers to the proportion of the eligible costs applied for. It does not mean that the student will automatically receive that amount as a cash award.

Total take-home household income	Indicative amount of eligible costs that may be funded
Less than £25,000 per annum	100%
£25,000 to £27,500	80%
£27,500 to £30,000	60%
£30,000 to £32,500	40%
£32,500 to £35,000	20%
More than £35,000	0%

Students from larger families, defined as households with three or more dependent children, may be moved up one band at the discretion of the bursary panel. This will not be automatic and will depend on the evidence provided and the overall circumstances of the household.

The maximum annual discretionary award is normally £1,200 per student. However, this amount may vary each year depending on the Department for Education allocation received by the College and the level of demand from eligible students.

Students who do not meet the income criteria, but who experience exceptional financial hardship may still apply. The College will consider such applications on a case-by-case basis.

9. Free school meals and meal support

Free school meals for eligible students are funded through Kent County Council arrangements. Breakfast Club is also available for students from 8.15am in the canteen.

The College recognises that Sixth Form students are older and may have different needs during the school day. In some circumstances, and where financial hardship is demonstrated, the College may use the Bursary Fund to subsidise meal costs or provide emergency meal support, using the school catering facilities only.

Meal support will be considered as part of the student's overall bursary application and will depend on assessed need and available funding.

10. Application process

Students can apply for bursary support by completing the College's Microsoft Form. Paper copies will also be available from the Sixth Form Office.

Applications should ideally be submitted by the last Friday in September. This allows the College to assess the overall level of demand and make fair decisions about the allocation of discretionary funding.

Applications will remain open throughout the academic year where a student's circumstances change or where new financial hardship arises.

Completed applications and enquiries should be submitted to:

sixthform@ursuline.kent.sch.uk

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application. Where an application is successful, the College will confirm the type of support awarded, the value of the support, any conditions attached, and whether the support will be provided directly, reimbursed or paid in another approved way.

11. Evidence required

All applications must be supported by appropriate evidence. The College may request one or more of the following:

- recent payslips;
- Universal Credit statements;
- P60;
- Universal Credit award notice;
- benefit award letters;
- self-employment accounts;
- bank statements where needed;
- evidence of maintenance payments;

- evidence of dependent children;
- evidence of looked-after or care leaver status;
- evidence of receipt of benefits in the student's own name, where relevant;
- receipts or invoices for costs already incurred;
- evidence of transport costs;
- evidence of course-related costs.

The College may ask for additional evidence where necessary to make a fair decision.

All evidence will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared with staff who need to be involved in the assessment, administration or audit of the Bursary Fund.

12. Payment and purchasing arrangements

The College will normally provide bursary support in kind. This may include:

- purchasing bus or train passes;
- purchasing textbooks, revision guides or equipment directly;
- providing laptops or other equipment on loan;
- reimbursing agreed costs once receipts have been provided;
- supporting essential course-related travel;
- providing emergency meal support.

Cash payments will not be made.

BACS payments may be made only where this is the most appropriate method and where it has been approved by the bursary panel or finance team. Any such payment must be linked to an agreed educational cost and supported by evidence.

The College reserves the right to refuse reimbursement where expenditure was not approved in advance or where it is not directly linked to the student's programme of study.

13. Conditions attached to bursary support

Bursary support is conditional on students meeting the expectations of the Sixth Form.

Students are expected to:

- maintain attendance of at least 95%;
- attend all timetabled lessons, including PSHE, Core RE and directed study where applicable;
- arrive punctually to College and lessons;
- meet the expectations of the Sixth Form Code of Conduct;
- wear their lanyard and ID as required;
- behave appropriately and respectfully;
- complete work to an acceptable standard;
- use home study appropriately where it has been granted;
- use bursary support only for the purpose for which it was awarded;
- provide receipts or evidence of expenditure where requested;
- return any loaned equipment when required.

Where attendance falls below 90%, bursary support may be reviewed, reduced, paused or withheld, subject to individual circumstances.

The College will always consider the reasons for absence or any failure to meet the conditions of support. This includes illness, disability, caring responsibilities, safeguarding concerns, bereavement or other exceptional circumstances.

Where a student withdraws from their programme of study, bursary support will stop. Any loaned items, including laptops, must be returned to the College.

Where bursary support has been misused, the College reserves the right to request repayment or the return of items purchased. Any decision will take account of the student's individual circumstances.

14. Change in circumstances

Students and parents/carers must notify the College without delay if there is any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for bursary support.

This includes:

- a change in household income;
- a change in benefits;
- a change in living arrangements;
- a change in care status;
- a change in transport needs;
- withdrawal from a course;
- significant changes in attendance or participation.

The College may review, increase, reduce, pause or withdraw support where circumstances change.

15. Record keeping and audit

The College will maintain accurate records relating to the administration of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

Records may include:

- application forms;
- supporting evidence;
- assessment decisions;
- reasons for awards;
- records of rejected applications;
- records of students assessed as eligible but with no current financial need;
- payment records;
- receipts and invoices;
- signed declarations;
- attendance and progress information;
- records of appeals;
- records of returned equipment.

Records will be stored securely and retained in line with audit requirements.

16. Unspent funds

The College will manage bursary funding in line with Department for Education requirements.

Unspent funding will be reported and managed in accordance with current guidance. The College will not carry forward bursary funding beyond the period permitted by the Department for Education.

17. Appeals

Students or parents/carers may appeal a bursary decision if they believe that the application has not been considered fairly or that relevant evidence has not been taken into account.

Stage 1

The student or parent/carer should submit a written appeal to the Director of Sixth Form within 10 school days of receiving the decision.

The appeal should explain the reason for the appeal and include any additional evidence.

The Director of Sixth Form will review the decision and respond in writing.

Stage 2

If the student or parent/carer remains dissatisfied, they may request a further review by the Headteacher or a senior member of staff not involved in the original decision. This review must be requested within 5 school days of the Stage 1 review decision.

The Stage 2 decision will be confirmed in writing and will normally be final.

Where appropriate, complaints about the administration of the policy may also be considered under the College's complaints procedure. [Ursuline College - Complaints Procedure](#)

18. Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the Director of Sixth Form.

The policy will be reviewed annually in June, or earlier if Department for Education guidance changes significantly.

The policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

19. Student declaration

Students receiving support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund will be required to sign a declaration confirming that they:

- understand the conditions attached to bursary support;
- will use the support only for the purpose for which it was awarded;
- will provide receipts or evidence where required;
- will inform the College of any change in circumstances;
- understand that support may be reviewed, reduced, paused or withdrawn if conditions are not met;
- understand that loaned equipment remains the property of Ursuline College and must be returned when requested.