

ASHLEY HIGH SCHOOL

16 – 19 Bursary Policy

This policy was adopted: September 2023

This policy was reviewed: September 2024

This policy will be reviewed: September 2025

**Lead Teacher: Nicola Lightfoot**

**Aims**

Ashley High 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
* Make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

**Guidance**

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the [16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2024 to 2025 academic year.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-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)

‘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 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutivel (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, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our school, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to Diane Wilson – Headteacher.

In our school, monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to Nicola Lightfoot – Assistant Headteacher

* **The headteacher**

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

* **Staff**

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 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.

* **Parents**

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

**How we use the bursary fund**

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See below for Eligibility criteria for 16 – 19 bursaries.

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and

Discretionary bursaries

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

Books

Equipment

Field trips and other course-related costs

The costs of attending college interviews and open days

**Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries**

* **Age**

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2024 to 2025academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2024.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they:

Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or

Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.

In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to these younger students. However, if these students are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible for bursary funding.

* **Eligible education provision**

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 fall into one of these groups:

Be funded directly by the ESFA or by the ESFA via a local authority;

Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund;

Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA’s list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19; or

Be a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a Prince’s Trust Team Programme are also eligible to receive a bursary in the same way as any other student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

Students are not eligible if:

They are on an apprenticeship programme; or

Are on any waged training

Students who are studying via distance learning are eligible for either 16 to 19 bursary but are likely to require financial help on a more infrequent basis (e.g. travel to exams). If this is the case, we will provide support in-kind, such as a travel pass, details of which shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

* **Residency**

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-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 the responsibility of the local authority;

Are to be treated as ‘looked after’ children; and

Are 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.

* **Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups**

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

In care (NB: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after);

Care leavers;

Receiving Income Support (IS) or 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; or

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

UC has now replaced IS, as well as other benefits above, for current and future young people aged 16 to 18. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and students with an EHC plan) may still receive the legacy benefits listed above.

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).

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 base the outcome based on a particular student’s needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

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

If a student’s study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student’s study programme when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

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.

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

* **Discretionary bursaries**

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

Learners wanting to apply for a **discretionary** bursary must provide evidence of household income. Ashley High School will consider the young person’s household income as the **main** eligibility criterion.

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 apply for a discretionary bursary.

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

Level of household income

Distance to travel between the student’s home and the institution, or a location for a placement

The number of dependent children in the student’s household

The requirements of their study programme

Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help

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.

* **Evidence**

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

Claimants will be required to provide at least 3 forms of documentation in support of their application. Please see the table below for accepted forms of documentation. We may also ask for, a P60, or 3-6 months’ worth of bank statements as evidence of self-employment income.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefit received** | **Evidence required to support application** |
| Council Tax benefit (other than single occupancy) | Local Council letter stating you currently receive this benefit |
| Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) | Benefits Agency letter stating you currently receive this benefit with an income based payment dated after 30th June 2017 |
| Housing Benefit | Local Council letter stating you currently receive this benefit |
| Income support | Benefits Agency letter stating you currently receive this benefit dated after 30th June 2017 |
| Income Based Job Seekers Allowance | All pages of the Benefits Agency letter stating there is an income based payment attached, dated after 30th June 2017 |
| Pension credit (Guarantee credit) | All pages of the Award Notice issued by the Pension Service, dated after 30th June 2016 |
| Working Tax credit | All pages of the Inland Revenue Award Notice for April 2017 to April 2018 |
| Child Tax Credit | Provided not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 |
| Immigration Support | Support under part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 |
| Other Needs | There may be learners who fall out of all the categories outlined above but face great barriers to continuing in education or training post 16 or find they have challenging circumstances in the year. These applications will be evaluated on an individual basis |

**Application and payment process**

* **Applications**

Applications should ideally be submitted by 30th September 2024 to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. This date will be clearly stated on the application form.

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 (either via email or via letter) whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school’s complaints procedure.

* **Payment process**

Ashley High School will determine which young people should be eligible to receive a discretionary bursary and how much they should receive.

Ashley High School will manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within our budget, targeting bursaries towards those facing the most significant financial barriers to participation.

Ashley High School will assess the young person’s actual need for financial assistance before determining whether to award a bursary. Bursaries will not be used to substitute for other sources of financial support e.g. childcare payments made under the Care to Learn scheme, or payments to meet residential costs under a Residential Support scheme.

Bursaries will not take the form of regular payments for living costs, which would then be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000. Receipt of other benefits and financial support does not exclude a young person from receiving a bursary (e.g. a young person who is receiving support from Care to Learn may also receive a bursary) if he/she is also experiencing financial difficulty with meeting costs associated with learning.

Bursaries will be used to help young people pay for the costs related to participation e.g. meals whilst attending their course, transport, books and equipment or other course-related costs.

In the case of the bursary being awarded towards the cost of equipment and text books, Ashley High School will then determine if these resources should be returned to the school at the end of their course for use by other learners. This will not be appropriate for all equipment purchases such as for some vocational provision.

Ashley High School will not use the bursary for any purpose designed to give the school a competitive advantage over other providers, such as the provision of benefits or gadgets. Nor will they be used for:

* enrolment or administration fees imposed by the school, academy, college or training provider;
* fees for access to college facilities;
* block subsidy of canteens;
* block subsidy of transport;
* block provision of equipment, materials or books.

Ashley High School will determine the frequency of bursary payments, taking account of the purpose and limited funding being available for the year.

* **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 95% and above

Signing and following the behaviour contract

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.

We will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

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, and any decision will be confirmed to the student in writing.

**Change in circumstances**

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

**Record keeping**

Any paperwork and documents we retain for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, documents as evidence and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with our data protection policy, privacy notices and record retention schedule. These can be provided on request.

**Unspent Funds**

Funding for discretionary bursary funding cannot be carried forward for more than 1 year. Unspent funding must be reported to the ESFA using the [online enquiry form](https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Education_and_Skills_Funding_Agency__ESFA__enquiry_form), specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The ESFA will recover all unspent funds.

**Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by Nicola Lightfoot – Assistant Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by Diane Wilson – Headteacher.