

Ringwood School
16- 19 Bursary Fund Policy

POLICY DETAILS

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Author	Mr A Walbrin
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To be reviewed by	Audit, Risk & Finance Committee

16-19 Bursary Fund

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

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
2. discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with the funding rules.

Ringwood School follows the guidance issued by the ESFA to support its students. The address of the guidance for 24/25 and 25/26 are shown below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2025-to-2026>

Eligibility for Bursary Awards

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on the 31st August of the start of the forthcoming academic year to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in that forthcoming academic year.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.

16 to 19 study programmes at Ringwood School are designed to provide students with a structured and challenging learning programme that supports their development and progression in line with their career plans. Study programmes are individually tailored but will typically combine the elements below:

1. substantial qualifications that stretch students and prepare them for education at the next level or for employment.
2. English and Maths where students have not yet achieved a GCSE grade 4.
3. work experience to give students the opportunity to develop their career choices and to apply their skills in real working conditions.
4. other non-qualification activity to develop students' character, broader skills, attitudes and confidence, and to support progression.

Ringwood school places equal value to all aspects of the programmes of study.

Discretionary Bursary

Eligibility Criteria

Available to any student who finds themselves with financial hardship and faces potential barriers to participation.

The School considers the provision of free school meals to those students that meet eligibility (as advised to us by Hampshire County Council) to be an appropriate use of this Bursary Fund, and this will be automatically applied, rather than requiring separate application from students. Beyond this, applications will be considered on an individual basis and discretionary awards made, subject to funding being available.

Students facing financial hardship are invited to apply for assistance with essential course-related or other costs supporting participation in Education, for example:

- Transport to or from school
- ICT equipment
- Meals at school (in circumstances where free school meals is not automatically applied)
- Materials - calculators, art equipment, stationary etc
- UCAS fee and travel to open days
- Course-related protective clothing - sportswear, lab/art coats, safety goggles etc
- Trips, visits and sports activities directly relevant to a course of study
- Clothing
- Examination resit fees

The school may choose to procure any items required by students. All applications will be assessed on an individual basis. The school will also consider other exceptional circumstances when assessing applications for example if the student is providing care to a sick or disabled relative or facing a sudden change in circumstance.

Appropriate evidence confirming income will be required for the School to undertake the ESFA required assessment of financial need. Our baseline position is that applications will be accepted from students that are already showing as eligible for free school meals, provided evidence is provided that the household is presently in receipt of universal credit or other income support. We will consider applications from students not showing as eligible for free school meals, but more so on an exceptional basis, and from which we will request evidence that net household income (including any benefit payments and monthly payments from a separated parent) does not exceed £2,500 per month whilst also most importantly then considering the merits of the application ie meeting the low income threshold does not give entitlement to an award but is one foundation – **the main consideration will be how the requested financial support will help to overcome the specific barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.** In addition, the School will manage the total level of payments granted to students to remain within the overall funding provided to the School.

The sort of information that might be requested includes one or more of the following:

- Universal credit award notices
- Payslips, P60 or other third-party confirmation of income

- Self-Employment Income – A SA302 form; or accountants' letter on headed paper

Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate. Students should be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have and must not be automatically awarded £1,200. Ringwood school will ensure students are eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups in each year they require support.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- 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
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

Conditions

Young people who are awarded a bursary will be expected to meet the criteria of the student agreement (signed in September each year). This includes:

- Demonstration of excellent attendance (95% authorised)
- Actively engage in lessons and demonstrate consistently an attitude to learning that ensures progress.
- Actively engage in the pastoral programme, house system, enrichment and volunteering opportunities to enhance your Post 16 experience.

Applications for Bursaries

Application forms are available via the School website (Sixth form / Sixth Form Life / Bursary) and for any help or questions, please ask our Sixth Form administrator (Mrs Flynn). Two opportunities in September and January are offered for students to apply for a bursary. If, however, students find themselves in financial hardship at any time during the academic year they should see Director of Sixth Form Mr Walbrin.

On the application form, students will need to:

- I. State the amount of money that they are applying for.

- II. Explain why the money is necessary and **provide specific details** of what the money will be spent on e.g. cost of termly bus pass.
- III. Provide evidence of the financial hardship warranting the award of a bursary.
- IV. Understand and agree that receipts will need to be submitted for items purchased.
- V. Sign acceptance to the terms & conditions of the bursary award (Student Agreement)

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by letter or email as soon as reasonably possible after receipt of a correctly completed application, with the target being not longer than 2 weeks. Applications are processed by Mr Walbrin, Director of Sixth Form and approved by both Mr Sismey, Head of Business & Finance and our Headteacher, Mrs Symonds.

Payment of Bursaries

As part of communication of a successful bursary award, the method of payment will also be proposed from the options noted earlier, being:

- The School procuring the item directly for the student or
- The student procuring the items and being reimbursed by the School on presentation of receipts
- The School advancing the funds to the student to purchase the item and retrospectively presenting receipts as proof of purchase

Depending on the size and nature of the award, payment schedules may vary to support the student and enable them manage their finances appropriately.

Any student who leaves Ringwood School before the end of the examination year will be required to repay any unspent bursary.

Ringwood School reserves the right to withdraw and seek repayment of any funding if evidence is submitted indicating the bursary has been received under false pretence, or is not being used for the purpose for which it was approved.

Appeals

All students have the right to appeal against any decision made in respect to a bursary award or non-award. Appeals must be made in writing and submitted within 10 working days of the decision. Appeals regarding applications should be sent to Mr Walbrin, Director of Sixth Form.

Appendix 1: Example of Application form for Bursary

Appendix 2: ESFA Checklist on Administering the Bursary Fund

Appendix 3: ESFA Checklist on Validating Applications

APPENDIX I

APPLICATION FOR SIXTH FORM DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

Applications are to be made via the Sixth Form area of the School website under “Sixth Form Life” / “Bursary”

An extract is included below of the two main sections that are required:

7. BURSARY AMOUNT REQUESTED AND REASON FOR APPLICATION

Students facing financial hardship are invited to apply for assistance with school course-related costs, for example: • Transport to or from school • Meals at school • Materials - calculators, art equipment, stationery etc . Further guidance is can be accessed in the policy on our website.

An example of how to apply: £155 for 90 bus pass to school (2 will be needed for academic year).

*

Enter your answer

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT EVIDENCE THAT CAN BE PROVIDED ON REQUEST (please add details below)

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IMPORTANT: The personal information you provide will be used for the purpose of processing this application form and will be in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. Awards will be made at the discretion of the School and the School’s decision is final.

Enter your answer

Appendix 2: ESFA Checklist on Administering the Bursary Fund

This is a list of the most important things that institutions should and should not do when administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

This does not replace the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide](#) which institutions must read in full.

Institutions should:

- publish a policy or statement on their website setting out how they will use their Bursary Fund and what eligibility criteria they use
- consider the relevant local authority's transport statement when setting their Bursary Fund policy
- ensure application forms, bursary policies and any supporting information are clear that the Bursary Fund is intended to help students with their actual costs of participating. Institutions should ensure their forms avoid any terminology such as 'guaranteed bursary' or wording such as 'you will automatically get a bursary of £1,200 if you are in one of the defined groups'
- base all decisions about which students receive help from the bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student. Institutions must carry out a financial assessment for each student to establish their household income, whether there is an actual financial need and what kinds of costs the student has
- fully verify each student's eligibility and need for a bursary for vulnerable groups before submitting any funding claim to the [Student Bursary Support Service](#)
- consider whether they can provide support to students in-kind – by buying a bus pass or books or providing a credit or voucher for a meal, for example
- retain evidence to show how they have determined the amount of bursary to pay each student and, for cash payments, hold evidence to support the payment made
- ensure students are eligible for the Bursary Fund each year – their circumstances and needs can change so institutions should ensure students complete an application form for each academic year and the form should be signed by the student
- retain copies of any documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their Bursary Fund conditions, including the impact on payments if they do not attend and the institution's rules about returning equipment paid for from the Bursary Fund
- consider having more than one person who can process bursaries, with segregation of duties or a contingency plan if that person was absent

Appendix 3: ESFA Checklist on Validating Applications

Section	Item	Completed?
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Student meets the age criteria.	
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Eligible education provision.	
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Student meets the residency criteria for post-16 provision.	
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Evidence of eligibility has been retained.	
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Student falls within one of the defined vulnerable groups for example, in receipt of the specified benefits in their own right or in care/care leaver.	
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Financial needs assessment carried out to confirm financial need and actual costs they have. No student should automatically receive £1,200.	
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Appropriate evidence seen and copies retained to confirm student's eligibility, including the letter to support in care.	
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained.	
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.	
Discretionary bursary	Evidence to confirm the student meets the institution's bursary fund criteria, including household income and statement of actual participation costs.	
Discretionary bursary	Evidence of income and overall eligibility obtained, and copies retained.	
Discretionary bursary	Assessment of student's actual financial needs carried out. Block, blanket or flat rate payments are not permitted – the financial support from bursary funds should reflect the actual costs the student has.	
Discretionary bursary	Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained.	
Discretionary bursary	Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.	