

# Featherstone High School

## 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy



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**Non Statutory Policy**

## Contents Page

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Aims	1
Guidance	1
Definitions	1
<b>2.0 Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>1</b>
The Governing Board	1
The Headteacher	2
The Bursary Panel	2
Staff	2
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.	2
Parents	2
<b>3.0 How we use the bursary fund</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4.0 Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries</b>	<b>2</b>
Age	2
Eligible education provision	3
Residency	3
Asylum seekers	3
Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups	4
Vulnerable Bursary (Level One)	5
Discretionary Bursary (Level Two and Three)	5
Hardship	5
<b>5.0 Evidence</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6.0 Application, payment and appeals process</b>	<b>6</b>
Application	6
Declaration	6
Appeals	7
<b>7.0 Conditions of payment</b>	<b>7</b>
Attendance & Punctuality	7
Bank account & Method of payment	7
Change of young person's financial circumstances	7
<b>8.0 Monitoring and record-keeping</b>	<b>8</b>
Monitoring arrangements	8
Record-keeping	8

## 1.0 Introduction

### Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of the 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 16-19 bursary fund for the 2024 to 2025 academic year](#). This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.
- The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education and benefit from post-16 education and training.
- The bursary fund is not intended to support costs not related to education (living costs), extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities or to provide learning support – services that the school already provides for students – such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.

### 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 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.

## 2.0 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.

### **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.

### **The Bursary Panel**

Featherstone High School has assigned a Bursary panel which will review applications, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence given. Students will be notified of the outcome within two weeks of receipt. The Bursary Panel consists of:

- Sixth Form Administrator
- Director of Sixth Form
- Director of Finance and Operations.

### **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.

## **3.0 How we use the bursary fund**

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 4 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

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 two types of 16-19 bursaries:**

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries which the school awards using policies set in line with the ESFA funding rules.

### **Bursary funds can typically be used for the following:**

- Transport
- Books and Equipment
- Uniform
- Trips that are an essential part of the curriculum and progress beyond Sixth Form.

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

### **Age**

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2024 to 2025 academic 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 plan (EHCP)
- 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](#).

### **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 section 4, 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 the vulnerable groups bursary are **not** automatically entitled to receive bursary support. 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).

**Vulnerable students** can receive contributions **of up to £1,200** per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When granting bursary requests, **cases will be looked at individually** and the amount contributed towards items will be based on particular student needs.

Students who are entitled to the **discretionary bursary** may receive contributions of **up to £400**.

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 ordering and paying for the items that they have **requested**, where possible to do so. Bursary amounts will not be provided as regular payments for living costs.

#### **The following groups of young people are eligible to apply.**

- Group A: Vulnerable young students – Guaranteed Bursary
- Group B: Students who are eligible for Free School Meals
- Group C: Students facing Financial Hardship – based on receipted expenditure.

There are 3 separate bursaries that students could qualify for:

### **Vulnerable Bursary (Level One)**

You could receive up to £1,200 if you are:

- In or have recently left local authority care;
- Disabled and you get Income Support in your own name;
- Disabled and you get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name;
- Disabled and you get Universal Credit in your name in place of Income Support or ESA.

### **Discretionary Bursary (Level Two and Three)**

You can apply for a discretionary bursary if you are **not** eligible to receive the vulnerable bursary, but still need financial help to stay on in school. Featherstone Sixth Form provides **two levels** of discretionary bursary support.

**Level 2** - For students whose gross household income is below **£16,500** as assessed by HMRC. Students whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit should **also** apply to their Local Council for Free School Meals.

**Level 3** - For students whose gross household income is between **£16,500- £25,000** as assessed by HMRC.

Students will be entitled to receive items that support the costs of continuing in study, such as for clothing, resources and travel. This may also be issued in the form of food in which case money will be paid directly into their lunch accounts.

### **Hardship**

We understand that circumstances and needs may change later in the year. 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, are encouraged to 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.

## **5.0 Evidence**

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

- A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the student's name

- 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
- A copy of the UC claim from the Department of Work and Pensions.

## 6.0 Application, payment and appeals process

### Application

All students who believe they are eligible for a 16-19 Bursary should submit a bursary application form on Applicaa.

There will be up to three bursary application windows as detailed below:

**Window 1:** All bursary applications and resource requests must be submitted no later than Monday 30th September by 5pm. If applications are not submitted by this date, the next available opportunity for students to have their applications and requests reviewed will be when Window 2 opens.

**Window 2:** All bursary applications (or new resource requests for those who applied in Window 1) will need to be submitted no later than Friday 31st January. If applications are not submitted by this date, the next available opportunity for students to have their applications and requests reviewed will be when Window 3 opens.

**Window 3:** All bursary applications (or new resource requests) will need to be submitted no later than Friday 21st March. If applications are not submitted by this date, there will be no further opportunities to submit requests or new applications unless authorised by the bursary panel.

### Declaration

It is important to note that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. This might result in a referral to the police. To acknowledge understanding of this, students and/or their families will be required to sign a declaration form prior to submitting their application for approval.

### The bursary application process has two stages:

**Stage 1:** Complete the 16-19 Bursary application form through Applicaa, to provide evidence of entitlement and also an itemised list of support that the student wishes to receive.

**Stage 2:** Applications will be reviewed and authorised by the Bursary panel. The Finance department will oversee the ordering of items and vouchers as requested. The school may also choose to make in-kind payments, such as for travel passes, UCAS payments and netbook deposits. You will be notified in writing if your application has been approved.



## **Appeals**

If any student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Director of Sixth Form outlining their reasons why.

The Director of Sixth Form will convene a 16- 19 Bursary Appeals Panel, consisting of:

- A Deputy Headteacher
- 1 member of staff from the Senior Leadership Team

The panel will then meet, and a decision will be communicated to the complainant within twenty-one days of receipt of the complaint.

## **7.0 Conditions of payment**

### **Attendance & Punctuality**

Students in receipt of the bursary will be expected to satisfactorily meet punctuality and attendance requirements, as outlined in the Sixth Form Handbook and below. These conditions are not additional to those expected of any young person within the Sixth Form.

- The student must not have unauthorised and unexplained absence or lateness to school or lessons
- The student must have over 95% attendance and punctuality at all times
- The student must be up to date with all subject work and hand in all coursework on time
- The student must show the required commitment to their studies at all times
- The student must sit all their examinations

### **Bank account & Method of payment**

Where possible to do so, bursary payments for both defined vulnerable groups and discretionary bursaries will be paid out to students in-kind rather than cash. This will help to ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments can include travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and required equipment.

Where students receive payments in the form of BACS transfer this will be paid into the students own bank account. A basic bank account (which students can open at age 16) allows BACS transfers and allows the student to withdraw money. Support will stop should a student cease to be learning at the school.

### **Change of young person's financial circumstances**

Any young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform the school should their financial circumstances, or those of their parent/guardian/carer(s) change (e.g. increase in household income, Free School Meals being withdrawn).

This does not automatically mean any future bursary payments will be stopped but would result in a review to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped, and the funds redistributed.

## **8.0 Monitoring and record-keeping**

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the Sixth Form team annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the bursary panel.

### **Record-keeping**

Receipts for expenditure and purchases made with bursary funding form part of our audit and assurance requirements.

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.