



## 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governors
July 2025	July 2026	Lynn Hawkins	Full Governing Body

### 1. Introduction

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.

This policy sets out how the scheme will be administered at Ridgeway School and Post 16.

### 2. Aims

Our 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.

### 3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

### 4. 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

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

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

### **Executive Headteacher**

- The Executive Headteacher has overall responsibility for approving this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy
- The Executive Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring staff are familiar with the policy and that it is applied consistently.

### **Staff**

- Staff are responsible for implementing the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.
- The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate guidance and support in relation to this policy and its implementation.

### **Parents and Carers**

- Parents and Carers are expected to notify the Lead of Post 16 of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy. They are encouraged to support their young person to make an application and make available all necessary evidence.

## **6. How the Bursary Fund is Used**

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See eligibility criteria section 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 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for students in vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

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

- Transport costs for journeys not covered by school transport or a Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- Essential books
- Essential equipment
- Other essential course related costs

## **7. Eligibility Criteria for the 16 to 19 bursary**

### **7.1 Age**

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2025.

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 students in 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.

## **7.2 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 ESFA or by 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.

## **7.3 Residency**

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

## **7.4 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.

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

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following four criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 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

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, we will look at cases individually and base the outcome 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.

## 7.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

Are a student whose parents or carers are in receipt of:

- Income support\*
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support from the National Asylum Support Service
- Tax Credits (Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit)
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance\*
- In receipt of Universal Credit

AND expect to have a household Inland Revenue assessed annual income of less than £16,190 for the current tax year (2024/25) and confirmed annual income of less than £16,190 previous tax year (2023/24)

\*From 2013 the phased introduction of the Universal Credit to replace Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payments to replace the Disability Living Allowance commenced. Where applicable, these benefits will be taken into consideration.

We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive based on each student's individual circumstances **and** their actual financial need.

Students must apply for a discretionary bursary each academic year to enable us to review the student's eligibility position. Students will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

## 7.7 Evidence

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

- Written confirmation of a student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority; and/or
- Written confirmation of a benefit award or tax credit notice, in the name of the student (for either bursary) or the parent (for the discretionary bursary)
- P60
- Previous 3 to 6 months' worth of payslips

The requirements are detailed in the application form.

# 8 Application and Payment Process

## 8.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by the end of September 2025 but no later than 10th October 2025 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 and the terms and conditions that apply. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

Each application will be subject to the following:

- A full assessment of the student's financial position using the evidence submitted
- A full assessment of the student's ability to stay in full-time education based on their financial needs associated with their programme of study at Ridgeway School
- An assessment to establish that the bursary will support students to make at least expected levels of progress

## **8.2 Payment Process**

Payments in kind will be made wherever possible, such as travel passes, books, equipment or provision of school dinners.

Monetary payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account will be made in exceptional circumstances and made weekly or monthly for qualifying students.

## **8.3 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 of 90% or higher
- Following the Ridgeway code of conduct

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.

All students and parents / carers are required to sign a declaration in the application form relating to the application being made.

## **9 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.

## **10 Record Keeping**

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

## **10 Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the 6th Form Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Headteacher.

## **11 Equalities**

Ridgeway School will apply this policy fairly and without prejudice. The school recognises and will abide by its duties to ensure that pupils and staff are protected from discrimination in relation to their protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This policy has been written with due regard to the Equalities Act 2010.

## **Useful Documents**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision-2024-to-2025>

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Ridgeway School 16-19 Bursary Fund 2025/2026 Application Form