

16 – 19 Bursary Policy

Updated for the 2026 to 2027 academic year, following a compliance review against the DfE 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide

Document Control

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1. Introduction

The Sixth Form Bursary Fund is set up to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can stay in education. There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

- A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for students in one of the defined vulnerable groups which is based upon an assessment of needs.
- Discretionary bursaries that institutions award to meet individual needs, for example transport, meals, books and equipment. Support is also available to contribute to the cost of travelling to university interviews, open days and for other course-related costs.

This policy and the bursary eligibility criteria are published on the school website and shared with Year 11 pupils and their families ahead of the Sixth Form options evening, so that this information can be used when making post-16 decisions.

2. Vulnerable Bursary

An application for a vulnerable bursary can be made where the applicant is in one of the groups below:

- You are in or recently left local authority care
- You get Income Support or Universal Credit in your own name
- You get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your own name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC)
- You get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit (UC)

We do require original evidence from external agencies, key worker/social worker or evidence of benefit in your own name.

3. Discretionary Bursary

For those not falling into one of the vulnerable groups and where financial support is needed to stay in education, an application can be made for a discretionary bursary. Applicants must be between 16 and 19 years old and in full-time education. The amount of bursary funding is dependent on the following evidence

- Annual household income of £20,000 or less
- The requirements of student's programme of study.
- Distance from school and travel costs will be considered as part of the individual assessment of need. Students may be eligible for TfL's 16+ Zip Oyster photocard (free bus and tram travel, subject to TfL's own eligibility criteria) or the 18+ Student Oyster photocard (discounted travel for those in full-time education aged 18–25). Applicants should confirm what TfL support, if any, they already receive; where this does not cover a student's actual travel costs, the shortfall can be considered under the bursary.
- Behaviour, attendance and punctuality will be monitored on a weekly basis, against a target of at least 97% authorised attendance and consistent punctuality. Where these are not met, or where a serious behaviour incident results in an internal or external exclusion, the Sixth Form Bursary Application Panel will review the individual circumstances of the student before deciding whether to withhold that week's payment. Reasonable causes – including illness, a safeguarding concern, or circumstances connected to being in care or a care leaver – will always be taken into account, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Virtual School Head will be consulted before any payment to a looked-after child or care leaver is withheld or suspended.

- Please note that absence or lateness will need evidence as to the reason in order to continue to receive the bursary payment.

4. Exceptional Circumstances

The bursary fund can also help with hardship needs arising from a sudden change in the financial circumstances of families during the year, such as a redundancy or sudden drop in income. Students who apply with exceptional circumstances will be viewed on an individual basis where financial need can be evidenced. A covering letter should be included, outlining the circumstances and providing supporting evidence.

5. Evidence

All applications to access the Sixth Form Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of student's eligibility, the individual assessment and the student's actual participation costs shall be retained by the school to provide financial assurance as required. All application forms and supporting evidence will be retained securely for 6 years, in line with DFE funding assurance requirements and the school's Data Protection Policy and retention schedule. All evidence will be treated as confidential.

Acceptable supporting evidence for the Vulnerable Bursary will be a:

- Statement from the Local Authority confirming the student's current or previously looked after status.
- Recent Entitlement or Award Statement setting out the benefit to which the student is entitled.

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Discretionary Bursary** will be evidence of the below. We require the 3 most recent Universal Credit monthly award statements as the primary evidence of household income. Where a household is not in receipt of Universal Credit, other supporting evidence can include a Tax Credits Award Notice letter (TC602) for the 2025 to 2026 tax year – Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit closed to new and ongoing claims from April 2025, so this will only apply to a small number of legacy households – a Pension Credit Award Notice, or a P60/Self-Assessment Tax Calculation (SA302) for the 2025 to 2026 tax year. Other supporting evidence can include:

- Universal Credit award statement (primary evidence)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit / Working Tax Credit (legacy claims only)
- P60 / Self-Assessment Tax Calculation (SA302)

Please note that applications received without the appropriate supporting evidence cannot be processed. Applicants will be informed if additional information is required and there may be delay in processing the form if the necessary information is not received with the original application.

Discretionary awards are not for a guaranteed sum of money but are dependent upon the level of funding allocated to the school each academic year. It is also dependent on the number of applications received.

It is the student and parents' responsibility to ensure that the evidence provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. Please be aware 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. It may also result in a referral to the police with the possibility of facing prosecution.

Please note the receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits to families.

6. How the Bursary will be Paid

The bursary is intended to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study program e.g., costs of essential books and equipment for your course, field trips and other course-related costs or support in the following areas:

- Transport costs not covered by the TfL 16+ Zip Oyster
- Academic Books
- Equipment including laptops and portable 4G hotspot devices (Equipment issued with a value of £100 or more should be returned to Harlington School once a student's study program is completed and students will need to sign a contract agreeing to this)
- Field trips and other similar course-related costs
- UCAS or similar applications
- The costs of attending university interviews, a reasonable number of open days (maximum 5) and careers related events
- Work experience

Receipts need to be uploaded for us to reimburse the cost as long as it is within the allocated amount. Receipts need to be uploaded each week. Bursary reimbursement requests are looked at every Wednesday and if your request is authorised you will be reimbursed by the following Friday. Bursary payments are made directly to the student's bank account and will be made in arrears by bank transfer.

If a student is unable to meet the upfront costs for any essential item, this should be discussed with the Sixth Form team. Students can then agree to a payment plan enabling them to make essential purchases to support their studies.

The bursary will need to be paid into a bank account in the student's own name and proof of the bank account, e.g. a bank statement will need to be provided. Where a student is unable to open or operate a bank account in their own name, the Director of Finance and Operations will agree an alternative payment arrangement (for example, in-kind provision such as a travel pass, vouchers, or direct payment for equipment) on a case-by-case basis.

Behaviour, attendance and punctuality will be monitored weekly. Upon meeting the school's expectations, payments will be made at regular, shorter intervals (for example monthly) rather than as a small number of large instalments, in line with DfE guidance that bursary funding should not be paid as lump sums. Deductions will only be made following the individual-circumstances review described in Section 3.

These conditions will not be additional to those expected of any student within the Sixth Form.

7. How to Apply

Students will be emailed the link to the Bursary portal to submit an application. The bursary portal will have detailed criteria and an application form. The student is required to fill out the application form. All this information should be submitted via the online portal, along with supporting evidence by the date specified in the pack. For any additional support with this please contact The Sixth Form Administrator in the Sixth Form office. Any applications made after the deadline may not be accepted as funds have already been allocated to other students.

8. Process

All applications for a bursary will be assessed by the Sixth Form Bursary Application Panel comprising the Director of Finance and Operations, Head of Years for Sixth Form, Pastoral Leader and Sixth Form Administrator.

The Panel will review the application and supporting evidence and students will then be notified of the outcome by letter.

Any attempt to obtain Bursary funding by deception (i.e. forging of signatures and/or deliberately providing misleading information) will be considered a severe breach of a student's contract. In such a case, the school reserves the right to suspend that student's Bursary support for the remainder of their time in the 6th Form.

9. Administration of the Scheme

Any remaining underspent funds at the year- end will be carried over to the next academic year for continued support of students eligible for the Bursary and will be fully utilised for Bursary students before any new academic year funding allocation is used. The school can retain up to 5% of Bursary funding as an administration contribution. Underspend can only be carried forward for one academic year. Any funds not spent within that period will be reported to the Local Authority and returned, as required by the DfE 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.

10. Right to Appeal

Where a decision is taken that a student should not receive support through the Discretionary Bursary Fund, the student should raise the issue with the 6th Form Administrator in the first instance. If this does not satisfactorily resolve the issue students have the right to appeal to the Director of Finance & Operations. This should be done in writing and, if necessary, a parent/carers can be involved.

The school is not obliged to provide more than the above appeal hearings and appeal decisions are final. There is no mechanism for appeal against a stoppage/suspension decision to any outside party.

A panel consisting of the Director of Finance and Operations, Heads of Year and 6th form administrator will consider and respond to appeals within three weeks of receipt. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld, it will be referred back to the Application Panel with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld, the appealing party will be signposted to the school's Complaints Procedure.

11. Change of Student's Financial Circumstances

Any student receiving a bursary has a duty to inform the school if their financial circumstances change, or those of their parent/guardian/carers change. This does not automatically mean any future bursary payments will be stopped but this would result in the Application Panel convening to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped and the funds re-distributed.

12. Student Withdrawing

Where a student in receipt of a bursary withdraws from the school and does not transfer to another education or training provider, bursary payments made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled payments to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

13. Student Transferring

Where a student in receipt of a bursary transfers out of the school to another education/training provider in-year, the school will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of bursary payments to enable the student to complete their learning.

14. At the End of a Student's Course

If students have purchased learning resources through the bursary that can be reused by students in future years, for example course textbooks. These should be returned to school on the completion of student's study.

15. Equality and Data Protection

Harlington School administers this scheme in line with the Equality Act 2010, and will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any student because of a protected characteristic.

Applications for a bursary involve special category data, including information about disability benefits and looked-after or care leaver status. This information is collected, stored and shared only as far as needed to assess and administer applications, in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the school's Privacy Notice. All application forms and supporting evidence are retained securely for 6 years, in line with ESFA funding assurance requirements.

Application Form

If you require help in completing this form, please speak to the 6th form Administrator

SECTION 1

STUDENT DETAILS (please print details and complete in black ink)

First Names:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	Home Telephone Number:
Email:	Mobile Number:

SECTION 2

- ☐ Vulnerable Bursary - please complete section 3, 5, 6 and 7
- ☐ Discretionary Bursary - Please complete section 4, 5, 6 and 7

SECTION 3

Vulnerable 16-19 Bursary (£1,200 p.a.) - The student who is applying for the award should tick the box that applies to them (please attach proof - see section 5):

- ☐ I am living in care
- ☐ I am a care leaver
- ☐ I am in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in my own name
- ☐ I am in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in my own name, and I am also in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in my own name

SECTION 4 – Discretionary 16-19 Bursary

I am a student who permanently lives in a household whose parents/guardians receive one of the following (please tick the appropriate box):

Name of Person receiving benefit	Free School Meals	Income Support / Universal Credit	Job Seeker's Allowance	Employment Support Allowance	Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

SECTION 5 – Evidence

All information provided in this section will remain confidential. Evidence of your eligibility for the Vulnerable Bursary and for the Discretionary Bursary must be sent with this application.

Qualifying Documentary Evidence for Vulnerable Bursary

- Statement from the Local Authority confirming the student's current looked after status.
- Recent Entitlement or Award Statement in the student's own name setting out the benefits to which the student is entitled.

Qualifying Documentary Evidence for Discretionary Bursary

This table has been updated to reflect that Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit closed to new and ongoing claims from April 2025, and to bring the reference tax years up to date; Universal Credit is now the primary form of evidence.

Universal Credit (primary evidence)	Please supply all pages of your 3 most recent monthly Universal Credit award statements (including the page with your name and address details).
Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance	Please supply all pages of a letter showing the breakdown of Jobseeker's Allowance dated within last 3 months (to include the first page with your name and address details on and the page that states that your Jobseeker's Allowance is Income Based).
Income Related Employment Support Allowance	Please supply all pages of the letter from DWP/ Job Centre Plus dated within the previous 3 months (including the first page with your name and address details on).
Guaranteed Pension Credit	Please supply your MIOOO Pension Credit Award Notice (dated within the last 3 months) which clearly shows that you are in receipt of the Guaranteed Element of the State Pension Credit.
Child Tax Credit (legacy claims only)	Please supply a copy of your Inland Revenue tax credit award notice for the 2025 to 2026 tax year (TC602). Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit closed to new and ongoing claims from April 2025, so this evidence will only apply to a small number of legacy households.
P60 and/or Self- Assessment Tax Calculation	Please supply the P60 for tax-year 2025 to 2026 or Self-Assessment Tax Calculation Form (SA302).

In most cases, the last 3 months of your Universal Credit Award Notice should be sufficient for the Discretionary Bursary. In the absence of a tax credit notice please refer to other forms of evidence as listed above. We may request further evidence from you.

Please enter the amount you consider your household income to be in the box below, together with any other information we should know. Please attach paper evidence to your application. Photocopies of evidence should be provided as documents will not be returned.

£

The table below shows the evidence you will need to provide with your application form. Once you have declared and identified your benefits/income on the application, find the type of income that applies to you in the first column, and the evidence required column will tell you what you need to provide. Then tick if you submitted this as evidence.

Type of Income	Tick if enclosed	Type of Income	Tick if enclosed
Universal Credit		Personal Independence Payment	
Income Support		Carer's Allowance	
Job Seekers Allowance		Child Tax Credits	
Employment Support Allowance		Grants or bursaries etc.	
Incapacity Benefit		Disability Living Allowance	

SECTION 6 – Student Bank Account Details (proof is required)

(You should check that your bank account can accept BACS Direct Credits)

If you are unable to open or operate a bank account in your own name, please speak to the Sixth Form Administrator about alternative payment arrangements.

Bank Name (e.g. NatWest)	
Branch Location	
Name of Account Holder	
Sort Code	
Account Number	
Roll Number (building society accounts)	

SECTION 7 – Declaration

Please read the declaration below carefully before signing:

1. I/We attach evidence of eligibility for a Nominated/Discretionary Bursary
2. I/We understand that if I give false information or withholding information, my application will be cancelled and, if necessary, action will be taken to recover any money paid to me.
3. I/We undertake to refund any sum arising from an overpayment for any reason.
4. I/We will inform the school if there is a change to family earnings which affects eligibility for the Bursary Fund.
5. I/We understand that payments may be withheld, following a review of my individual circumstances, if I do not comply with the school expectations regarding Behaviour, Performance and Attendance or if I am absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks without providing evidence of the reason.
6. I/We understand that the relevant information regarding my application may be shared with other agencies in regard to education funding bodies, and will be processed in line with the school's Privacy Notice and UK GDPR.
7. I/We understand that any monies paid out may be reclaimed if I leave School before I have completed my studies.
8. I/We understand that any bursary awarded only covers the 26/27 Academic Year and a new application will be required for any future years.

The Bursary fund will assist me in purchasing or paying for the following items:	
1-	2-
3-	4-

Signed (Student):	Date:
Print Name:	

Signed (Parent/Guardian):	Relationship:
Print Name:	

Please return this completed form to:

Harlington School, Finance Office, Bursary Award, Pinkwell Lane, Hayes, Middx UB3 1PB

Or via email: Finance@harlingtonschool.org

For School Use:	
Date Received:	Bursary Approved: Yes ☐ No ☐
Vulnerable Bursary -: Yes ☐ No ☐	Discretionary Bursary -: Yes ☐ No ☐
Evidence Seen/Returned	Evidence Seen/Returned
Ticked By Head of 6th Form on students' expectations	Behaviour Attendance Performance
Authorised By Head of 6th Form:	Date:
Authorised By Director of Finance:	Date:
First Payment Date:	