

## Leigh Academy Hugh Christie 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

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### Revision Log

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Brief detail of change</b>

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### **1. Introduction**

This policy statement sets out the schools provision for supporting students who are eligible for the 16-19 bursary fund. This policy is based on guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2025-to-2026>

Our school aims to ensure that:

- Processes for the use and allocation of the 16-19 bursary fund are transparent
- Parents/ guardians and students are made aware of financial support available and how to access these funds
- Parents/ guardians and students are clear on the prerequisites students must fulfil to receive the funds such as satisfactory attendance and conduct

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 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. **Vulnerable-Group Bursary** – targeted support for specific high-priority students.
2. **Discretionary Bursary** – awards based on individual financial need, usually linked to household income.

Bursary funding is to help eligible students with costs such as travel to and from school or college, to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example) that are required for their study programme. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support – services that you give to students, for example, counselling or mentoring – or to support extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities that are not essential to the students' study programme or to provide living costs support.

## **2. Students entitlement**

### **2.1 Eligibility**

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed in addition to the individual student's actual financial needs. No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.

To be eligible for either the vulnerable or discretionary bursary fund, 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 program or course that they began when they were aged 16 to 18- years-old
- 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.

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 1 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
- Be a 16 to 19 traineeship program.

### **2.2 Residency**

Students must meet the residency criteria in [ESFA funding regulations](#) for post-16 provision. This document also specifies the evidence institutions must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility).

### **2.3 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
- 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.

#### 2.4 Bursary for vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 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
- 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 budgets (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 programs lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and 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 program 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 as regular payments for living costs.

### 2.5 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in the sections above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

- The school will make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls) or items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.
- The school will base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

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

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

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.

### 2.6 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 Department of Work and Pension

### **3. Enrolment letter information and promotion**

**Letters will be uploaded to our school website once distributed to students.**

We promote the use of the 16-19 Bursary Fund by:

- Promoting the fund on the sixth form area of our website with key information
- Including information on the fund in our prospectus and promotional material to prospective students
- Displaying posters in our Sixth Form Area to raise awareness with students
- Providing an application form for the bursary at the point of enrolment
- Reminder texts and emails to parents/ guardians to increase applications in the first module
- Providing an electronic copy of the application form for accessibility to families and sharing this on our website

### **4. Application form**

Applications should be submitted early in module one and ideally at the latest by 28th September to enable the school to assess the level of demand and make discretionary awards fairly. The date each year will be stated on the application form and all communication home.

Applicants will be notified in writing, usually via email, whether their application has been successful along 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 complaint procedure.

**16-19 Bursary Fund Application Form - Academic year 2025/26**

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Advisory Group:</b>	
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I am applying for a (please tick one):

- Vulnerable Bursary  
 Discretionary Bursary

<b>Reason(s) for Application (What is it likely that the money will be spent on):</b>
Method of normal transport to and from school
Distance travelled (approximately)
Number of days that transport is required in a week.
Number of dependent siblings in the household.
Annual household income (please attach three months confirmation of income).
Details of additional extenuating circumstances that you think relevant to the claim.

<p>I have read and understand the Hugh Christie School 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy and I confirm that I meet the necessary criteria. The information contained and any supporting evidence regarding our family circumstances is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.</p> <p>Signed: ..... (Parent or Guardian)</p> <p>Print Name: ..... (Parent or Guardian)</p> <p>Date: .....</p> <p><b>Return your completed form to the Sixth Form Team by the 15<sup>th</sup> of September.</b></p>
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## Guidance notes for students and parents when applying for the 16-19 Bursary Fund

### **1. What is the 16-19 bursary fund?**

The 16-19 bursary fund was introduced to provide financial support to young people aged 16-19 who face financial barriers to participating in education or training, providing they meet the institutions expected standards of attendance and behaviour.

### **2. Who is eligible for the bursary scheme?**

We offer two types of bursary that you can apply for:

1. The **Vulnerable Bursary**, to be eligible you must meet all **four** of the following conditions:
  - A) Attend Hugh Christie Sixth Form
  - B) Start Year 12 or 13 in September 2024
  - C) Be aged 16-18 on 31 August 2024
  - D) Belong to one of the following groups:
    - a) Young person in car, including unaccompanied asylum seeking child
    - b) Young care leaver
    - c) Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in your own right
    - d) Receiving Employment Support Allowance and are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments
2. The **Discretionary Bursary**, to be eligible you must meet **four** of the following conditions:
  - A) Attend Hugh Christie Sixth Form
  - B) Start Year 12 or 13 in September 2024
  - C) Be aged 16-18 on 31 August 2024
  - D) Living in household with an **annual income below £40,000** before tax and national insurance or received free school meals
  - E) An accompanied asylum seeker

### **How much money will I get?**

If you are eligible for the vulnerable bursary you will be entitled to up to £1200 which will be held by your academy and released to you for specific educational reasons. An agreed monthly amount may be paid into your bank account for travel or other regular expenses.

If you are eligible for the discretionary bursary you will not be allocated a specific amount but your needs will be discussed with the Sixth Form Team. This money will be used to support your educational studies. Students should not presume that funds will be released and must always ensure the 'costs' will be agreed before any payment is made.

Receipts must also be provided for purchases before payment can be made.

### **What can I use the bursary for?**

You can use the bursary to help with costs related to your studies, such as text books, travel to school or books and equipment.

## **Are there any other conditions to receive bursary?**

You will be expected to:

- Maintain 90%+ attendance (subject to exceptional circumstances)
- Adhere to and uphold the Sixth Form behaviour policy at all times.

## **How do I apply?**

1. Complete the application form
2. Attach evidence of your financial and/ or living situation to support your application. These must be original documents, not photocopies.
3. Give the application to Mrs. Pike in the Sixth Form office.

## **When do I apply by and how will I hear the outcome of my application?**

We ask that you submit your application by the 15th of September ideally and at the latest by the 28th of September 2025 where there may be reasonable delays, however, we will consider late applications throughout the year. We ask that you meet the earlier deadline to ensure that we can make payments to you as soon as possible, where applications are successful.

We will email everyone who applies to tell you the outcome of your application, this will include communicating to relevant parents/ guardians.

We will also contact you if we need more information from you to process your application.

## **What should I do if I am not successful and want to query my application?**

Initially, contact the Assistant Principal for Sixth Form, Mrs. Stubbs. If you still have outstanding queries please contact the Headteacher, Mr. Shah.

## **How do payments work?**

Bursary payments can be made into your own bank account by a process called BACS transfer. It is important you have your own bank account in your name as payments can only be made into your own account via a bank transfer.

When purchasing goods, bursary money will only be issued once a bursary spend form is authorised by the Sixth Form Admin, Mrs. Pike. It is important you get authorisation before purchasing goods or services. You will need to provide receipts as proof of purchase.

If you do not follow the procedure, you may not be refunded any money spent.

### **What happens if my financial or living circumstances change?**

If you have a change of personal circumstances such as a change of address or household income, you must let us know immediately in writing.

If you change your bank account details you must also write to us immediately.

If you leave school before completing your course, your payments will be stopped.

## **5. Bursary Process**

### **5.1 Vulnerable Bursary - to support students who are living more independently in some form**

Subject to meeting the condition requirements as detailed below, payments will be made in the following instalments:

- October (£300)
- February (£300)
- April (£300)
- June (£300)

### **5.2 Discretionary Bursary - to support students in lower income families of those facing barriers to learning**

- The school will make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls) or items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate
- The school will base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

Payments will be via the students own bank account in the name of the young person. The young person must have a valid account in their name unless there are exceptional reasons which mean an appointee has been named to manage the affairs of the young person.

Payments will be made by the finance department on a monthly basis, students will be provided with the cut off date to submit bursary spend forms by and given an estimated reimbursement date when the spend form is approved.

We ensure families and students know about the bursary process by:

- Communicating on the application form and promotional material the point of contact for any queries for payments
- Meeting with the student, along with parents/ guardians where required, to discuss the best methods to support the student such as priority expenditure or methods of direct purchasing through school or regular payments

- Bursary student briefings once a term (two modules) to ensure they are budgeting well and looking ahead at expenditure they may have

NB: Common errors government guidance suggests are identified at audit, which can lead to the recovery of funds, include:

- no clear bursary fund policy in place which explains, for example, the criteria the institution will use to assess students and how they will make decisions about the amount of support they award
- bursary fund application forms which are not fit for purpose because they do not capture all the necessary evidence to confirm the student's household income and the actual participation costs they have
- application forms not completed and signed by students each year to allow an assessment of their current financial needs to be made
- financial assessments not always being undertaken or undertaken based on partial/incomplete evidence
- making blanket or flat rate/fixed rate payments to students and payments not based on actual need for financial support or the types of costs they have. For example, a student has £7.50 of travel costs per week and no other defined costs but they are paid £20 per week
- using bursary funding to pay for foreign/overseas field trips where the content can be found in England at a cheaper cost and/or using bursary funding to support field trips that are not an essential part of achieving a student's study programme goals
- evidence to support household income not being retained

### 5.3 Conditions for bursary payments

Payments of the bursary are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

- Students are expected to maintain 90%+ attendance (subject to exceptional circumstances)
- Students are expected to adhere to and uphold the Sixth Form behaviour policy at all times.

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.

#### 5.4 Change in circumstances

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

#### 5.5 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. Should you wish to access your files at any time, please contact the Sixth Form team at [sixthform@lahughchristie.org.uk](mailto:sixthform@lahughchristie.org.uk)

#### 5.6 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, 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.

#### 5.7 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal for Sixth Form every 12 months. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher and the governing body.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Principal Palak Shah	Responsible for strategic and operational support and challenge of Assistant Principal in charge of Sixth Form's decisions at Principal level.
Vice Principal Aimee Acton	Direct line manager of Sixth Form. Responsible for strategic and operational support and challenge of Assistant Principal in charge of Sixth Form's decisions.
Assistant Principal responsible for Sixth Form Emma Stubbs	Planning and setting the strategic direction of 16-19 Bursary Fund provision at Hugh Christie
Link Governor for Sixth Form	Responsible for strategic and operational support and challenge of Assistant Principal in charge of Sixth Form's decisions at Governor level
Sixth Form Admin Support	Admin support as directed by the Assistant Principal in charge of Sixth Form