KING EDWARD VI
SHELDON HEATH
ACADEMY

16-19 Bursary

Responsible Board/Committee	SGB
Policy Type	Academy Policy
Policy Owner	Harvey Sehejpal
Statutory	Yes
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Review Cycle	Annual This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per its designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will only become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
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1. Aims and scope

The Kesh Sixth Form 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 and this policy refers to both:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries

This policy aims to:

- Set out clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make sure that bursary funds are administered appropriately and fairly, with due regard to the Equality Act 2010
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the type of support that is available and how to apply for it
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. 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 or 17 who was previously looked after for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 (they can have entered care at any age, but they must have spent at least 13 weeks in care after their 14th birthday before leaving after the age of 16), or
  - A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to turning 18 for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Approving these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with relevant requirements

4.2 The Headteacher and Head of 6th Form

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure that staff are familiar with these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies
- Making sure the policy is being applied consistently

The Head of 6th Form is responsible for:

- Setting eligibility criteria for bursary funding and making sure these comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Promoting awareness of the 16 to 19 bursary fund to prospective applicants and their parents/carers

4.3 Bursary panel

The bursary panel is responsible for reviewing applications and supporting evidence in accordance with this policy.

The panel consists of:

- Head of 6th Form
- Deputy Head of Sixth Form and/or LM for Sixth Form

4.4 School business manager/bursar/head of finance

The bursar is responsible for ensuring that the bursary funding is accounted for accurately.

4.5 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing these 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

4.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of:

- Any concerns or queries regarding these 16 to 19 bursary fund policy
- Any change in circumstances that might affect eligibility for bursary funding

4.7 Students

Students are responsible for meeting the conditions attached to the receipt of any support from the bursary funding.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See sections 6, 7 and 8 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 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

We use the fund to provide students with support to fund items the student would otherwise need to buy to participate:

- Transport
- Books
- Equipment
- Field trips that are essential to the course and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days
- Specialist clothing
- Emergency meal and travel support

We will provide support for students from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible.

The bursary fund is not for non-education related costs. For example, it will not be provided for:

- General living costs
- Non-essential extra-curricular activities
- Any learning support and pastoral services that we provide

The bursary fund may be used to provide exceptional further help with childcare costs if the costs exceed the Care to Learn scheme's weekly maximum rates. Childcare provision must meet Care to Learn scheme eligibility rules, and evidence will be required that the maximum amount is already

paid through that scheme and a top up is required. Any top up will be made in line with Care to Learn funding rules and go directly to the childcare provider, not the student.

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed **in addition** to the individual student's actual financial needs. This means there is no guarantee of funding.

- No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have
- Funding provided to each eligible student is based on their actual participation needs (supported by evidence) and not a flat or fixed-rate payment that does not reflect the actual costs they face
- Students with no participation costs will not receive funding

6.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2026 to 2027 academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2026.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary (see section 8 below) if they:

- Are continuing on a study programme or course that they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old (19+ continuers), or
- 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 an eligible 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 aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 bursary fund.

6.2 Eligible education provision

Students' provision must be subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also fall into 1 of these groups:

- Funded directly by the DfE, or by the DfE via a local authority
- Otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the DfE's list of qualifications approved for funding
- Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a King's Trust Team Programme

Students are not eligible if:

- They are on an apprenticeship programme
- They are participating in any waged training

Students who are studying via distance learning are not likely to require financial help from the bursary fund. If they do require financial help, we will provide support in kind, such as a travel pass to attend exams. Details of this shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the DfE funding rules for 16 to 19 provision.

6.4 Asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seeking children (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-seeking young people who have not had asylum refused.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are:

- The responsibility of the local authority
- To be treated as 'looked after' children
- 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. Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1 to 6.4 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care
    - Note: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after and are not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups
- Care leavers
    - Note: where a young person has left the care of the local authority via achieving permanence through an order, such as a Special Guardianship Order, they are a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (see section 3 of this policy) to be eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups
- 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
    - Note: students must be in receipt of DLA or PIP and ESA or UC to be eligible. Receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the criteria

UC is replacing some benefits for new claimants, including IS and income-related ESA, so current and future young people aged 16 to 18 will not be in receipt of 'legacy' benefits. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (such as students with an EHC plan) may still receive 'legacy' benefits.

Students will be funded to reflect the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have.

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). Should we refuse the application on this basis, we will discuss this with the student and their support worker/parent/carer where applicable.

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, 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, to provide more or less than £1,200 per year for a student who meets the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups if it is necessary, in all the circumstances, for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from the school's discretionary bursary allocation or the school's own funds.

If a student's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, this will be considered in the assessment for the bursary amount provided as they may not need as much financial support as those on longer programmes. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding the correct bursary amount to ensure it is appropriate.

We will review each 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.

8. Discretionary bursaries

8.1 Criteria and assessment

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1 to 6.4 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

To be eligible for the **discretionary bursary**, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education. Students who apply for the discretionary bursary fund will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on their actual financial need.

The discretionary bursary can be used to help eligible students with the costs of:

- Transport (this does not replace the statutory transport duty local authorities have);
- books and equipment;
- Laptops and computer equipment;
- field trips and other course-related costs;
- attending university interviews and open days;
- attending apprenticeship interviews

The Academy will decide which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much support they receive, depending on each student's circumstances; there is not a blanket or flat rate payment to all students.

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 still apply for a discretionary bursary.

In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

The Academy will award bursaries to students whose family's household income falls below £16,000 per year. The Academy will consider awarding a tiered bursary to students whose family income is between £16,000 and £20,000 depending on the individual's circumstances. Factors such as the number of dependent children in the household or whether the young person is a young carer or a parent and the wider family circumstances will be considered when assessing a student for a discretionary bursary. Students in receipt of free school meals are also entitled a discretionary bursary.

- Level of household income (below £16000 or tiered for other income below £20000)
  - Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or the location of 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

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 against the available funds.

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

8.2 Emergency meal and travel support

Students who face severe hardship can apply for emergency meal and travel support from the discretionary bursary, for the days they attend their study programme. At our discretion, we may provide this support without completing the usual household income and evidence checks.

Students should email the Sixth form with details of any emergency where funds, help or support is required so that it can be considered.

Emergency support will be a temporary arrangement, with a full discretionary bursary assessment completed as soon as practicable.

We will keep records and documentation related to emergency support for audit purposes.

8.3 Free School Meals

As well as the bursary fund, some students may be eligible for free school meals. Students who are entitled to free school meals must contact the Academy's main reception for information on how to apply for this entitlement/ use the same procedure as the rest of the academy.

9. Application and payment process

9.1 Applications

Applications should be submitted via the printed application form for 2026/2027 available from the Sixth Form office.

Applications should ideally be submitted by 25th September 2026 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 (via email) whether their application has been successful, together 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 complaints procedure.

Any enquiries about the application process should be directed to the Head of Sixth Form, H.Sehejpal.

9.2 Evidence

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

- A copy of the UC or IS award notice from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP, 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

9.3 Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

Students will be required to request Bursary items in the application form initially. Following this they may email a request to the Head of Sixth Form using the order form with the details and link for items. Awards made using the Students circumstances will then be used to purchase items as in-kind payments (as per the DFE's preferred option) - items may include anything to support study, education and travel Eg, items such as Bus Passes, Books, Calculators, uniform etc.

Where bursaries are paid in cash, the Academy will pay these by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. Bursary payments cannot be paid into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. If the student is in one of the defined vulnerable groups and cannot manage their own funds, the Academy will work with other stakeholders as appropriate to identify who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

9.4 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 above 95% [subject to exceptional circumstances]
- Following the KESH Sixth Form Learner Agreement and code of conduct
- Receipts for expenditure and purchases made with the bursary funding are provided [must be provided by email and will only be reimbursed for Bus Passes and Travel costs as other payments are in-kind and purchased by the Academy. - for audit purposes you must retain receipts for actual costs incurred.]

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.

If students have received in-kind support such as equipment or travel cards, they will be asked to return these if they fail to meet the conditions.

We will stop payments 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.

If we find evidence that a student or parent/carer has knowingly submitted misleading or fraudulent information, resulting in the student receiving a bursary they were not entitled to, we will attempt to recover the overpayment from the student. Any instances of significant fraud will be reported to the DfE.

9.5 Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel, and in the event of an appeal, the 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during processing, payment and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the learner and/or their parent/ carer(s) will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to sharing any information further.

10. 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.

11. Record keeping and audit

The school will maintain comprehensive and accurate records relating to the 16 to 19 bursary fund. These records will be kept securely and be readily available for audit purposes. Records will include, but are not limited to:

- Copies of application forms and supporting evidence
- Proof that students meet eligibility criteria
- Records of ‘zero bursary’ students
- Details of assessment decisions and rationale for awards
- Records of all payments made to students, including dates, value and purpose
- Copies of documents signed by students to give formal agreement to the conditions of payment
- Evidence of student attendance and progress monitoring
- Records relating to emergency meal and travel support (including the number of students supported, the value and reason for support, and signed confirmations from students)

Records will be retained for 6 academic years after the end of the academic year in which the student completed their programme.

12. Unspent funds

Funding for bursary funding cannot be carried forward by the school for more than 1 year. Unspent funding must be reported to the DfE by the school using the customer help centre, specifying the amount of funding and the year(s) it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The DfE will recover all unspent funds.

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be monitored by H. Sehejpal (Head of 6th Form)

This policy will be reviewed by H. Sehejpal annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

14. Complaints or appeals

Where any student or parent is unhappy with how we have managed their application for bursary funding or the support that has been provided, they are free to make a complaint or appeal as per the school's complaints policy.