



Chiltern Way Academy Trust

Turning Futures Around

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Responsibility for this policy (job title): Director of Schools

Responsibility for its review: CEO

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The *16-19 Bursary Fund* provides financial support to students; its purpose is to help with specific education-related costs that may otherwise be a barrier to participation.

This policy is based on the [16-19-bursary fund guide 2023-2024](#) from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Types of Bursary

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursary

- 1) bursaries for *defined vulnerable groups* of up to £1,200 a year
- 2) *discretionary* bursaries

Who is eligible to apply for the funding?

Age

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2023 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Students aged 19 or over must be continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and can only apply for the discretionary bursary

Residency

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

Education Provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted) and fall into one of the following groups:

- funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of [qualifications approved for funding](#)

Students are not eligible if they are:

- on an apprenticeship programme
- on any waged training

Defined Vulnerable Group Bursary

Students who are in any of the defined vulnerable groups and who have a financial need can apply for this type of bursary.

The defined vulnerable groups are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right **and** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks would be paid a pro-rata amount.

Students will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount to participate. Similarly, a student may meet the defined vulnerable group criteria but may not have a financial need, this may be because the financial needs are already met. Chiltern Way Academy can refuse the student's application on this basis.

Definition of in care and care leavers

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' 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) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'

A '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*

Evidence of eligibility

The following proof of eligibility for vulnerable groups will be required:

- For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority
- For students in receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC), a copy of their IS or UC award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training
- For students in receipt of UC, a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- For students receiving UC/Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their UC claim from DWP (UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided.

Chiltern Way Academy will only submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) for the vulnerable group bursary when evidence to confirm eligibility has been received.

Discretionary Bursary

Chiltern Way Academy may award a discretionary bursary to those students facing genuine financial barriers to participation. We set the criteria and will consider factors such as:

- Household income (less than £33,000, as a guideline)
- The student was eligible for Free School Meals in Year 11 or is currently eligible
- The household is in receipt of other means tested benefits
- The number of dependent children in the student's household

Meeting any of the criteria above does not guarantee an award. All decisions on how much bursary is awarded will be based on each individual student's circumstances and their actual financial need. Any discretionary bursary awarded will be used to fund specific items.

Evidence

When assessing the application and amount of discretionary bursary, you will be required to provide proof of household income and we will request to see the following applicable evidence:

- P60
- Pay Slips (most recent 3 months)
- Bank statements (most recent 3 months)
- Universal Credit award notices for the most recent 3 months
- Tax credit award notifications
- Self-employment income evidence
- Other means tested certification
- Child Benefit notification

(Where the Local Authority checking service shows that a student is eligible for Free School Meals, as this is means-tested, we may not require further evidence).

How we calculate a discretionary award

- An award decision will be based on the individual student's financial need, the bursary fund available to us and the number of qualifying students in our 16-19 provision.
- We can choose to reserve up to 30% of the fund to be awarded after the autumn term of the same financial year, to help us support students whose financial circumstances may change during the course of the year.

How the bursary fund is to be used

The purpose of the bursary fund is to help students with costs specifically associated with their education/training course. These include but are not limited to:

- Books
- Cost of attending interviews and open days
- Equipment
- Educational trips
- Transport e.g. bus pass to support independent travel (but does not replace the statutory duty of the local authority)

Chiltern Way Academy can request that students return specified items at the end of their study programme so that these items can be used again by another student, where appropriate. We reserve the right to keep these items on campus where necessary.

Conditions for receipt of bursary payments

Payments/payments in kind are conditional on students meeting the following standards in relation to attendance and behaviour:

- Attendance is above 90%
- Behaviour is in line with school expectations

All students will be required to sign a declaration confirming they agree to these conditions. Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their award withheld. The impact on attendance caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration.

We will withhold awards where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding school holidays, unless there is evidence that the student intends to return).

As much as possible, we will avoid sanctioning students to the extent that the bursary funding is withheld for a whole term.

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.

If there are changes in circumstances which may affect the eligibility for a bursary, applicants must notify the academy without delay; we reserve the right to review the payment of an award and take money back.

How bursary payments will be made

Where an application for a 16-19 bursary award is successful, the award will be held by Chiltern Way Academy and used to purchase specified items directly on behalf of the student.

In some situations, where Chiltern Way Academy deems it appropriate, the defined vulnerable bursary award may be paid in instalments directly into a bank account held in the student's name only.

A student's unspent bursary award may not be carried forward to the next year. Chiltern Way Academy will recycle funding that has not been spent because a student has left/did not meet the agreed conditions; this funding will be used to offset funding claims for newly identified students who meet the criteria.

How to apply

By completing the *16 to 19 Defined Vulnerable Bursary Fund Application Form 2023/24* and/or *16 to 19 Discretionary Bursary Fund Application Form 2023/24* available from the school/school website.

Applications for the *Discretionary Bursary* should be submitted at the start of the academic year to which they relate and before the autumn half term holiday, so that we can fairly assess and allocate awards to qualifying applicants. As financial circumstances can change, there will be a second application round and all forms should be submitted before the spring half term holiday, to be considered for the second round. We will continue to accept applications after this date, but it should be borne in mind that our discretionary fund is a limited fund.

Applicants will be notified in writing whether an application has been successful and the amount of the award. If a decision on an award is to be appealed, then the academy's complaints procedure should be followed.

Applications should be made on an annual basis, where there is a need. The SBSS has set a deadline of 31st July 2024 for the *Defined Vulnerable Bursary* for the 2023-24 academic year and will not pay any claims submitted after this date.