



Tudor Grange Academy Solihull

16 – 19 Bursary Policy

Document title	16 – 19 Bursary Policy
Author/originator	Head of Sixth Form
Date of Approval/Review	12.01.2023
Approved by	Principal / Local Governing Body
Version	2023
Policy review date	Annual – 01.08. 2024

Contents

1	Introduction and Aims	2
2	Categories of Bursary	2
3	Eligibility	3
4	Allocation of Funds	4
5	How we use the bursary fund	5
6	Conditions for receipt of student bursaries	5
7	Applications.....	6
8	Late applications	6
9	Payments.....	6
10	Appeals/Complaints.....	7
11	Data and Confidentiality	7
12	Audit.....	7
13	Misuse and Fraud.....	7
14	Review.....	7

1 Introduction and Aims

The 16-19 bursary funds are paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and are available to all eligible Sixth form students studying at Tudor Grange Academy Solihull up to the age of 19. Bursaries are to be used to provide financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation in education.

We aim to:

- have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds;
- make clear to parents/carers and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it.

This policy is based on current advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

2 Categories of Bursary

There are two types of 16-19 bursary:

2.1 Vulnerable Student Bursary

This is a bursary of up to £1200 per year for young people who:

- meet the general eligibility criteria below; and
- fall within one of the defined vulnerable groups as set out in section 3b below.

2.2 Discretionary bursary

This is available to all young people who:

- meet the general eligibility criteria below; and
- meet the additional eligibility for the Discretionary Student Bursary as set out in section 3.3 below.

It is awarded at the school's discretion based on individual needs to cover specific costs such as transport, books or equipment, and other course costs.

Awards will be dependent on the funds available from the ESFA and the number of eligible students.

3 Eligibility

3.1 General Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a bursary, all young people must satisfy the following criteria:

- Age - students must be over 16 and under 19 at 31 August 2023. If a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to receive the bursary to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner. Students may also continue to receive the bursary at age 19 or over if they have an EHCP plan.
- Residency – students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for sixth form provision 2023-24. This document sets out the evidence required to confirm eligibility and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advicefunding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>
- Provision - students must be participating in provision that is subject to a quality assurance inspection by a public body (e.g. OFSTED) and funded by the ESFA. The young person must then also meet the additional eligibility criteria outlined below for the category of bursary they are applying.

3.2 Additional eligibility for Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students must fall into one of the categories below to be eligible for a vulnerable student bursary:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Young people personally in receipt of 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 as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

The allocation of these funds is subject to audit and applications must be supported by evidence of eligibility. Tudor Grange Academy Solihull will retain copies of evidence for a period of 6 years. All information will be treated in confidence and held securely.

Acceptable evidence includes:

- Recent entitlement or award statement setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled. The evidence must not include any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training.
- Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked after status from the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

3.3 Additional eligibility for Discretionary Student Bursary

Where a student has met the general eligibility, but does not meet the vulnerable student criteria, he or she may be eligible for some support from the Discretionary Fund. Tudor Grange Academy Solihull has set three tiers of support based on household income, but will also consider those facing financial hardship due to exceptional reasons or circumstances:

Tier A - Students eligible to receive free school meals (FSM) will be eligible to claim a discretionary bursary and students whose household income is less than £22,000. For those students who have submitted a successful FSM application, please attach a copy of your confirmation letter to your application (Students claiming in this category will not normally be eligible to claim bursary funding for lunches, as they will be entitled to receive a free school meal at school)

Tier B – students whose household income is less than £26,000 may apply for support.

Tier C – students whose household income is between £26,000 and £30,000 may apply for support.

The following evidence will be considered as acceptable evidence for students applying for a discretionary bursary under Tiers B and C:

- A full Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN). This document from HMRC details entitlement to tax credits and shows the total income for the year (all pages of the document are required).
- Other Income Support or Universal Credit award letters that show evidence of income. All documents must relate to the current tax year.
- P60 End of year certificate
- Payslips from previous 3 months
- Bank statements for the previous 3 months
- Self – Assessment tax calculation (SA302) if self employed
- Evidence of other benefits, pension awards

Evidence must be submitted for all adults who contribute to household costs.

3.4 Exceptional circumstances/ additional costs

Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to an exceptional reason or circumstance, or who needs funds to cover an additional cost connected to their studies, can apply for funds by completing an application form requesting additional support available from the Sixth Form Office.

Students will be required to inform the school of any changes in their financial circumstances, which may affect their eligibility for bursary funding.

4 Allocation of Funds

4.1 Vulnerable Student Bursary

The funding for the vulnerable student bursaries is held centrally by the Student Bursary Support Service. Whenever a new student meeting the criteria is identified, Tudor Grange Academy Solihull will draw the funding down by completing and submitting a claim form via the SBSS online portal.

We will look at individual cases for these students, based on needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

4.2 Discretionary Bursary

- 5% of the fund will be held back for administration.
- Students applying under Tier A will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on their actual financial need.
- If there is still money in the fund after the allocation of funds to Tier A, students applying under Tier B will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on actual financial need.
- If there is still money in the fund after the allocation of funds to Tiers A and B, students applying under Tier C will be assessed individually and awarded a bursary based on actual financial need.
- If a student encounters unexpected costs connected to their studies, for example a field trip, then an additional claim can be made under the exceptional circumstances category.

Any award of bursary funding outside the thresholds set will depend on there being sufficient funds available and the relative needs of all eligible students.

5 How we use the bursary fund

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

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

- Transport
- Books and Equipment
- Uniform
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days

This is not an exhaustive list, however, any expenditure must be connected to the student's education.

Expenditure must be pre-approved by the school or it may not be reimbursed. When we purchase books or equipment for a student, the student is expected to return the items at the end of the study programme so that they may be used again by other students where appropriate.

The bursary fund may NOT be used for any of the following:

- Gift cards/vouchers
- Attendance rewards
- Goods and services benefitting the whole student body including those not qualifying for a bursary award
- Blanket cash payments not linked to individual need

6 Conditions for receipt of student bursaries

Students will be reviewed termly (re: their attendance, timekeeping and general conduct) throughout the year in accordance with the sixth form behaviour and discipline policy. In order for the ensuing payments to be authorised, students must be compliant with the code of conduct.

Upon review each term, students will also generally be expected to have attendance higher than 95% (subject to exceptional circumstances that impact on attendance including illness or caring responsibilities that will be considered on a case by case basis) for the term and should have no unauthorised absence. Students in receipt of this grant funding will not usually be eligible or granted any further financial support from the school towards these costs.

The Director of Sixth Form will make the decision as to whether the student meets the attendance and behaviour criteria set out above. If a decision is made to withhold payment, the student will be notified in writing (including email).

7 Applications

Application forms can be found via a link on the Sixth Form page of the academy website. Alternatively, paper forms are also available from the Sixth Form Office at the request of the student.

Once applications have been submitted via the website link, proof of eligibility will be requested via the administrators at the academy. Evidence of eligibility must be photocopies. We cannot accept originals; we cannot be responsible for any loss of evidence. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

Funding is not guaranteed by receipt of an application form. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis if eligibility criteria have been met and will be subject to the availability of funds.

Applicants will be notified as soon as possible of the outcome for initial applications and within two weeks of receipt for any subsequent applications.

An application form must be completed each year, to allow an assessment of current needs to be made.

All applications will be kept in the strictest confidence.

8 Late applications

Late applications will be considered at any point during the year for students whose financial circumstances change, or for new students joining the sixth form, provided sufficient funds are available. Once the discretionary bursary fund has been used, it will not be possible to consider further applications.

9 Payments

Bursaries are paid after the bursary application has been submitted and approved, after completion and approval of expenditure request form (available from the Sixth Form Office) and on production of purchase receipt. Payment will be made by bank transfer into a bank account held in the name of the student usually within 30 days.

Payments in kind will be used by the school wherever possible. This will always be the case for curriculum trips/activities paid for by the school and usually for course materials.

Any student who leaves Tudor Grange Academy Solihull before the end of the academic year will forfeit any remaining unspent bursary.

10 Appeals/Complaints

Should a student or parent/carer wish to appeal against a decision regarding financial support, the matter will be referred initially to the principal.

Complaints regarding the handling of an application for bursary funding should follow the school's complaints procedure (see the complaints policy available on the policy page of the school website).

11 Data and Confidentiality

All information supplied pursuant to this policy will be treated as confidential and in accordance with Tudor Grange Academy Solihull's data protection policy and records management policy (copies can be found on the policy page of the school website).

12 Audit

The 16-19 Bursary fund is subject to audit so the Tudor Grange Academy Solihull must retain all documentation relating to each claim, whether it was awarded or not and a brief justification. In particular, documentation should include:

- Application forms and evidence showing the student is eligible
- Evidence of payments received from SBSS (Vulnerable claims)
- Evidence of payments made to the students.
- Receipts for purchases made e.g. bus pass, book receipts.

All documentation will be retained for a period of 6 years.

13 Misuse and Fraud

Tudor Grange Academy Solihull has a duty to investigate instances of suspected fraud when a student is applying for bursary funds. When evidence is found that misleading or fraudulent information has been knowingly submitted by a student or parent, resulting in the student receiving a bursary that they should not have received, we will attempt to recover overpayment from the student.

If significant fraud is identified, the school has a duty to report to the ESFA. Significant fraud involves the amount exceeding £1200 or the particulars are novel, unusual, systematic or complex, or there is likely to be great public interest because of the nature of the fraud or the people involved.

The matter may also be referred to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their parent or carer facing prosecution.

14 Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Sixth Form annually.