

16-19 Bursary Fund 25/26

School Policy



1. Background

In March 2011, the Government announced a new 16-19 Bursary Fund scheme to provide financial assistance to those students who face a financial barrier to continuing in education post-16. The scheme has been put in place as a partial replacement for the Education Maintenance Allowance, which closed to new applicants on 1st January 2011.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has been allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA), the funding agency for 16-19 education and training.

This policy sets out the arrangements for how Altwood School will prioritise and administer the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2025/26.

The School is committed to ensuring the Fund is used to support financially disadvantaged students taking up or continuing in their education or training post-16 and achieving their learning aim(s).

The named contact at the School for all 16-19 Bursary support / enquiries is:

Miss Lynn Brittain – Deputy Head

2. Bursaries Available

There are two types of Bursary available:

i. Vulnerable Groups Bursary

A Bursary is available to all students who meet the general eligibility criteria as set out in this policy and who in addition, have been identified as belonging to a vulnerable group, details of which are also set out in this policy.

ii. Discretionary Bursary

A Discretionary Bursary is available to all students who meet the general eligibility criteria as set out in this policy. For support towards:

- Travel
- Books/school equipment
- Educational visits
- University visits
- Clothing for school

3. Bursary Amounts

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund determined by the EFSA. For 2025/26, the School has been allocated a total 16-19 Bursary Fund of £4991

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The school will deduct 5% of the 16-19 Bursary Fund for administration. A small sum is also held back to allow the school to respond to exceptional changes or hardship which may arise during the year. The contingency fund will be reviewed in April 2025 and any remaining funds will be distributed to eligible students.

All Bursary payments, both vulnerable and discretionary will be made subject to the individual needs of students and will not be a fixed amount.

A proportion of any Bursary may be retained by the School and used to support the central costs of books, equipment, and educational trips.

The school recognises that the ESFA encourages the payment of Bursary in kind rather than cash. It is therefore possible that students may be offered travel passes, vouchers, required textbooks or equipment in lieu of a cash payment.

4. General Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a Bursary, all students must be aged 16, 17 or 18 at 31/08/25 and who meet the EFSA residency requirements - as set out in document 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide 2025-2026 which can be accessed via this [link](#). This details the national funding residency requirements including those for Asylum Seekers.

5. Additional Eligibility for Vulnerable Groups Bursary

A vulnerable group bursary is available to all students who are identified as being:

- In Care
- Care Leavers

Or in receipt of

- Income Support or Universal Credit and supporting themselves or others.
- Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own right
- Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

6. Additional Eligibility for Discretionary Bursary Medium Band and Low Band

A Discretionary Bursary is available, subject to availability of remaining funds, to all students where:

- Parents / Carers have provided evidence that household income, assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, does not exceed £22,020 for medium band and between £22,021 and £32,000 for low band
- the student, or a sibling, qualifies for Free School Meals (FSM)

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- the students' parent/carer(s) are in receipt of one of the following:
 - Universal credit
 - Income Support.
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance.
 - Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
 - Any other evidenced UK benefit that is means tested.

All Bursary awards are made on the basis of student needs and while household income will be one factor in determining need, it will not be the sole factor.

7. Contingency Eligibility

Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to exceptional reason or circumstance change, can apply to access the contingency funds on an individual basis by submitting an application in writing.

8. Those Not Eligible

Applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund are not open to students aged under 16 or over 19 at 31 August 2025.

9. Evidence

All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence and these must be for all adult members of the household with parental responsibility. If you are a 2-parent household then we will require either a P60, Tax credit or self-assessment document for each parent.

Copies of evidence shall be retained by the School to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential and destroyed within 1 year of the young person leaving the School.

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Vulnerable Groups Bursary** will be either a:

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

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Discretionary Bursary** will be either:

- P60 End of Year Certificate for the financial year ending 5th April 2025 for each parent or carer.
- This certificate is a statement of earnings from an employer.

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- Self-Assessment Tax Calculation (SA302). This is the equivalent of the P60 for self-employed people. It must be for the correct adult and for the financial year ending 5th April 2025. The income will be shown as Total for year.
- Confirmation from the Local Authority of entitlement to Free School Meals.
- Universal Credit award notice. This must be for each of the last 3 months.
- Latest Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN) for the young person's household. This document from HM Revenue & Customs details entitlement to Tax Credits and the Total Income for the year 6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025.

NB. It is important that parents and carers provide clear and unambiguous documentary evidence of household income. Failure to do so will delay a decision on any award.

10. Payments

Payments

Subject to meeting the condition requirements as detailed in this policy, payments will be made in 3 equal instalments from November to April. Details of the date of payments will be confirmed in the award letter.

Payments will only be made via BACS (Banker's Automated Clearing Services) to a Bank Account in the name of the student applying for the bursary unless there are exceptional reasons which mean an appointee has been named to manage the affairs of the young person.

Bursaries in Kind

Where an award is in kind the school will arrange for the purchase and distribution of books or equipment. Other awards in kind will be made as required.

11. Qualifying Condition Requirements

Eligible students will need to complete a qualifying learning period of 6 weeks before they are able to receive Bursary payments. However, any eligible young person can make an application ahead of the six-week qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship, consideration will also be given for payment in advance of the six week period.

All students in receipt of a Bursary must meet weekly punctuality and attendance requirements of **95%** to ensure continued monthly payments. In addition, all students in receipt of a Bursary must behave appropriately and submit work of an appropriate level and to required deadlines. If the young person does not meet these conditions, the school will suspend Bursary payments pending and may cancel them entirely.

These conditions will not be additional to those expected of any young person within the School.

12. Application

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Applications for a Bursary may be made at anytime, but the school encourages early applications to ensure that sufficient funds are available and individual needs can be met. Unfortunately, once the Bursary Fund has been used, it will not be possible to consider further applications.

The deadline to be included in the initial assessment panel is **Friday 20th September 2025**.

The school can aid and guide students who may need assistance to make an application where they are unable to do so for any reason.

The school will also aid students to make an application where they are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from their parents / carers.

13. Process

All applications for a Bursary or to access the contingency fund will be assessed by a 16-19 Bursary Application Panel, consisting of:

- **Mrs C Harden** **Headteacher**
- **Miss L Brittain** **Deputy Head**
- **Mrs F Hall** **Finance Manager**

The Panel will review the application, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence. They may request additional information from students or parents / carers where they feel they do not have sufficient details to make an immediate decision. Students will be advised of the outcome.

14. Appeals

If a student or their parent/carer are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Headteacher outlining their reasons why. The Headteacher will convene a 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel, consisting of:

- **Mrs C Harden - Headteacher**
- **Link Governor**

The Panel will consider and respond to appeals within **two weeks** of receipt. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld, it will be referred back to the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld the appealing party will be signposted to the School's Complaint Procedure.

15. 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 young person and/or their

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parent/guardian/carer will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to sharing any information further.

16. Change of Financial Circumstances

Students in receipt of a Bursary have a duty to inform the School should their financial circumstances change, or those of their parent/carer change (e.g. increase in household

income that would affect the young person's entitlement to Free School Meals). This does not automatically mean any future Bursary payments will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped and the funds redistributed.

17. Students Transferring

Where a young person 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 young person to complete their learning aim(s).

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers *into* the School from another education / training provider in-year, the School will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete their learning aim(s).

18. Young Person Withdrawing

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary withdraws from the School and does not transfer to another education/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.

19. Supporting Documents

In addition to this policy being openly shared with all students and their parent / carer, the following documents will be used in the 16-19 Bursary process:

1. Application Form
2. Information for Students / Parents / Carers

20. Further Information

These arrangements will be reviewed annually and full guidance on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be located at this [Link](#):