



Watford Grammar School for Girls

16 to 19 Bursary

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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
- Make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year>

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 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.

Only students who meet this definition are eligible if they have a financial need.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy. The responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to the Curriculum Committee.

4.1. The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.2. Staff

The Head of Sixth Form/Assistant Head is responsible for implementing the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently and will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.3. Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 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:

- Travel to and from school;
- Books;
- Equipment;
- Essential Field trips and other course-related costs; and
- The costs of attending university interviews, open days and work experience.

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

6.1. Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2024 to 2025 academic year, students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they:

- Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, 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 a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school (accelerated study programme), 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.

6.2. Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

6.3. 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; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups (in-care group), 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.

6.4. Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 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; or
- 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 budget (19+ continuers and students with an EHC plan) may still receive the legacy benefits.

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 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, 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 programme 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.

7. Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- Those whose salaried household income is £30,000 or less. The amount paid will be dependent upon the total allocated to the school each academic year.

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 programme; and
- 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.

8. 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 last 3 months UC statements or IS award notice;
- A copy of the last 3 months payslips or P60;
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority; or
- Evidence of self-employed income.

Students claiming a vulnerable bursary must provide evidence of benefits in their own name or fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers.

9. Application and payment process

9.1. Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by 31st October 2024 to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make bursary awards on a fair basis.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the academic 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.

At the start of Year 13, students already in receipt of a bursary award must complete a Self-Declaration form to confirm their circumstances have not changed for their bursary award to continue. Written confirmation will be sent to confirm their bursary award for 2024/25.

Any unspent bursary award from the previous academic year is not carried over into Year 13 and ceases on leaving.

10. Payment process

Payments (discretionary and vulnerable) are made using the following process:

- Receipts for expenditure and purchases are submitted with a claim form. Students are encouraged to submit weekly claims to help them manage their finances;
- Claims are checked to ensure that the student meet the conditions in point 11 below; and
- Payments are made by BACs transfer to the student's bank account.

11. 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 90% unless absence is authorised
- Excellent punctuality
- Meet requirements of their Sixth Form Agreement of Planned Study and attend all timetabled lessons

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.

12. What the bursary fund cannot be used for

The Bursary fund (discretionary and vulnerable) must not be used to:

- provide learning support i.e. counselling, mentoring, extra tutoring or servicing of laptops;
- support extra-curricular activities where these are **not essential** to the student's study programme; and
- support the cost of local and overseas field trips that are **not essential** to the student's study programme.

13. Change in circumstances

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

14. 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: [Policies & Statutory Reports - Watford Grammar School for Girls](#)

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Head of Sixth/Assistant Head every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.