


<p><b>The Chiltern School</b></p>	<p><b>16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy</b></p>	
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Date Policy Adopted	Policy Review Date	Author
March 2026	March 2027	Kasia Stern

**The Chiltern School Vision**

*Where we learn and achieve together, where we dare to be different. Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, to inspire, innovate and promote the best practice in inclusive pedagogy, that is recognised locally, regionally and nationally for SEND development and provision, where we put the pupils at the heart of all decision making. Our children will leave being happy, confident, inquisitive and independent.*

### 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/carers and students the type of support that is available and the means of applying 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 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2023 to 2024 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

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 The governing board**

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but has delegated this to the headteacher.

In our school, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to the headteacher.

### **4.2 The Headteacher**

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

### **4.3 Staff**

Our Assistant Head with responsibility for Phase 3 oversight and the Family Work team are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently, in conjunction with the School Business Manager.

### **4.4 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to notify the Assistant Head with responsibility for Phase 3 oversight and the Family Work team 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:

- Transport e.g. to work experience placements, trips, etc.
- Learning resources and equipment e.g. books, sensory equipment, etc.
- Trips

## **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. No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.

### **6.1 Age**

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2023.

### **6.2 Eligible education provision**

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

- Be funded directly by the ESFA or by the ESFA via a local authority; (This is how The Chiltern School is funded).
- Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund;
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA's list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19; or
- Be a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

Students who are studying via distance learning are eligible for either 16 to 19 bursary, but are likely to require financial help on a more infrequent basis (e.g. travel to exams). If this is the case, we will provide support in-kind, such as a travel pass, details of which shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

### **6.3 Residency**

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

### **6.4 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, 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.

### **6.5 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, 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 listed above. 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.

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.

## **6.6 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 1 or more of the following criteria:

- Entitlement to Free School Meals
- Household income needs to be below £22,000 per year
- The student or their family is in receipt of means tested benefits

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

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.

## **6.7 Evidence**

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

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/ PIP in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC)
- A copy of the parent's income (banks statements, wage slips and benefit awards notice)

## **7. Application and payment process**

### **7.1 Applications**

Applications should be submitted by 15th January each year 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 (either via email or via letter) 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.

### **7.2 Payment process**

Payments are made using the following process:

- Make in kind payments, such as travel passes, books, equipment or vouchers for meals.
- Make a payment by BACS transfer to the student's bank account
- In exceptional circumstances a payment by BACS transfer may be made to the parent's bank account

### **7.3 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:

- Attendance level of 90% or more (excluding where students have known medical issues which impact their attendance).

All parents (or students with mental capacity in the area) 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 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.

### **8. 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.

### **9. 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.

### **10. Unspent funds**

Funding for discretionary bursary funding cannot be carried forward for more than 1 year. Unspent funding must be reported to the ESFA using the online enquiry form, specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The ESFA will recover all unspent funds.

### **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually.