



Wilmington Academy 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy 2023/2024

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund

The fund is made available from the government through its funding body – Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for 16-18-year olds - to provide assistance to students whose access to, or completion of, education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.

Eligibility Criteria:

The School 16–19 Bursary Fund will operate on three levels.

For all levels of support a student must be aged under 19 years of age on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study and must satisfy the ESFA residency criteria as detailed in the ESFA Funding Guidance.

In addition, to continue to receive a bursary the student must satisfy the following conditions:

The student must have no level of unauthorised and unexplained absence from all lessons or from School when they are expected to be present. In weeks where a student does have absence from School the Bursary will not be paid.

The student must be punctual to all lessons.

The student must not have broken the terms of the Sixth Form Contract.

Condition one: 100% attendance If absence is not authorised, there will be no payment for the week in question. All of the week's payment will be lost; the scheme does not allow part-payments for the weekly allowance. You need to apply for authorised leave in advance before taking time off for any of the following reasons. Failure to apply for leave in advance will result in your payment being stopped for that week.

AUTHORISED LEAVE IN ADVANCE

- Medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside School hours, e.g. hospital appointments which are supported by an appointment card.
- Religious festival.
- Visit(s) to University for an interview or open day. (Following the School's policy for number of visits.)
- An unpaid work experience placement that is an integral part of your course.
- Participation in significant extracurricular activity, e.g. drama or sport, at a regional or national level.
- Attendance at a probation meeting.
- Attendance at the funeral of a relative or close friend.
- Study Leave – your Bursary will be paid as normal during study leave up until the date of your final examination.

We recognise that on certain occasions you may not be able to attend classes through circumstances that are beyond your control. These absences may be treated as authorised providing you notify the School on Extension 238, in line with School procedures.

OTHER ABSENCE THAT MAY BE AUTHORISED

- Emergency situation of a family member, e.g. sudden, severe illness.
- Emergency dental/doctor's appointments.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

The following are some examples of absences and will be treated as unauthorised by the School and will result in your weekly Bursary payment being stopped. This is not an exhaustive list and the School reserves the right to make judgement on what counts as unauthorised absences:

- Holidays.
- Part or full time work not part of your programme of study.
- Absence of more than 1 day per term as a result of illness. (This can be adjusted in the case of a student with disability as defined by Equalities Act 2010.)
- Leisure activities.
- Birthdays or similar celebrations.
- Babysitting younger siblings.
- Driving lessons.
- Routine check-ups at dentist/doctor.
- Exclusion from a particular class or from the School

Condition Two: Attendance at all lessons on time

Persistent lateness to lessons will result in your weekly payment being stopped. Students must arrive to each lesson on time. Punctuality will be determined by the register mark taken at the beginning of each lesson.

Condition Three: Adherence to the School Sixth Form Contract

All Sixth Form students would have signed a copy at enrolment. – Do we have this within the LAT?

Emergency Food

Institutions can use their bursary fund in individual cases of severe hardship, to provide **food** support whilst a student attends their study programme, for a student they consider to be in real need, without undertaking the checks on household income or gathering other evidence that would normally be required. We expect this to only apply to a very small number of the total 16 to 19 student cohort.

We do not expect this arrangement to continue on an ongoing basis for any individual student - institutions should exercise their discretion in each case and should be mindful that this flexibility relates to food support only.

Household Income checking

Current eligibility for free meals only requires a single check of household income for each phase of education (Primary, Secondary or 16 to 19). In making decisions about bursary awards, institutions can now exercise discretion as to whether they carry out checks annually or just once at the beginning of a student's study programme. If an institution decides not to carry out annual checks of bursary fund eligibility, it must ensure a signed and dated (hard copy or electronic) self-declaration form is obtained from the student to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

Institutions should be aware that this policy is only currently applicable in the 2023 to 2024 academic year. Decisions have not yet been taken on free meals in further education or bursary fund arrangements for the 2024 to 2025 academic year and beyond. On this point, wherever practical, we will aim for consistency across bursary and free meals in further education policy, as well as across schools and FE institutions, in the future.

UC award notifications do not include any information on the benefits they replace. For this reason, the description of the bursaries for vulnerable group category that relates to receipt of UC or IS is that a student

must be receiving UC in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.

Universal Credit

UC has replaced IS and ESA as well as other benefits. Institutions will increasingly see students claiming bursaries for defined vulnerable groups based on receiving UC.

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Who is eligible to apply for 16-19 Bursary Funding?

Students following government (ESFA) funded full time or part-time courses, who are 16 years and over and satisfy one or more of the following criteria: -

- Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31st August 2023 who are in care, are leaving care, are in direct receipt of Income Support or are disabled and in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance/PIP
- Students who are economically or socially disadvantaged and at risk of not taking up or continuing in their education. This group includes students with physical or other disabilities, medical conditions and/or learning difficulties
- Students who have been in care, on probation, are young parents or are otherwise considered at risk
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees (who will have access to 16-19 Bursary Funding if they are in receipt of supportive evidence from DWP)
- Lone parents

Who is not eligible for 16-19 Bursary Funding?

- Students under 16 years of age or over 19 years of age on 31st August 2023
- Students who do not meet the residency qualifications
- If the student is on a programme that is less than 30 weeks their Bursary payments will be Pro-rata'd

How does the Academy assess applications and allocate 16-19 Bursary funding?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund and the Academy will prioritise allocation. There will be three priority groups, categorised as high, medium and low.

High priority group

Students aged less than 19 on 31st August 2023 and who fall into one of the following categories:

- Are currently in care (as defined by social services)
- Are leaving or have recently left care
- 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
- Teenage parents in receipt of income support or Universal Credit (UC)
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

Universal Credit has now fully rolled out and so young people aged 16 to 18 will no longer be in receipt of the other benefits listed above. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and those with an EHCP) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits

Eligible students will be guaranteed a £1200 bursary for costs such as transport, equipment etc.

Payments will be made at the start of each module (i.e. 6 times per year)

Medium priority group

Students who fall into any the following category:

- Have a gross annual household income of below £20,000
- Teenage parents not in receipt of income support

Eligible students in this group, if they apply to the 16–19 Bursary Fund by 15th September 2023, may be eligible for a contribution towards:

- The cost of transport, essential course equipment, trips, uniforms, materials, etc
- Financial support towards childcare costs and exam resit fees if aged less than 19 on 31st August 2023.

Payments will be made three times per year

Low priority group

- Have a gross annual household income of between £20,000 and £25,000

Those in the low priority group will be considered for funding based on the Academy allocation and subject to available funding after those in the high and medium priority groups have been awarded. In some cases, awards may not be made until after 31st December 2023. Students in this group may get a **contribution** towards the cost of essential course equipment, uniforms and transport costs (they may also receive a cash bursary if aged less than 19 years of age on 31st August 2023, if funds permit).

Payments will be made on a needs basis.

Applications

A 16-19 Bursary Fund Application form must be completed and returned to the Post 16 admin office by 15th September 2023 to ensure receipt of any bursary funds in line with the dates advertised. Any applications received after 15th September 2023 will still be considered under the same criteria but any payments may be delayed.

Criteria

Receipt of any funding is dependent on *Positive Attitude and Application*

The criteria are:

Punctual attendance at all timetabled lessons including enrichment and classes in other centres.

Appropriate behaviour at all times

Appropriate application in your work so that all deadlines for homework and coursework are met.

Absences

Absence due to sickness for more than three days needs to be supported by an SC2 form (self-certification sick-note) obtained from your medical centre. For sickness of one or two days a letter from parents/carers is required within three days of the absence. Persistent short-term illness may not be authorised. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in the absence being recorded as 'Unauthorised'.

You must inform your tutor prior to any events which are listed below:

Hospital/Orthodontist/Doctors' appointments (a maximum of ½ day absence will be automatically authorised), Interviews, University Open Days, Driving Tests, Connexions Appointments, Principal Student Voice Official Business, Study Leave etc. Where possible the above appointments must be made outside lesson hours. Teaching staff must be informed in advance and not after the event, otherwise this could lead to non-payment. Absences known in advance will be credited.

Holidays must not be arranged in term-time.

Religious observances during term time approved by the Academy will be authorised – you must inform your tutor prior to the event so your absences can be authorised.

Extended leave is treated as a holiday – see above.

Absence during examinations will only be authorised if the absence is due to illness when a doctor's note will need to be produced.

Absences due to personal issues e.g. for a funeral of a close relative/friend or for time off for family matters, authorised absence may apply at the discretion of the Academy. Where possible you must ask permission first before time off is taken.

Absence due to disciplinary procedures will lead to suspension of any payments.

Payment Dates

High Priority Group

Payment of £200 made each term – six times a year

- September 2023 (Exact dates to be confirmed)
- November 2023
- January 2024
- March 2024
- May 2024
- June 2024

Medium Priority Group

Payment of £100 made three times a year

- October 2023
- February 2024
- June 2024

In addition, students will be notified if applications for contributions to essential course equipment, trips and materials have been approved and payments will be made directly at the time needed.

These could be payments towards any curriculum trips or community events including residential field trips, teambuilding, residential courses, Celebration event, Sixth Form Prom and materials such as photographic equipment, books or extra printing. The total amount awarded will depend on the number of bursary applicants and the total fund will be shared between them according to need.

Low Priority Group

See above. Payments will be made on an as needed basis.

Appeals Procedure

If you think you have grounds for appeal against non-payment or non-approval of application you should discuss it with your tutor who may well refer this to Miss Evans. If you are still not satisfied with the decision you should submit your appeal in writing. Appeals will be heard by the relevant College Principal. Both you and your parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your appeal or it may be decided on the basis of your written submission.

Criteria Changes

The above policy will remain in place for 2023-2024. A review of the policy will be made in June 2024.

Guidance on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2023-to-2024-academic-year>