



Joyce Frankland Academy

Financial Support for Students: 16-19 Bursary Award Policy for Academic year 2023-24

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education. A new application must be made by the student each academic year so an accurate assessment of current need can be made.

What is the 16-19 Bursary Award?

There are two types of 16-19 Bursary Fund:

1. A fund which is for students in a defined vulnerable group – the definition of which is outlined by the ESFA; and
2. A discretionary bursary which enables support to be given to other students according to their needs and circumstances.

The bursary fund is not intended to:

- Provide learning support
- Support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme, or
- Support general household incomes.

Who is eligible?

Students must meet the age and residency criteria outlined by the ESFA. They must:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2023;
- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.
- Be following a programme of study funded directly by the ESFA
- Have the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom at the start of their study programme. Where there is any question here, we will reference to the current regulations as specified in the Government's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund document.

Who may receive a defined vulnerable group bursary?

The academy will pay up to a maximum of £1,200 to students from the following defined vulnerable groups:

- Students in care or recent care leavers living independently
- Students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependant on them and living with them, such as a child or partner

- Students in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name as well as either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- Students in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name as well as either ESA or Universal Credit.

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 budgets (19+ continuers and those with an EHCP) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits.

When making an application for this bursary, original documents to support eligibility will be required to be provided to the Academy and copies will be retained for audit purposes.

Please note that in some cases, a student may meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are assessed as already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award. In these instances, the Academy can refuse the student's application or award an amount lower than £1,200 and in so doing, advise the student and/or the student's parents the aim of the bursary funding and why they are awarding reduced bursary (limited financial help is needed) or not awarding a bursary at all (no financial help needed).

Who may receive a discretionary bursary?

The Academy can award a discretionary bursary award to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls). These are items that the student would have to acquire in order to participate in the courses they are studying. The fund is not intended to provide learning support or support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the student's study programme.

Students must be eligible for the discretionary bursary in each year they require support.

To be eligible for the discretionary award, students must be encountering financial difficulty. The main criteria the academy uses to determine eligibility for this award is entitlement to Free School Meals as confirmed by Essex County Council.

The decision as to whether a student receives a discretionary bursary and how much they will receive will be based upon his/her individual circumstances and their actual financial need. This will therefore vary student to student depending upon their household income, the distance they need to travel to the Academy and the requirements of the courses they are completing.

Household income will be assessed by the student providing the last three months Universal credit statements along with the number of dependent children in the household. We may also request to see proof of income such as a recent P60.

The amount awarded to students will also be determined by the total 16-19 bursary budget amount awarded to the Academy by the ESFA and the number of students who claim a discretionary bursary that are eligible.

Applications for a discretionary bursary **must be submitted to the Finance Office before the stated deadline.**

When making an application for this bursary, original documents to support eligibility will be required to be provided to the Academy and copies will be retained for audit purposes.

Emergency Food

We may use our bursary fund in individual cases of severe hardship, to provide food support whilst a student attends their study programme. This will be for a student we 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 cohort and to only be a temporary measure in line with government's guidance.

Conditions for receiving bursary funding

Payments for both the bursary for vulnerable groups and the discretionary bursary are conditional on the student:

1. Maintaining at least 95% attendance in all lessons and registrations timetabled, and
2. Attending all examinations.

This will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and Examinations Officer.

The discretionary bursary may also be withdrawn if homework, effort or behaviour causes concern to the extent that the Director of Sixth Form has to intervene. This usually occurs if students fail to heed formal warnings from their form tutor or subject teachers.

Students will be required as part of their application form for bursary funds to sign a declaration to say that they have seen and agreed to these conditions.

Should a student be absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme, The academy will cease making bursary payments and seek to recover any bursary monies previously provided be they in-kind or cash.

When the Academy purchases books or equipment for a student, these items will be required to be returned to the Academy at the end of the study programme so that they may be used by another student.

Applications

Applications for the vulnerable group bursary can be made at any point in the academic year.

Applications for the discretionary bursary should be made **before 29th September 2023** so that the Academy can access the demand and make awards on a fair basis.

In the application, a student will need to state what they might need to spend the bursary on for their course. To ascertain this, the student will need to discuss with their subject teachers to get an estimate of likely costs for trips etc. throughout the year.

However, if a student becomes eligible for the defined vulnerable group or discretionary bursary mid-year, s/he must contact the finance manager immediately and give notice that they wish to be considered for a bursary specifying which they would like to be considered for. Late applications will be considered at any point throughout the academic year, although any award will be pro rata dependent upon when the student became eligible and the course length remaining.

All applications will remain confidential and subject to the usual care and security measures taken by the finance and sixth form departments, including the disposal of material no longer required at the end of a student's time at Joyce Frankland. Giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect / overpayment may result in future payments being stopped, any incorrectly paid funds being recovered and may result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and / or their family facing prosecution.

Payment of Bursary

Payment of the bursary will be in-kind rather than cash as far as possible to ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments will include travel passes, vouchers or credit for meals, required books and required equipment.

When making an award to the student, the Academy will advise how much has been awarded. When a payment in-kind has been made, the Academy will advise the value of that payment, the amount deducted from their award and the balance of their award left.

In exceptional circumstances, the Academy may make bursary payments directly to the student rather than providing support in-kind. In such instances, the Academy will insist that students only spend the bursary payments made to them on the support that has been identified as necessary to help them participate in education and students may be asked to provide evidence of this. Payment will be by BACs transfer directly to the student's own bank account every two weeks. No large or lump sum payments will be made. Only in exceptional circumstances, where a student is unable to administer their own account, would the Academy pay the bursary into another person's account. If the student cannot manage their own funds, the Academy will consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

If a decision to withhold a bursary payment is made, the student will be advised in writing by no later than the relevant payment date.

Complaints or Appeals

Any student or parent who is unhappy with how the Academy has handled their application for bursary funding should follow the Academy's complaints procedure details of which can be found on our website.

Appeals against decisions made regarding attendance, behaviour or proven financial hardship should be made in writing to the Principal. The Appeal must be lodged within 5 working days of the decision letter being received and a decision regarding the appeal must be reached and communicated within 5 working days of the appeal letter being received by the Principal.