

Furze Platt Senior School Sixth Form **16-19 Bursary Fund Guidance Notes**

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

This document is based on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) "16-19 Bursary Fund – Guide for 2023 to 2024 academic year" and sets out arrangements for how the school will operate the 16-19 Bursary Funds during the academic year.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is a government provided, means-tested fund, providing financial support to help students to overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education and training. The school has received this funding to help students to meet the cost of participating in post-16 education and training.

Types of 16 – 19 Bursaries

There are two types of 16 – 19 Bursaries:

- A Vulnerable Bursary – up to £1,200 bursary for students in at least one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- A Discretionary Bursary – that is awarded by the school in order to meet the individual needs of a student for specific participation costs (i.e. transport, books, meals and equipment).

General Eligibility and Awards Criteria

To be eligible to receive a Bursary in the 2023/24 academic year, all young people must be at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2023, meet the residence criteria in the ESFA Funding Guidance for 2023/24 Academic Year and attend suitable provision subject to inspection by a public body.

Eligibility for The Vulnerable Bursary

A bursary of **up to £1,200** per annum for a full time course (30 weeks or more) is available to students who meet defined criteria. The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Young people in care or care leavers (ESFA class 'care leavers' as young people aged 18-21 who have been looked after for more than 13 weeks or since the age of 14; or young people who cease to be looked after or accommodated, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children).
- Young people claiming Income Support or Universal Credit (in their own name).
- Young people getting both Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments and Employment Support Allowance (ESFA) or Universal Credit (in their own name)

Appropriate written evidence confirming eligibility will be required.

Applications for The Vulnerable Bursary will be submitted by the school to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) once all necessary evidence has been seen and verified.

ESFA guidance advises that there is the possibility of no award or a limited award and that meeting the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups does not automatically mean funding will be given.

Eligibility for The Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary Bursary allocations are based on each student's individual circumstances and actual financial need. The amount awarded to successful applicants for this bursary will depend on the level of finances available in the fund along with the fulfilment of specific criteria.

Awards of this bursary will be made using the following criteria:

- Household income – this must be less than £25,000 before tax.
- Where the young person is in receipt of Free School Meals.
- Contextual factors used to assess the level of student need, such as distance of travel to school, number of dependent children in the household and actual participation needs the student has.

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, students will need to meet specific expectations of the Furze Platt Sixth Form. These expectations are:

- A minimum of 96% attendance.
- Appropriate standards of behaviour and approach to learning (A2L). For this measure, students will need to achieve a minimum of an A2L grade 2 in each subject in their reports.
- Adherence to the conditions laid out in the Furze Platt Sixth Form Charter.

Discretionary awards are not for a guaranteed sum of money but are dependent upon the level of funding allocated to the school each academic year. It is also dependent on the number of applications received.

All discretionary bursaries are subject to annual review and last the duration of one academic year. Students wishing to apply for discretionary bursaries must do so each academic year.

Evidence of Eligibility

All applications to access 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence shall be retained by the school to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential.

Acceptable evidence for **The Vulnerable Bursary**, will be either:

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

Applications for **The Discretionary Bursary** will need to provide evidence of income / benefits entitlement stated on your application. Examples of types of acceptable evidence (photocopies accepted) are shown in the table over the page.

Type of Income	Evidence Required
Annual Salary	P60 for last tax year, or week 52 (last week in March) payslip or month 12 (March) payslip
Income Support or Universal Credit	3 separate Entitlement / Award letters (from the most recent 3 months)

Working Tax Credit	Working Tax Credit Award Notice marked for current year. Must be for full year and not partial awards (FULL AWARD NOTICE)
Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last 3 months
Any other income	Relevant paperwork, e.g. evidence of income from self-employment (Self-Assessment Tax Calculation SA302), etc.

Wider family circumstances may be considered when awarding a discretionary bursary.

Please note that applications received without the appropriate supporting evidence cannot be processed. Applicants will be informed if additional information is required and there may be delay in processing the form if the necessary information is not received with the original application.

Bursary application process

Bursary application forms are available on the website under the 'Sixth Form' section. Application forms can also be requested via email from the Sixth Form Manager (Mary.Pasa@furzeplatt.net).

Application forms will need to be completed in full and submitted to the Sixth Form Manager. Late applications may still be considered but may affect the amount of funding available.

Applications for bursaries must be made to Sixth Form Manager, along with all necessary documentation by October 20th 2023.

Bursary payment

The School will offer bursaries in the form of non-cash, 'in kind' payments where possible, such as:

- Books and equipment
- Places on course related school trips
- Uniform

The value of any purchase or payment will be deducted from the total amount of bursary funding that each student is eligible for.

In some cases, the school may be required to make cash payments rather than 'in kind' payments. In these cases, payments will be made via BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing Services) to a bank account in the name of the student. The student must have a valid account in their name unless in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account, which means an appointee will have to be considered by the school to manage the affairs of the student.

'In kind' payments will be made as necessary, depending on actual student need and availability of funds.

Bursary Decision Process

The 16 – 19 Bursary Panel will decide on the eligibility and level of a Bursary award following receipt of all applications by the closing date published on the application form. Students will be notified of the outcome by letter.

The Bursary Decision Panel is made up of:

- a. The Head Teacher
- b. The Head of Sixth Form
- c. The Sixth Form Manager

If any student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Head of Sixth Form outlining their reasons. If required, a meeting will be arranged with the Appeals Panel where the claim will be reassessed and the student informed of the decision in writing within 10 days of the Panel meeting.

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.

Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16 -19 Bursary Application Panel and in the event of an appeal, the 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 parent/guardian/carer(s) will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to obtaining further information.

Change of Young Person's Financial Circumstances

Any parent/carer of a young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform the School should their household financial circumstances change (e.g. increase in household income that would affect the student'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 are adjusted.

Fraud

The school has the right to investigate any suspected instances of fraud relating to bursary fund applications. If evidence comes to light that supplied information is misleading or fraudulent, the school will stop any further payments and will attempt to recover any payments already made to the students.

Where significant fraud is identified, the institution will report this to the ESFA – this includes the following:

- The amount of money is in excess of £1,200
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systematic or complex
- There is likely to be great public interest due to the nature of the fraud of the people involved

Student Transferring

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

Where a student 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 student to complete their learning aim(s).

Student Withdrawing

Where a student 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. In addition, where a

student is absent for 4 weeks or more (excluding holidays, or if there is evidence the student intends to return)
payment will stop.