



16-19 Bursary Fund Statement

At Seaford Head School, we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they can access their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. The bursary is intended to help students with the essential costs of their studies, e.g. important books, equipment and travel costs. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by the setting. In both cases, the setting is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We are dedicated to:

- Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all.
- Widening access to, and participation in, 16-19 education.
- Ensuring all students who are eligible for funding have access to it.

Eligibility

Students aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August 2023 will qualify for bursaries for the 2024/2025 academic year. Students aged under 16 will only receive bursaries in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if they are following an accelerated study programme.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable bursary, although the school may decide the student is eligible for a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an EHC plan, remain eligible and need the support to continue their participation.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our **16-19 Bursary Application Form**.

The level of actual financial need will be assessed for all students, and a set amount of funding will not be automatically awarded.

Vulnerable bursaries

To be eligible for a vulnerable bursary, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- The student is in care (this includes students classed as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child)
- The student is a care leaver
- The student receives Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- The student receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Any student who meets these criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 per year if their study programme lasts for 30 weeks or more; students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata amount. Alternatively, we may decide to allocate more than £1,200 if a student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be paid from the setting's discretionary bursary allocation or its own funds. There will be no blanket or flat-rate payments without consideration of the student's specific financial needs.

We are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student attends specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full.
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation, e.g. no travel or food costs.
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.
- A student is financially supported by their partner.

Where such a bursary is refused, the setting will explain to the student and/or the student's parents or support worker the aim of bursary funding and why it is appropriate not to award any in this instance. In all cases, the setting will consider the particular circumstances of each case, and may choose to award a reduced amount, e.g. where the financial help needed is limited. The setting will make clear in its application form that there is a possibility of no award or a limited award.

Discretionary bursaries

We allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries may be awarded up to the value of £1,200, and will be reviewed each year the student requires support. Where a bursary is over £1,200 due to a clearly identified need for an individual student with costs requiring this level of funding, the rationale will be included as part of the setting's auditable records. Our eligibility criteria for a discretionary bursary includes the following:

- Students living in a low-income household
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent
- Students who travel to school from outside of Seaford

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students from low-income households. The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income.

Where possible, the setting will retain a small emergency fund from its allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation that impacts on their ability to participate in education. Evidence of the student's eligibility, the individual assessment and their actual participation costs must be held for audit purposes as for any other bursary award.

Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the application form and provide the necessary supporting documentation. All applications should be submitted by **15th September 2024** this academic year; however, we do understand that needs may arise throughout the academic year, and we will still consider applications after this date where appropriate.

Our application process will maintain the student's confidentiality.

Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds – these are explained to all students during the application process. Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold payments where students breach these conditions; however, the student's individual circumstances will always be considered first and sanctioning will not occur to the extent that a student's ability to attend is undermined.

The conditions are as follows:

- Students must have **95** percent attendance at timetabled lessons, unless the absence is authorised
- Students that are absent due to sickness must present a note from a qualified medical practitioner if their absence is longer than three days
- Students must abide by the Behaviour Policy

Payments will be stopped where:

- A student is absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or more excluding holidays.
- A student withdraws themselves from a study programme.
- Money is not being spent for the reasons it was awarded.
- A student breaches any of the conditions for payment.

Receipt of the bursary will not affect the receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, e.g. Income Support.

Paying the bursary

Funds will be allocated in-kind rather than in cash where possible, e.g. through travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, or required books or equipment. All payments will be given to students on a termly basis.

Bursary funds will not be given to students in large lump sums. A percentage of funding will be kept back as hardship funding to respond to any emergencies throughout the year.

In instances where payments in-kind are not possible, we will pay funding by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. In exceptional circumstances where the student is unable to manage their own funds, we will consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

Using the bursary

Upon receiving a bursary, students will receive help based on their areas of need.

The following priority areas will be addressed first:

- Travel to school, e.g. bus passes and travel cards. Students will be awarded travel on bursaries based on the most cost effective payment method e.g. monthly bus passes
- Equipment costs, e.g. books, stationery, calculators
- Meals
- Any other educational support, e.g. attendance at university open days

Students must retain evidence of their travel costs and provide these to the school at the end of each term.

We reserve the right to request that, if a student has had books or equipment bought for them through the fund, they return it at the end of their study programme. We may also request that the equipment is kept on the college site.

Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow our complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints Procedures Policy – this is available on our website.

Further information

More information on the use and allocation of 16-19 bursaries can be found in our **16-19 Bursary Fund Policy**, available on the school website.