



The White Hills Park Trust

Better Together

16-19 Bursary Policy

Version control

Scope:	Applicable to all Trust Schools with Post 16 provision
Review date:	Summer 26
Statutory or non-statutory:	Non-Statutory
Author/Reviewer:	Julia Gibbs / CFO

Introduction

This policy applies to all Trust schools/academies with Post 16 provision.

Equalities

The Trust and its member schools/academies recognise their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and this policy aims to ensure that all employees are treated with equality and fairness regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes
0.1		Summer 24	First draft in Trust format
0.2		Summer 25	Change references from "ESFA" to "Department for Education" / "DfE" Change date references Minor wording enhancement for clarification P4 – within section on Asylum seeking children, bullet 2, the wording "if they have a financial need" is added to sentence 1
0.3	Jo Hume	January 26	Inclusion of Foxwood Academy, and amended referencing Sixth Form/Head of Sixth Form to include Post 16/ Head of 14-19 relevant to Foxwood.

Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education. The award is dependent on funds provided to the Academy by the Department for Education (“DfE”) and on individual students’ personal circumstances.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- ‘Vulnerable’ bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- ‘Discretionary’ bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

Students who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should make an application. The Bursary Fund will be administered by the Sixth Form/P16 who will set its own eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursaries and the terms and conditions under which it is awarded. However, all criteria will be in line with the DfE guidance on funding. The White Hills Park Trust will seek to ensure that Bursary funds available are;

- Distributed fairly through a process which is transparent and easily understood;
- Allocated according to individual need, taking into account the financial circumstances of the applicant; and
- Used to widen access to and participation in, post 16 education.

Administration

The Academy is permitted to retain 5% of their discretionary bursary fund allocation towards the cost of administration.

Unspent bursary funding may be retained for use in the following academic year for one year only.

Eligibility

This section covers the basic eligibility requirements of the scheme. These criteria apply to both types of bursary – discretionary and vulnerable – unless otherwise noted.

Age Criteria

To be eligible to receive a bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year the student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2025.

Where a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of

study, whichever is sooner. Bursaries will only be paid to students who have reached the statutory school leaving age.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues, and the academy considers they need the additional support to continue their participation.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable student bursary.

Residency Criteria

Students must meet the residency criteria in DfE funding regulation.

A student must have the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom at the start of their study programme. Any person subject to a Home Office deportation order will ordinarily be ineligible for funding until their situation has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Home Office, as institutions must only claim funding for students who can complete their programmes.

Asylum Seeking Children

- Accompanied, under 18 with an adult relative or partner are not eligible to apply for any Bursary funding, but provisions in kind for books, equipment and travel passes can be given. No cash payments can be made. All other assistance requirements can be made via an application to the Home Office.
 - Note - the above eligibility only applies if their application for asylum has not been refused
- Unaccompanied, to age 17 – are funded as ‘In Care Group’ and are eligible for vulnerable bursary, if they have a financial need. At age 18 their immigration status must be considered. Successful asylum claims will be eligible to continue with the vulnerable bursary until the upper age limit. Unsuccessful claims have no further entitlement to funding unless there is a breach of human rights established

The Vulnerable Bursary

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable bursary of UP TO £1,200 (if they are participating in a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more). If they are studying for less than 30 weeks, the bursary will be paid on a pro-rata basis. This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

It is likely that these students do not receive financial assistance from parents or carers.

To be eligible for a vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of 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
- in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right.

The Academy will assess whether a student meets the criteria to receive a vulnerable bursary payment and will retain evidence to support that assessment.

The Academy may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need and so are not eligible on that basis. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

The Discretionary Bursary

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education.

The academy is required to define which students should receive support and how much. The academy is required to manage the number and size of discretionary awards ensuring that the academy stays within budget and that awards made are targeted at those facing the most significant financial barriers to participation.

Students who have a total household income, including benefits or tax credits, of £30,000 or less can apply for a discretionary bursary. Household income can be evidenced by the receipt of benefit (3 months' statements and award letter) and/or P60, Tax Credit Award Notice, last 3 months' wage slips or evidence of self-employment income. Students previously in receipt of free school meals will also be eligible to apply. Young people with caring responsibilities, for example caring for a parent or other relative, are also eligible.

In many cases goods or services will be ordered and paid for directly by the academy, but in some cases, payments may be made directly to the student following the receipt of evidence of goods or services purchased.

The following are examples of the types of goods and services that may be applied for.

- School meals
- Transport costs to and from school (outside of a 2mile radius of college)
- Transport costs toward University interview days/Industry Placement days

- UCAS open day costs
- Books
- Course related trips and study courses
- Sports activities (where they relate directly to a course)
- Specialist equipment and materials (eg art and design materials)
- Use of a laptop for the duration of the student's time in the Sixth Form/P16. Other technologies can be considered, as appropriate to the learning needs. Students will be expected to sign a user agreement before any technology will be allocated. All equipment must be returned to the academy in July of the student's final year in the Sixth Form/P16 (or earlier if the student leaves the course before completion).

The fund available is limited, but we want to enable all of our students to have equal access to all the academy has to offer. As a Trust, we are committed to promoting and enabling social mobility.

As a guide we are suggesting the following:

- Those with household incomes of less than £21,000 will be high priority;
- Those with household incomes of less than £25,000 will be medium priority; and
- Those with household incomes of less than £30,000 will be low priority.

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.

Attendance and Behaviour requirements

Payments are dependent on meeting agreed attendance and behaviour criteria. Students must maintain attendance levels of at least 90% (with no unauthorised absence) and must not be subject to any concerns on tracking data for effort or homework.

Where a student does not meet the agreed attendance or behaviour standards, the Academy will make every effort to advise the student and help resolve any issues but retains the right to rescind or suspend bursary payment(s).

We will stop payments where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

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.

Applications

An application form is required for all categories of Bursary. This should be submitted, along with the required evidence of proof of income and benefits, to the Head of Sixth Form/ Head of 14-19. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Sixth form/P16 team will review each application and where necessary refer to the Trust Finance Manager for further guidance.

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.

Payment process

Payments are made using the following means:

- Make in-kind payments, such as travel passes, books, equipment or vouchers for meals;
- In lieu of receipts received and authorised by the Head of Sixth form/ Head of 14-19.
- Allocation to the catering system for Free School Meals

Data

All data relating to bursary applications will be retained and disposed of in line with the Trust's data retention policy and GDPR policy.