

## **The Crossley Heath School**

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# **16 – 19 BURSARY POLICY**

**2025-26**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy is based on guidance issued by the Department of Education (DfE) on the administration of the 16-19 bursary fund for the academic year 2025-26.

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2025-to-2026)

## **2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. The Crossley Heath School aims to process applications in line with current government guidelines to ensure that students can access and remain in their education.

## **3. ELIGIBILITY**

### **3.1 Types of 16 to 19 bursaries:**

There are two types of bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which schools award using policies they set, in line with current funding rules

### **3.2 Eligibility Age**

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.
- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- These 2 groups of aged 19+ 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 school considers they need the support to continue their participation.
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.
- The Crossley Heath School would generally only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances where under 16 students are on funded 16-19 study programmes, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to younger students. For example, where a student is following an accelerated study programme. Bursary funds will not be awarded to students enrolled at another institution, where that institution also receives public funding for the student, for example, students aged 14-16 who are attending college as part of their key stage 4 programme at a local school/academy.
- Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department for Education calls these: "essential costs of participating, such as travel to and from school"; "to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing that are required for [student's] individual study plan." Bursary is **specifically not** to be used for counselling, mentoring or extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the student's study programme, nor can it be used to provide living costs support.

### **3.3 Eligibility education provision**

Students must be participating in education provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example, Ofsted). The provision must also be in one of these groups:

- funded directly by DfE, or by DfE via a local authority
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the DfE list of qualifications approved for funding for 14 to 19-year-olds.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed rather than in education, and are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

### **3.4 Residency**

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [DfE funding rules](#) for post-16 provision, which can be found on the UK Government website. This DfE document also specifies the evidence Crossley Heath must see – and keep for audit – that will confirm eligibility for post-16 funding: this includes documents that demonstrate how the student meets the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility.

### **3.5 Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)**

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute, they can apply to the Home Office (HO) for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, we can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances can school give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

### **3.6 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not receive cash support from the HO and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group), where they have a financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, school must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper age limit (see paragraph 3.2 above).

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard/the appeals process exhausted, an individual

has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

### **3.7 Eligibility criteria: bursaries for young people defined in vulnerable groups**

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- 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
- 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.

The Crossley Heath School may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. School can refuse a student's application on this basis. Similarly, students will only receive the amount they need to participate and will not be automatically entitled to the full amount that can be paid annually.

Crossley Heath School may pay a bursary greater than the full annual entitlement to a student from a vulnerable group if it assesses that student needs extra help to remain in education: such payments must be made from school's discretionary bursary allocation or from its own funds.

Students who meet the criteria and who are on study programmes lasting for less than 30 weeks will be given a bursary on a pro-rata basis.

Please note: meeting the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups does not automatically mean funding will be given.

### **3.8 Defining in-care and care leavers**

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' as children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
- a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16.

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group where they need financial support to participate. A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so, the period of weeks and age range set out above). If they do, they are eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

### **3.9 Evidence of eligibility**

School must obtain proof that students are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups and will ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes. For example:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority;
- for students in receipt of IS or UC, a copy of their Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. For students in receipt of UC, the school must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on;
- for students receiving UC/ESA and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP), a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided;

UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account or provide a screenshot to the Crossley Heath School.

School will only submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) [online portal](#):

- when we have seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups, and
- when we have assessed the actual amount of financial help the student needs to participate. It is this amount that The Crossley Heath School should request from the SBSS.

### **3.10 Eligibility criteria: discretionary bursaries**

School can make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, to go on educational trips or visits, to undertake work experience or for equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example).

These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that schools give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

A student's household income will usually be assessed as evidenced by receipt of benefit, P60 or Tax Credit Award Notice if employed, or SA302 form or certified accounts if self-employed. Students currently or previously in receipt of free school meals are not automatically entitled to receive a bursary, but this may be considered.

### **3.11 Payment Conditions**

School is free to determine which students should be eligible to receive a discretionary bursary and how much they should receive. If more students apply than there are bursary funds available, the allocated payments listed below may be adjusted. Payments may be limited by the level of demand for bursary support. The receipt of bursary monies is never guaranteed.

Note: School can award discretionary bursaries equal to or higher than the bursary for vulnerable groups maximum if we have clearly identified an individual student requires this level of funding.

### **3.12 There will be three categories of bursary payment:**

**Type A Students** - in the defined vulnerable groups in 3.3 above. They are eligible for up to £1200 per academic year.

**Type B Students** - in receipt of free school meals or means-tested benefits can apply for a bursary and the amount will be decided by the Associate Head Teacher per academic year. Evidence of eligibility is set out in section 3.5 above. The size of the allowance will be established upon agreement by the school and based on individual needs. All evidence of household income will be in strict confidence.

**Type C Students** - can apply for an in-kind discretionary bursary for specific educational purposes if there is financial need. These include, but are not limited to:

- Costs of transport
- Meals in school
- Books and equipment
- Educational trips
- UCAS fees

Students in severe hardship may also apply to the Director of Sixth Form for emergency food support, without school needing to undertake checks on household income. We will provide meals in school, and this will be reviewed every half term.

NB: If a bursary was awarded in Year 12 in 2024-2025, then Year 13 students in 2025-2026 need to confirm in writing that their financial circumstances have not changed. This is to be submitted on the form at Appendix 1.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

For audit purposes, hard copies of all documentation for the Bursary Fund should be kept for a period of 6 years. This documentation must include evidence of the application process, documents relating to how the learner was assessed and the funds issued.

## **4. APPLICATIONS AND PAYMENT PROCESS**

**4.1** Students should apply for a bursary by Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. If this deadline is missed, there will be a further opportunity to apply in March (before the Easter break). Students must apply for funds for specific educational purposes. All applications must be online using the following link. <https://thecrossleyheathbursary.applicaa.com/bursary>

**4.2** Students will be informed in writing of the decision within two weeks of the assessment. Appeals over decisions made must be made in writing to the Headteacher. An appeals panel consisting of three Governors will meet to hear all appeals.

**4.3** Claims will be processed monthly and only those supported by evidence of expenditure **and** consistent attendance will be considered. The Head of Finance will assess each claim and authorise payments.

**4.4** Payment decisions will be recorded for audit purposes, along with records of applications and evidence.

**4.5** Bursary payments are transferred directly into students' bank accounts. If account details are not provided, no payments can be made.

**4.6** Payments should not be made into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances, individually evidenced, where a student is unable to administer their own account. Payments may be made to a joint account, if the student is one of the account holders and provides written consent.

**4.7** Bursaries may also be paid 'in kind'. Such items will be provided to the named individual. In the case of books or equipment we ask they be returned at the end of the course.

**4.8** In determining payments of the 16-19 Bursary Fund students will not be discriminated against based on their protected characteristics. Payments are also subject to the public sector equality duty in section 149(1) of the Equality Act.

## **5. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every year in line with latest government guidance.

APPENDIX 1

## 16-19 BURSARY FUND APPLICATION FORM 2025-26

(Form for students previously receiving Bursary support in 2024-25 - Y13 only)

**I can confirm that we received Bursary Fund from 2024-25 and that our household financial circumstances have not changed since October 2024.**

**Name of Student:**

**Signed (Parent):**

**Print Parent Name:**

**If you are in receipt of any of the following benefits, or if you are dependent on somebody who is, please enclose proof (photocopy) of the benefit with your application (or it will not be considered).**

<b>CAT A BURSARY</b>  <b>Acceptable Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Local Authority confirmation letter of status if in care or a care leaver</li><li>• A recent benefit entitlement letter (less than 3 months old) if in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit</li><li>• A recent copy of your benefit entitlement letter (less than 3 months old) if in receipt of Employment Support and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments</li></ul>
<b>CAT B BURSARY</b>  <b>Acceptable Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Latest Tax Credit Notice – please send all pages of the award notice</u></li><li>• Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit letter (<b>less than 3 months old</b>)</li><li>• Proof of Benefit -Form stamped by the Benefits Agency; latest confirmation letter if in receipt of Pensions Credit</li><li>• Housing Benefit/Council Tax award letter for the current financial year; <u>please send all pages</u></li></ul>
<b>CAT C BURSARY</b>  <b>Acceptable Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Latest Tax Credit Notice</b> (if applicable)</li><li>• Supporting letter from school</li></ul>

**Please return to Miss Rudman in the first instance**