



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith
and to benefit from an enriching education*

16 – 19 bursary fund policy

1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

- 'In care' is defined 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'
- '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 of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and has delegated this responsibility to the finance, premises and personnel committee.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and has delegated this responsibility to the finance, premises and personnel committee.

4.2 The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

- We use the fund to provide students with support to fund individual needs for example:
 - Transport
 - Books
 - Equipment
 - Field trips and other course-related costs
 - The costs of attending university interviews and open days

6. Eligibility criteria

6.1 Age

- To be eligible:
 - A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2019
- Students 19 or over must either:
 - Be continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or
 - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

6.2 Eligible education provision

- Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assure quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also be either:
 - Funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
 - Funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund
 - Publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19
 - In a 16 to 19 traineeship programme
 - Non-employed and participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme
- Students are not eligible if:
 - They are on an apprenticeship programme
 - Are on any waged training
- Students who are studying via distance learning may need infrequent financial help (e.g. travel to exams), if this is the case we will provide support in-kind (e.g. a travel pass)

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision](#).

6.4 Asylum seekers

- Those under 18 with an adult relative or partner and those aged 18 and above:

- Are entitled to education
- Are not entitled to public funds
- Can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

➤ Unaccompanied children:

- Are the responsibility of the local authority
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups

When these students reach 18 we will consider their immigration status. They will still be eligible for a bursary if the asylum claim is in their favour and will be treated as a 'care leaver' until they reach the upper age limit.

6.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the above age and residency criteria, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 per year.

➤ The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (those who are privately fostered are **not** classed as looked after)
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

We will look at individual cases for these students, based on needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

Students eligible for bursaries under this category will be given a pro rata bursary if their study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks.

➤ We will obtain the following **proof of eligibility** for vulnerable groups:

- 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. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority
- For students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit, a copy of their Income Support or Universal Credit 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 Universal Credit (UC), a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- For students receiving UC/Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their UC claim from DWP (UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

➤ The following students will be eligible for a discretionary bursary:

- Students who are in receipt of free school meals;
- Students who have been in receipt of free school meals in the last 6 years (Ever6);

- Students who are economically or socially disadvantaged as determined by their current postcode location (deprivation factors 1 and 2)

Students who do not meet the criteria above for a discretionary bursary are still entitled to apply. To be eligible students must be able to demonstrate exceptional financial hardship which will depend on specific needs and individual circumstances. Awards will be at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form.

The amount of the discretionary bursary paid to each student will depend on total 16-19 bursary grant funding received by school from the ESFA and the number of students eligible for the grant. The fund will close when the money allocated has been spent.

7. Payment

7.1 Process

Payments will be made in kind if possible eg through a meal allowance on the student's lunch account, purchase of items required to continue in education, travel costs. In addition, a payment will be made into the student's bank account by BACS transfer.

Payments will be made five times a year – each payment being made after each half term period up to and including the first half of the summer term.

Any student faced with difficulties in opening a bank account should immediately contact Mr Saunders. Payments will not be made into parents' bank accounts unless there are exceptional circumstances.

7.2 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Payments are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

- Attendance above 90%
- Meeting acceptable standards of behaviour. Any student receiving 3 or more X sanctions in a half term may have their bursary withheld for that half term period.

All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions.

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld.

We will consider the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

We will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays, or if there is evidence that the student intends to return).

As much as possible, we will avoid sanctioning a student to the extent that their bursary funding had been stopped for a whole term.

We reserve the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

We will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy approved by the Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee 1st December 2020