



16-19 Bursary Fund Policy 2024/25

St Richard Reynolds Catholic High School (Sixth Form)

Policy: 16-19 Bursary Fund

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The 16-19 Bursary Fund exists to offer support to young people who might otherwise find it difficult to participate in full time education. There are two types of bursaries available; Vulnerable Student Bursary (A), Discretionary Student Bursary (B).

Bursaries are funded by the ESFA and as such it sets out certain criteria to determine its recipients. The Bursary Fund is intended to support young people with the costs of transport, food, books, educational visits, course materials or equipment essential to their post-16 studies. It is usually given as an “in kind” payment for costs such as course materials, course-related trips, UCAS fee/travel to open days, exam re-sit fees, DBS checks for course-related work experience. For a list of items previously funded, please see Appendix A.

Vulnerable Student Bursary A

You may apply if you are in one or more of the following groups:

- 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 maximum amount of support that may be available for you for the academic year is usually £1,200 per student - this is dependent upon the total number of eligible applications, individual need and the size of the fund available. If your eligibility is proven, support will usually be paid to you “in kind” (i.e. we will reimburse or pay for resources/equipment that you require). However, should your attendance, punctuality, progress or behaviour fall below expected standards (a minimum of 96% attendance and 96% punctuality), bursary amounts will be reduced. There may be a delay in any bursary amount if attendance falls below 96% at any point since the previous bursary amount and possible withdrawal of any bursary amounts if attendance does not improve. We will take into account extenuating circumstances which might affect a student's attendance, e.g. caring responsibilities or legitimate illness.

As such, you will be required to complete and submit the Discretionary Student Bursary A application, submitting the required evidence.

Discretionary Student Bursary B

You may apply for consideration for Discretionary Student Bursary B if you have an identifiable financial need but do not fall into the above category. For example, you may apply for this bursary if you are, or have been in the last five years, in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).

The maximum total amount of support that may be available for the academic year is usually £800 per student – this is dependent upon the total number of eligible applications and the size of the fund available and may therefore be reduced. If your eligibility is proven, support will usually be paid to you “in kind” (i.e. we will reimburse or pay for resources/equipment that you require). However, should your attendance, punctuality, progress or behaviour fall below expected standards (a minimum of 96% attendance and 96% punctuality), bursary amounts will be reduced. There may be a delay in any bursary amount if attendance falls below 96% at any point since the previous bursary amount and possible withdrawal of any bursary amounts if attendance does not improve. We will take into account extenuating circumstances which might affect a student's attendance, e.g. caring responsibilities or legitimate illness.

To apply for the bursary due to previous or current eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), you will need to prove your (current or previous) eligibility for FSM. If you are in receipt of Free School Meals at your current school, you can request a signed declaration from your school showing FSM entitlement. If you have not been entitled to Free School Meals in the past and think you might now be eligible, please complete this [application form](#).

How to make a bursary application:

Complete the 16-19 Bursary Application Form (including details regarding Household Income) and return to the College for the attention of the Sixth Form Development Manager, along with specified evidence **by Friday 4th October 2024**. Applications made after this date will be considered, as long as funds are still available.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

As part of our responsibility to distribute the 16-19 Bursary Fund fairly and appropriately, we are required to use household income to help establish the amount of support we award to each student for all bursaries. This is used in conjunction with other factors, such as distance to travel from the College and the number of dependent children in the household, as well as the actual participation needs the student has. Please refer to the application form for further details.

Evidence required

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

Acceptable supporting evidence for the Bursary for young people in defined vulnerable groups A will be either a:

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

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a Bursary, you must be aged 16, 17 or 18 at 31/08/23 and meet the ESFA residency requirements.

Payments

Any bursary payments awarded will be via BACS (Banker's Automated Clearing Services) to a Bank Account in your (the student's) name. Students must have a valid account in their name unless there are exceptional reasons which mean an appointee has been named to manage their affairs.

All bursaries will usually be paid "in kind". Such items will be provided to the named individual. In the case of books or equipment they are requested to be returned at the end of the course as donations to future students.

Qualifying Condition Requirements

You will need to complete a qualifying learning period before you are able to receive Bursary benefits. However, you can make an application ahead of the four-week qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship, consideration will also be given for payment in advance of the four-week period. Benefits from the Bursary Fund in the case of emergencies can be authorised by the Principal.

To receive any Bursary, you must meet attendance, punctuality, progress and behaviour standards (a minimum of 96% attendance and 96% punctuality). If you do not meet these standards, the College reserves the right to withdraw or suspend your Bursary. These conditions will not be additional to those expected of any other student within the Sixth Form.

Exceptions

There will be occasions when we feel it is appropriate to continue to award a bursary even if a student has fallen below minimum attendance requirements. For example, bereavement, serious illness or injury, sick dependant/family member.

Applications

Applications for a Bursary must be made using the correct Application Form and should be submitted to the Sixth Form Administrator in full by **Friday 4th October 2024**. Applications made after this date will be considered, as long as sufficient funds are available. However, once the Bursary Fund has been used, it will not be possible to consider further applications.

If you were in receipt of the 16 to 19 Bursary in 2023-24 and your financial circumstances have not changed, you are not required to reapply for the next academic year. You are however required to sign and submit the Declaration of unchanged financial circumstances, 2023-24 to confirm that your circumstances have not changed since your first application to the 16 to 19 Bursary by **Friday 4th October 2024**. If your financial circumstances have changed, you will need to submit a new application. In either situation, the Bursary Application Panel reserves the right to increase, decrease or cease your bursary payments depending on the circumstances of other applicants.

Consideration will be given to assisting you to make an application if you are unable to do so due to a level of learning difficulty and/or disability. Consideration must also be given to assisting you in making an application if you are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from your parent/guardian/carer(s).

Data protection

Please note that all information will be kept confidential and destroyed when no longer required. We will not submit this information to any third party without prior notice.

Process

The named contact at the College for all 16-19 Bursary support/enquiries is Teddy Shanahan (Sixth Form Administrator). 5% of the allocated fund will be used towards the administration of the bursaries in accordance with the ESFA 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2023/24. For audit purposes,

hard copies of all documentation for the Bursary Fund will be kept for a period of 6 years. This documentation must include evidence of the application process, documents relating to how the student was assessed and the funds/“in kind” support issued/provided.

All applications for a Bursary or to access the contingency fund will be assessed by a 16-19 Bursary Application Panel, consisting of the:

- Sixth Form Administrator
- Head of Sixth Form
- Finance Manager

The Panel will review the application, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence and you will be notified of the outcome within four weeks of receipt.

Appeals

If any young person or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should refer to the College’s Complaints Procedure (available on the College website and by request).

Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel and in the event of an appeal, the 16-19 Bursary 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.

Equality

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

Change of Financial Circumstances

If you are in receipt of a Bursary, you have a duty to inform the College should your, or those of your parent/guardian/carer(s), financial circumstances change (e.g. increase in household income that would affect entitlement to Free School Meals). This does not automatically mean any future Bursary amounts will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to determine whether the bursary continues or be stopped and the funds redistributed.

Transferring to/from SRCC

If you are in receipt of a Bursary and transfer out of the College to another education/training provider in-year, the College will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary amounts to enable you to complete the learning aim(s). If you are in receipt of a Bursary and transfer into the College from another education/training provider in-year, the College will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary amounts to enable you to complete the learning aim(s), subject to available funds.

Withdrawal from SRCC

If you are in receipt of a Bursary, withdraw from the College, and do not transfer to another education/training provider, Bursary amounts made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any future scheduled amounts will not be made.

Further Information

Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year>

Appendix A

In previous years, students have made successful applications for the following items:

- Chromebook
- Costs associated with attending university open days/interviews/admissions tests
- Additional reading materials, e.g. periodical subscription
- Specialist clothing or equipment for A Level subjects, e.g. lab coat
- UCAS Registration Fee
- Textbooks
- Costs associated with attending curriculum field trips or school trips
- Costs to attend additional course/lectures/super-curricular opportunities

Requests for the following items are not usually successful:

- everyday clothing for College
- costs associated with leisure activities or activities not directly related to study
- extra-curricular activities