

NEWPORT GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST



16-19 BURSARY POLICY

Policy written by:	Mrs Davenport
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Next review due:	May 2025
Statutory Governor Approval:	Pending

INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on Department for Education guidance:

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

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is made available from the government through its funding body, The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), to provide assistance to 16-19-year-old students whose access to, or completion of, education is inhibited by constraints or barriers.

AIMS

To provide financial support to help students overcome the specific barriers to participation they face, so that they can remain in education.

ELIGIBILITY

Age

Students must be aged 16 or over, but under 19 on 31 August 2024 to be eligible, except for the following exceptions:

- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing a study programme which they began aged 16-18 (19+ continuers) or
- Have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan
- Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for the vulnerable groups.

Residency

- Students must meet the residence criteria set out in ESFA Funding for Post-16 Provision. Evidence may be required to support this.

FUNDING OUTLINE

The funding is split into two categories

I. Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students in one of the defined vulnerable groups are eligible for up to £1,200 per annum. The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care (as defined in the government's published 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2024 to 2025 academic year)
- care leavers (as defined in the government's published 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2024 to 2025 academic year)
- 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 allocation of these funds is subject to audit, so evidence will be required to support any application. All information will be treated in confidence – copies of evidence will be retained for a period of 6 years.

Evidence required (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 UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS 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, institutions 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 DLA and PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a Vulnerable Student Bursary, but if their financial needs are already met, or they have no relevant costs then they would not need the maximum award. Meeting the criteria for the Vulnerable Student Bursary does not automatically mean funding will be given. Students that apply for a Vulnerable Student Bursary will not be eligible to apply for the additional discretionary bursaries.

2. The Discretionary Bursary

This is for students who need financial help but do not qualify for a Vulnerable Student Bursary. The 16-19 Bursary Fund is limited and will be awarded to students most in need of financial assistance to enable them to remain in full time education. Discretionary bursary awards are awarded to help students with items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate, for example:

- Transport costs (not private car or taxi)
- School trips or visits (curriculum-related such as fieldtrips for Biology or Geography)
- Course materials such as books or equipment (only if recommended by the school and school unable to loan such items to the student)
- Uniform
- University open days/interviews (if agreed by the Head of Sixth Form)

To qualify for the Discretionary Bursary students' total household income per year must be less than £25,000. Newport Girls' High School Academy Trust set two tiers of support:

Tier A

Students entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and students whose household income is less than £17,00 (if the household income is less than this, it is likely that they may also be eligible for FSM).

Tier B

Where the household income is greater than £17,000 but below £25,000.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

Funds would be allocated in accordance with the financial needs of individual students and availability of funds. If a student's application is successful they would be notified verbally and in writing. Students may be required to provide proof of purchase or receipts for all items claimed.

CONDITIONS FOR RECEIPT OF STUDENT BURSARY

Despite eligibility, in order for payments to be authorised and made, students have to agree (and sign a contract) recognising that the bursary is paid only if the student meets the criteria outlined in the Home-School Agreement with regard to attendance (97% or above), punctuality, uniform, behaviour and progress.

Students are expected to:

- Attend all lessons as detailed on their timetable
- Ensure they arrive punctually for registration and form time, and for each lesson
- Get permission **in advance** for any time they wish to take off.
- Follow the school absence procedure
- Meet the agreed timescales for homework and coursework etc.
- Meet the requirements for behaviour and uniform standards as outlined in the Student Handbook and school policies.

Failure to do so could result in the bursary support being suspended or halted.

The school will:

- Keep records and monitor the students' attendance
- Let students know in reasonable time if there is a problem that may affect payment of the bursary or for bursary support to be suspended or halted
- Respond to student enquiries with regards to payment or issues concerning their bursary

Students may ask for any decision to be looked at again.

APPLICATIONS AND PAYMENTS PROCESS

- Students should apply for bursary support by completing an application form. Application forms can be collected from Mrs Davenport or downloaded from the school website.
- Students should apply for the bursary as soon after the start the academic year as possible as only limited funding is available each year. Applications should be **submitted by 27th September** of the same year. This allows the school to assess the overall level of demand holistically and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. Applications may still be submitted after this date but in this case, and a discretionary amount may still be given. In this case, payments may be awarded on a pro-rata basis if the original deadline is missed. Students must apply for funds for specific educational purposes only.
- The exact amount of bursary payable is subject to change in response to the number of applicants and will reflect need.
- All applications should be submitted to Mrs Davenport who is the member of staff responsible for the 16-19 bursary at school.
- Each application will be assessed to check whether all criteria are met and a meeting held with Mrs Davenport to discuss individual needs. Applications will then be reviewed.

- Bursary payments will be transferred directly in the student's bank or building society account usually on a monthly basis. Payments will not be paid into another person's account. Payments may be made into a joint account as long as the student is one of the account holders.
- Bursaries may also be paid 'in kind'. Such items may be provided to the named student. In the case of books or equipment, school will expect such resources to be returned to the school at the end of the course or academic year.
- In determining payments of the 16-19 Bursary, students will not be discriminated against on the basis of their protected characteristics. Payments are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty as laid out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act.
- **Students will be required to inform the school of any changed in their financial circumstances which may affect their eligibility for bursary funding.**
- Students are required to re-apply when moving from Y12 to Y13.
- Any student who leaves NGHS before the end of the examination year will be required to repay any unspent bursary and /or return any equipment, stationery, books, etc, which can be made available for future use.

POLICY CHANGE

This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure we continue to provide support to students who need it. As a result amendments may be made and these can only be carried out by Newport Girls' High School Academy Trust.

APPEALS

Parents, carers and students have the right to appeal to the school if it is felt that a payment has been withheld without justification. Appeals should be made in writing to the Headteacher with full details and any additional evidence.