



Altrincham College Sixth Form

BURSARY POLICY

Introduction

1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) makes money available to each school to fund discretionary bursaries for Sixth Form students.
2. The aim of the scheme is to support disadvantaged students with the costs of staying in education after the age of 16, (e.g. textbooks, equipment for practical subjects, educational trips, travel costs to school, university interviews and open days). The school receives the fund allocation at the start of the academic year and sets their own eligibility criteria.
3. The bursary fund is not intended to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme, support general household incomes or provide learning support, e.g. counselling or mentoring.
4. The ESFA administers and pays individual direct bursaries of £1200 to 'vulnerable' students defined as those who are in care, have previously been in care, or if the student themselves is in receipt of income support/universal credit/disability living allowance/personal independence payments. Students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from other sources.
5. This policy relates to discretionary bursaries only and has been written with regard to the current guidance published by the ESFA.
6. A student awarded a discretionary bursary in Y12 will be required to submit a new application form at the start of Y13, together with the required evidence, so that the school can confirm they remain eligible each year.

Bursary Levels

7. The school develop and use their own application forms for students to apply for support from the bursary fund.
8. In determining the eligibility for each student, the school will consider the total household income, travel distance from home to school by public transport, the home local authority's transport policy for students aged 16 to 19 and the number of dependant children in the household plus any relevant additional information supplied by the student.

Band 1

9. Vulnerable Groups Bursary:

Students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (in their own name). Disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Looked After Children, may receive a bursary of up to £1200 per year dependant on individual financial needs.

Band 2

10. Free School Meal Entitlement

Students in receipt of Free School Meals and not supplying any further household income evidence must ensure a signed and dated self-declaration form is obtained to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed since the beginning of a student's study programme.

Band 3

11. Discretionary Bursary

The total household income for a Discretionary Bursary will be below £25,000. If this is the case, parents may be in receipt of one of the benefits or credits shown in the table below.

Universal Credit	Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	Housing or Council Tax Benefit
Income Support	Working Tax Credit
Pension Guarantee Credit	NHS Tax Credit Exemption Card

Supporting Evidence

12. Students must attach supporting evidence to their application form. This should be in the form of parental bank statements, payslips, and/or documented evidence of any benefit payments as shown in the table above.
13. Students must include on their application form details of the type and likely cost of expenditure they would claim from the bursary fund if their application is successful (see paragraph 2 above).

Application Process and Payments

14. The Head of Sixth Form introduces the bursary to Sixth Formers with all relevant paperwork in their Sixth Form Welcome Pack and invites applications. Students who wish to apply gather the relevant supporting evidence and return their application form to the Sixth Form Administrator. Students are given approximately two weeks to complete their applications.
15. All applications are assessed initially by the Head of Sixth Form, who may request further evidence if necessary.

16. The Head of Sixth Form and Business Manager meet to review each application and approve as appropriate.
17. The Head of Sixth Form will inform all applicants of the outcome of their application and, if successful, clearly set out the terms and conditions they are attaching to the funding.
18. Students should submit receipts to the Sixth Form Administrator who will arrange for Head of Sixth Form approval and forwarding to the finance office for reimbursement. Alternatively, students may submit a request for an item, e.g. a travel pass and, once approved, the Finance Office will arrange for this item to be purchased and the cost deducted from the student's fund allocation. There is also an automatic top up to school meals, in addition to the daily FSM allowance. The Finance Office will process claims up to the total allocation amount for the academic year, authorised by the Head of Sixth Form.
Please note as part of the Schools Accounts - the Bursary Process is subject to the schools' financial audit & as such we need appropriate evidence to support its use. Payments to pupils for bursary related spend will only be made with the necessary supporting documentation i.e. certified receipts & invoices from bonified suppliers in order to fulfil our responsibilities in regards to Public Funds.
19. Payments will be made direct to each student's bank account by BACS payment within four weeks of submission of receipts to the finance office.
20. Should a student's family financial circumstances change during the course of the year (e.g. parental unemployment), they may submit a late application to the bursary fund. The same assessment, approval and payment processes in paragraphs 15-19 above are followed.
21. A reserve sum will be retained within the central bursary fund during the course of the year to allow for late applications.
22. The ESFA guidance allows schools to keep up to 5% of their total annual bursary allocation for administration costs.

Student Declaration

23. As part of their application, students must sign a declaration stating 'I understand and agree that as a recipient of a 16-19 bursary, I will be responsible for maintaining high standards of attendance at school and full commitment to my A Level and/or BTEC/OCR courses.'

Annual Report

24. The Business Manager with delegated responsibility for the Sixth Form Bursary Fund will make an annual report to the Governing Board regarding the numbers of students eligible for a discretionary bursary and the sums disbursed.

Review

25. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Sixth Form and Business Manager.