



# THE WREN

NURTURE · CHALLENGE · INSPIRE

## The Wren Bursary Policy

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## 1. Aims

The Wren aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds;
- Make clear to families and students the type of support that is available and the means of applying for it;
- Make clear to families and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds.

## 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 2024 to 2025 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).
- 'Looked after child' is defined as: a child in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions for more than 24 hours ([section 22](#) of the Children Act 1989).
- '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.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 The Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for approving this policy.

The Principal is also responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

### 4.2 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy consistently.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

### 4.3 Families

Families are expected to notify staff or the Principal of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund policy.

## 5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. See section 6 below for details of the eligibility criteria.

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups;
- Discretionary bursaries.

The fund is used to provide students with support for:

- Transport;
- Books and resources;
- Equipment;
- Field trips and other course-related costs;
- The costs of attending further education or work interviews and open days.

## 6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

The following eligibility criteria will be assessed **in addition** to the individual student's financial needs. An assessment of financial need must take place to determine if the student is eligible to receive funding from the bursary.

### 6.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the current academic year, students must be 16 years or older on 1<sup>st</sup> September and not over 19 years old on 31 August.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they:

- Are continuing to study a program or course that they began when they were aged 16 to 18-years-old, or
- Have an education, health and care (EHCP) plan.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.

### 6.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body, whose role is to assure the quality of provision such as Ofsted. The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- Be funded directly by the ESFA or by the ESFA via a local authority;
- Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund;
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA's list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19; or
- Be registered and attending a 16 to 19 traineeship program.

Non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Program are also eligible to receive a bursary in the same way as any other student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

Students are **not eligible** if:

- They are on an apprenticeship program; or
- They are on any paid training.

Students who are studying via distance learning are eligible for 16 to 19 Bursary but are likely to require financial help on a more infrequent basis (e.g. travel to exams). If this is the case, we will provide support in-kind, such as a travel pass, details of which shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

### 6.3 Residency

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

### 6.4 Asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner, and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education but are not entitled to public funds. If necessary, they 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 asylum-seeking children:

- Are the responsibility of the Local Authority;
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need.

When these students reach 18-years-old, we will consider their immigration status. They will continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a defined vulnerable group 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 with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (NB: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after);
- 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; or
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

UC has now replaced IS, as well as other benefits above, for current and future young people aged 16 to 18. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and students with an EHC plan) may still receive the legacy benefits listed above.

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary. Students will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (for example, because their financial needs are met from other sources and/or because they have no relevant costs).

Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programs lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on a particular student's needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, and provide more than £1,200 per year if such would be necessary in all the circumstances for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

If a student's study program lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study program when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

We will provide this support for students from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. It will not be provided as regular payments for living costs.

## 6.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 6.3 and 6.4 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- Families meet the benefit criteria for Free School Meals;
- Families do not meet the FSM criteria, but the annual family income is less than £50,271 and essential monthly living costs are above 50% of the monthly income.

Students who do not satisfy any of the criteria listed in this section, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may apply for a discretionary bursary.

In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

- Level of household income;
- Outgoings for essential living expenses;
- Travel costs;
- The requirements of their study program;
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help.

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions upon which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

Students in Year 12 will not be required to reapply in Year 13 provided there are no changes in circumstances and any financial support remains on a need's basis.

## 6.7 Evidence

All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:

- A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the student's name.
- Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bill.
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority.
- A copy of the UC claim from Department of Work and Pensions

## 7. Application and payment process

### 7.1 Applications

Applications are handled on first come, first served basis. We reserve the right to remove the bursary offer should the total funds be spent or allocated.

Applicants will be notified in writing, via email, whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded from [fsf@wren.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:fsf@wren.excalibur.org.uk). If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

Students can discuss applications with our Pastoral Support Officer for KS5.

Families can upload their name, date of birth and National Insurance or NASS number [here](#)

Families / students complete the financial data [here](#) and send a copy of the last 2 months bank statements to [fsf@wren.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:fsf@wren.excalibur.org.uk)

Applications are reviewed fortnightly by the Bursary Committee. Where exceptional circumstances are present an urgent decision will be made by Committee Members.

### 7.2 Payment process

Payments are made using the following processes:

- Make in-kind payments, such as travel passes, books, equipment or credit for school meals;
- Make bank transfers to the student's bank account in exceptional circumstances.

### 7.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

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

- Maintaining good attendance, usually above 95%. (subject to exceptional circumstances).
- Following the school behaviour and uniform policy.
- Providing proof of purchases where required.

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; in all situations, we will take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

We will stop bursary support where students have been absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

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 and any decision will be confirmed to the student in writing.

## 8. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or families must notify the school without delay.

Students transitioning from Year 12 to Year 13 can complete the [16-19 declaration](#) without needing to reapply.

## **9. Record keeping**

Any paperwork and documents we retain for audit purposes, for example, copies of application forms, documents as evidence and any agreements signed by students, will be kept securely in line with our Data Protection policy, Privacy Notices and Record Retention Schedule.

## **10. Unspent funds**

Funding for discretionary bursary funding cannot be carried forward for more than one year. Unspent funding must be reported to the ESFA using the [online enquiry form](#), specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The ESFA will recover all unspent funds.

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the School Business Manager annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Principal.