



Dream **Believe** Achieve

Sponne School
A Music & Science Academy

16 to 19 Bursary Fund

POLICY 2023 - 2024

1. Introduction

The Government has set aside some money for schools to allocate to young people who need financial support to stay on in further education or training, this is called the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is designed to help support those young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post-16.

Students who are eligible for this bursary must **apply by 6th October 2023** and must also supply the required evidence to support their application (criteria in this document). Students who meet the requirements of the funding will be allocated a sum of money that they can access throughout the current academic year to support their post-16 education, which is subject to 'Conditions of Funding', see below.

You must read this document carefully to ensure that you fully understand the requirements of the bursary and that you do not miss important application deadlines which are non-negotiable. To further assist you, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document is attached at the back of this application form and should hopefully answer any queries or concerns that you may have.

2. Criteria and Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a bursary the student must be:

- Aged over 16
- Under 19 on 31st August in their final year of study (If a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to get the bursary to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner)
- Students must meet the residency criteria set out by the ESFA (A person on 1 September who is settled in the UK, and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three years preceding the 1 September)
- Aged 16 or over and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) due to their high needs

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund has three elements:

1. Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Group:

Defined Vulnerable Group bursary students are those who meet the criteria below and have a financial need:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Young people **personally** in receipt of income support or Universal Credit
- Young people **personally** in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit.

These students may receive **up to** £1,200 for the year depending on a financial needs assessment. The funds will be paid on a monthly basis via BACs (one week in arrears) provided the student meets the 'Conditions of Funding', see below. Please note that original documentation will be required by the school at the point of application, refer to the application form to determine the evidence required. A Financial needs assessment will be carried out to confirm actual financial need and the amount of support required.

2. Emergency food

Sponne School can use a proportion of the bursary funding in individual cases of **severe** hardship, to provide food support whilst a student attends the study programme who is considered in real need. This will be applied without

undertaking checks on household income or gathering other evidence that is normally required. This flexibility relates to food only.

3. Discretionary Group bursary:

Eligible applicants are identified as those who have a financial need and fall under one of the three 'Student Tiers of Need' and the bursary payment levels will be assessed for each eligible student and prioritised as follows;

- **Student Tier A** – Students who have successfully claimed Free School Meals* for the current academic year whose home household income is less than £16,480.
- **Student Tier B** – Students whose home household income is between £16,481 - £21,589.
- **Student Tier C** - Students whose home household income is between £21,590 - £26,554.

Please note: Original sources of evidence of household income will be required by the school at the point of application unless currently in receipt of free school meals, when a self declaration form will be filled in.. Please refer to the application form to determine the evidence required. A financial needs assessment will be carried out to confirm actual financial need and amount of support required.

***Free School Meals**

Existing Sponne School students who have claimed free school meals in Year 11 can continue to do so into the sixth form, subject to the usual periodic re-assessment of eligibility. If re-assessment of eligibility is not actioned, a self declaration form will need to be filled in and signed to state that household circumstances have not changed.

External students into our sixth form who have been eligible for free school meals at their previous school, or whose circumstances have changed and who feel that they may now be eligible, will need to apply for FSM. The free school meal entitlement is currently £2.50 per day and can only be used to offset items purchased at lunchtime; purchases above this value or items purchased at break times will require payment.

Any additional funding will need to be in agreement with, and authorised by, the Head of Sixth Form and will be allocated on the basis of need and availability of the funds.

3. **Conditions of Funding**

Students will be reviewed termly and must meet the academy's agreed standards of academic progress, learning, behaviour and good attendance (minimum attendance of 90% with zero unauthorised absences). If a student fails to meet these conditions then the bursary may be withdrawn. **Each student will have a financial needs assessment carried out to confirm the actual financial need and amount of support required.**

4. **Criteria for Financial Support**

The bursary is to be used to provide financial support for:

- Clothing/uniform which meets the sixth form dress code
- Course related equipment or resources, excluding laptops which are available from the Sixth Form Office
- Resit examination fees
- Assistance with costs of subject specific educational visits
- University open days associated costs
- University & apprenticeship interview travel costs

- UCAS application cost
- Work related learning risk assessment and travel/uniform costs
- Assistance with ongoing transport costs
- Specific costs linked to costs related to family emergency or change in circumstance

In order to access the funding, the student must submit receipts for items purchased which will then be refunded into the nominated bank account. In some circumstances if this is not possible due to hardship, the academy will purchase the items for the student.

5. Applications

Applications to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund will be accepted from 1st September each academic year through to the end of the academic year or until the funding has been fully allocated, whichever is sooner.

Students must complete the application form in full and provide evidence of household income and/or benefits as requested.

Students will also be required to inform the school of any changes in their financial circumstances during the academic year and may also make more than one application to the fund if their circumstances change significantly.

Where the student's circumstances change in-year and they become eligible as a vulnerable learner, they will receive a pro-rata amount of the vulnerable learner bursary, which will be from the date the student became eligible to the end of the academic year. Where a student is enrolled and there are less than 30 weeks of the academic year remaining then the vulnerable group bursary will be adjusted to an appropriate pro-rata amount.

We reserve the right to request repayment of all or part of any payment received and/or return equipment provided if a student withdraws from their course. Students may be asked to return books or equipment at the end of their course.

The final decision of the level of bursary support will be at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form and School Business Manager and is non-negotiable.

6. In year applications

Applications which are received after 6th October 2023 will be considered and students will receive a reduced bursary.

7. Procedure for application

To make an application, a student should first obtain advice from the Sixth Form Team. Students are advised to clarify they have the correct evidence before submitting their application forms as inadequate evidence will not be accepted and those students who miss the initial deadline of 6th October 2023 will then receive a reduced bursary amount.

Evidence of income will be required for each application, e.g. Evidence of benefits, P60, tax credit award notice and evidence of self-employment. At the bursary Panel's discretion, the above criteria may be waived in the event of students facing a unique financial barrier to learning. Each case will be considered individually and further information may be required to support the application.

Once the application form is complete with the evidence of eligibility attached, these should be placed in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' and handed in to Mrs White, Sixth Form Administrator.

All applications for a bursary will be assessed by the bursary panel, consisting of:

- *Head of Sixth Form*
- *Sixth form Administrator*
- *Business Manager*

The panel will meet termly to review the bursary fund to ensure it is being optimised to support all students who are eligible.

Appeals

The student or their parent/guardian/carer have the right to appeal against the decision made about their application. The appeal should be in the form of a letter to the Headteacher and with the bursary panel will consider and respond to the appeal within two weeks of receipt.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence throughout the process and all original documentation will be returned once the applications have been verified.

8. Further Information

Any unallocated funds from the Discretionary Bursary Contingency Fund cannot be carried forward for more than one year. Unspent funding will be reported to the ESFA using the online enquiry form specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it refers to, no later than 31 March each year. The ESFA will recover any unspent funds.

Important Notes

- All payments will be made via BACS to the nominated bank account.

Next review:	June 2024
Bursary panel.	
At every review the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Body.	