



16-19 Bursary Agreement

2025-2026

Approved by Local Governing Body

Chair of Governors: John Garner

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1. Aims

At Ruislip High School, we aim to:

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

2. Guidance

This agreement is based on the latest advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 bursary fund, most recently published for the 2025-2026 academic year [here](#).

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:
 - o 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
 - o 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. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 5 below for details of our 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 two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

At Ruislip High School, we use the fund to support students to meet the costs associated with sixth form study. Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Transport
- Books
- Equipment
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- Professional clothing

5. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

5.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2025.

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

- Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

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

In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to these younger students. However, if these students are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible for bursary funding.

5.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. 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 a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

5.3 Residency

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

5.4 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 still 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.

5.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 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 to eligible students in vulnerable groups, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and base 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 programme 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 programme 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.

5.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they are facing particular financial barriers to their participation in post-16 education.

Discretionary awards are based primarily on the level of household income. If a student's household is on a combined income of less than or equal to £19,000, they will be eligible for support through the bursary.

For students whose household income is higher than £19,000, but less than or equal to £31,500, they will be eligible for support should funds remain. If there is more demand for bursaries than funds available, awards will be prioritised according to total household income, with the lowest incomes receiving an award first.

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 writing to the Head of Sixth Form.

Students who are eligible for the discretionary bursary may request essential items up to the value of £150 in each year of their two years in the Sixth Form. In addition to this, eligible Year 12 students will have their textbook deposit refunded to them, and Year 13 students applying for university may have their UCAS application fee paid for using bursary funds.

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

5.7 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 bills
- 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
- A P60 or multiple pay slips

6. Application and payment process

6.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted as soon as possible at the start of a new academic year to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or via letter) whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

6.2 Payment process

Essential items that students require through the bursary will be ordered for them by the finance department. This will happen once the student has completed a purchase order form and had it approved by the Assistant Head of Year leading on the bursary and the Head of Sixth Form.

In exceptional circumstances, if a student urgently needs to purchase items before the start of term in September, they should liaise in writing before the end of term in July with the Head of Sixth Form. It may be possible for reimbursement for items up to a total value of £150 to be made into a student's bank account if valid receipts of purchase are shown, but this will be dependent on the student's bursary application being approved.

Students must request funding through the bursary section of the Ruislip High website.

7. Change in circumstances

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

8. 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. These can be accessed on request.