

Northampton School for Girls

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidance 2023-24

1.Context

This guidance forms part of our commitment to ensuring all sixth form students have access to high quality provision. The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. The fund is allocated to post-16 providers by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Students may experience financial difficulties with costs such as transport, offsite educational activities, equipment or other course related costs. Eligibility is based on the student meeting residency requirements and being on a means-tested or disability benefit.

2. The Bursary Scheme

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- i. Higher-priority claimants (defined vulnerable groups)
- ii. Discretionary bursaries awarded to meet individual needs.

Northampton School for Girls is responsible for managing both types of bursary. Students who wish to apply for support from the Bursary Fund must complete and submit an application form.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for either type of bursary the student must:

- Be aged over 16 and under 19 at the end of the academic year.
- Be aged 19 or over at the end of the academic year and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers'). If students are over the age of 19 at the end of the academic year, they must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Meet the residency criteria in section 3 of the ESFA document '[Funding Regulations for Post-16 Provision](#)'. Section 3 of this document also specifies the evidence the academy must see to confirm eligibility.

In addition, the student must also meet one of the criteria listed below:

3.1 Criteria for Higher Priority Claimants (defined vulnerable groups)

Students must fall into one or more of the categories below to be able to apply for a vulnerable bursary:

1. In care; (See Appendix 1 for definition)
2. Care leaver; (See Appendix 1 for definition)
3. Young person in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (See Appendix 2) 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;
4. Young person in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right (See Appendix 2).

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are already met. Therefore, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

3.2 Criteria for Discretionary Bursaries

Students with household incomes of less than £30,000 may apply for a lower level of support determined by their specific needs.

The following evidence will be required for students in this group:

- A copy of entitlement to means-tested state benefit, or Tax Credit Award Notice confirming household income of less than £30,000; and/or
- Evidence of income from self-employment, a P60, or 3 to 6 months' worth of bank statements as evidence; and/or
- 3 most recent monthly award statements for Universal Credit.

See section 5 below regarding how both of the funds are allocated.

4. Applications

The fund will be open for applications for the following academic year in August each year. Application forms must be completed and submitted via Bursary+, which is available through your Admissions+ login, or on the Sixth Form section of the school website. Funding is not guaranteed.

5. Allocation

The decision is made by the Business Manager regarding which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive, following an analysis of each student's individual circumstances and their documented financial need. This will vary from student to student depending on, for example, household income, number of dependent children in the household, distance travelled to school and requirements of individual study programmes.

- up to 5% of the fund will be allocated to cover administrative costs
- where a student is *required* to attend a subject related trip (e.g. Geography field trip), the appropriate amount will be deducted from the allocation.

The 16-19 Bursary fund is cash limited and can only be allocated by Northampton School for Girls whilst funding lasts.

6. Appeals

Students have the right to appeal a decision. Students, or their parent/carer, will be required to put an appeal in writing within 21 days of receiving confirmation of an award or a rejection.

6.1 The letter should set out the reasons for the appeal, which must prove that the student has been wrongly assessed as falling outside the eligibility criteria, plus any further evidence to support the Appeal. It should be sent to the Sixth Form Office.

6.2 The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and will be given in writing within 14 days of the decision.

6.3 The Appeals Panel will consist of:

- Director of Sixth Form
- Headteacher

The Appeals Panel meeting will be clerked by a member of the school's administrative/finance team.

7. Payment

Northampton School for Girls will base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, their household income, the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme. The school will not make bursary fund payments as regular payments for living costs as this is out of scope of the bursary fund.

Requests must be made through the student Bursary+ account. All requests will be assessed and if approved:

- Purchases will be made by the academy for items such as course materials, bus tickets, school trips and visits
- Reimbursement will be made via BACS transfer for items where the academy cannot provide the goods or service directly, subject to the relevant receipts/proof of purchase being submitted

The academy reserves the right to cease bursaries where a students' attendance and/or punctuality is deemed unacceptable (below 95% or persistent punctuality issues)

8. Audit

The fund will be audited in line with the school's standard audit procedures.

9. Monitoring and review

The Business Manager will oversee the operation of the Bursary Fund on a termly basis.

This guidance, and its operation, will be reviewed by the Business Manager at the end of each academic year to review the allocations and criteria for awards for the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Last Review Date	July 2023
Next Review Date	June 2024

Appendix 1

Definitions: 'In Care' and Care Leavers'

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' 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) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'

A '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

The allocation of these funds will be subject to audit so Northampton School for Girls will require proof that the application is genuine in the form of written evidence from the young person and her/his key worker. The academy will seek and retain copies of evidence from the young person, bearing in mind confidentiality. Appropriate evidence for students who are in care or a care leaver includes: written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority. This is the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services. This could be a letter or an email but must be irrefutably from the local authority.

Appendix 2

Income Support, Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance

More detailed information can be found below:

- Income Support www.gov.uk/income-support
- Universal Credit www.gov.uk/universal-credit
- Employment and Support Allowance www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance
- Personal Independence Payments www.gov.uk/pip

The allocation of these funds will be subject to audit so Northampton School for Girls will require proof that the application is genuine in the form of written evidence from the young person and her key worker. The academy will seek and retain copies of evidence from the young person, bearing in mind confidentiality. Appropriate evidence includes:

- For students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (UC), a copy of their Income Support or UC award notice (this can be printed off from the claimant's online account or a screenshot provided). 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 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 Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment must also be provided.