**Unity Schools Partnership 16-19 Bursary Statement 2024/25**

The Trust manages 16-19 Bursary funds, and this statement details the Trust’s Bursary scheme which follows the advice from the Government Funding Agency (EFSA).

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

• bursaries for defined vulnerable groups

• discretionary bursaries

To access the full Government guidelines please see use following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2024-to-2025-academic-year>

The bursary is a contribution towards the essential costs of participating in the students’ study programme and so can help with cost of travel to school, essential books, equipment, essential fieldtrips/educational visits and university interviews and open days. The bursary awards also support students on work experience who have extra participation costs.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support, for example, counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students’ study programme or to support general household incomes.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for either type of bursary students must be enrolled with a Unity School Partnership sixth form provider, have settled status or have been ordinarily resident in the UK for 3 years from the start of sixth form and be aged over 16 and under 19 as at 31 August 2024.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

**Vulnerable Bursary**

Awards of up to £1,200 per annum are made, on evidence of financial need, if at least one of the following applies, students are:

• In care

• Care leaver

• receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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

• receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

**Discretionary Bursary**

Students living with parents/carers can apply for an award of up to £1,200 for the academic year. If your household income (including all benefits) is £35,000 or Outer London £40,000 or less, you will be eligible to apply for the Discretionary Bursary funding.

Students are encouraged to apply if they have extenuating circumstances leading to a financial need in attending and participating in school.

**Emergency Fund**

The Trust will aim to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year that impact on their ability to attend and participate in sixth from education.

The Trust will use the ESFA checklist for all applications and if students are eligible awards will be made dependant on evidenced financial need.

**Applying**

To apply for either of the bursary elements students will need to complete a confidential application form annually, which can be found in the Sixth Form section of the school website.

All applications need to be submitted electronically and clearly named evidence sent to the school’s bursary email account. The Head of Sixth Form will assess the application and the students will be informed of the outcome once the application has been assessed.

Incomplete applications will not be processed, please ensure the application is complete.

Please submit electronic copies of all documentation to bursary@xxxschool. If your bursary application is successful, you will need to complete the online ‘bursary claim form’ which can be found in the sixth form section of the school website. There is no limit on how many claim forms you can submit, each claim will go through approval.  Once approved, the school will make the purchase on your behalf and will contact you if this is not possible.

Please do not make any purchases without prior approval as we cannot guarantee reimbursement.

Approval will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Students can apply for the bursary at any time throughout the year, especially if personal financial circumstances change.

When a student is on roll, we will endeavour to make payments as soon as possible.

**Evidence of Income**

**Vulnerable Bursary**

Evidence of looked after status such as a letter from a Social Worker or Young Persons Adviser.

Evidence of entitlement to a named benefit, with details of the calculation of that benefit (in student’s own name).

Evidence of financial status will need to be provided; and three months’ worth of bank statements for the account into which benefits, and salary are paid.

**Discretionary Bursary**

Evidence of total household income including all benefits needs to be provided, this includes parent(s), carer(s) and partner(s), but excludes siblings and grandparents (unless they are the student’s carer) who are earning and living within the household.

Disability Living Allowance is the exception when calculating household income as this element of funding is not included.

Evidence required includes payslips, self employed accounts, working tax credits, latest bank statements.

When assessing young carers’ eligibility for support from the bursary, the Trust considers whether they have had a young carers assessment (which includes questions about the support they need for education), whether they access a young carers service, whether their GP could confirm their caring role or whether they receive Carers Allowance.

Under our retention policy all documents provided for Bursary evidence will be kept securely in line with data protection for 6 years.

**Payments**

Where possible the school will make purchases on your behalf, depending on individual circumstances and local arrangements.

If we’re unable to make purchases on your behalf payments will be made into the students’ nominated bank account on receipt of evidence of purchase which should be emailed to bursary@xxxschool. Students must ensure that correct bank details are supplied and can provide evidence of the bank account information into which the award will be paid i.e. a copy of a bank statement or bank card to verify the bank details. The Trust cannot accept responsibility if incorrect bank details are provided and if any payments made do not reach the nominated account. Second payments will not be made due to incorrect bank details.

**Awards**

The local authority transport scheme is used as a benchmark for travel awards and determining distance that is travelled to college, therefore your award will reflect this.

If you were eligible for Free School Meals in year 11 and your circumstances have not changed, we can continue to support with School Meal cost in 6th form, if required.

If you require support in other areas of your study – course resources, exam resits, university visits, specialist clothing etc – you will need to submit a ‘bursary claim form’ prior to purchase.

Claims will be approved on a case by case basis.

**Attendance**

Students’ attendance is monitored on a half-termly basis in line with the school policy.

If there are mitigating circumstances for lower attendance levels these will be dealt with on an individual basis.

**Appeals / Complaints Procedure**

If any student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Headteacher outlining their reasons why.

The Headteacher will convene a 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel, consisting of the Headteacher and a member of the Governing Body. The Panel will consider and respond to appeals within two weeks of receipt. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld, it will be referred back to the Head of Sixth Form with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld the appealing party will be signposted to the School’s Complaints Procedure.

**Other**

Students must notify the school of any changes in their circumstances throughout the year, they will not normally be expected to repay an award, but their entitlement to further payments may be affected.

Due to significant increased demand for financial assistance, the Trust cannot guarantee applicants will receive any or part of funding requested.

**Marketing**

Unity Schools Partnership will advertise the bursary through social media and will be proactive in approaching students who may have additional financial need and support them to apply for the bursary.

**GDPR**

Data and evidence provided in the 16-19 Bursary Application form is collected, used and retained in accordance with the Unity Schools Partnership Privacy Notices. Data provided will be retained for 7 years, at which point it will be securely destroyed in accordance with the Unity Schools Partnership Records Retention Policy.

If any of the data provided on the form (such as your email address, mobile number) or within the evidence provided (such as your bank account details) change, please advise your school via the bursary@xxxschool email address*.*

**Contact us**

For help completing the application form or any queries please contact the head of sixth form.

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To be reviewed summer term 2025.