

Holy Family Catholic School: Sixth Form Bursary Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) makes money available to each school to fund discretionary bursaries for Sixth Form Students.
2. Additionally, the ESFA administers and pays individual direct bursaries of up to £1,200 to “vulnerable” students defined as those who are in care, have previously been in care, or if the student themselves is in receipt of income support / universal credit / disability living allowance / personal independence payments.
3. This policy has been written with regard to the current guidance published by the ESFA.
4. The aim of the bursary funds is to support disadvantaged students with the costs of staying in education after the age of 16, (e.g. textbooks, equipment for practical subjects, educational trips, travel costs to school, university interviews and open days). Please see Appendix A for examples of items that can be purchased via the bursary.
5. The bursary funds are not intended to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students’ study programme, support general household incomes or provide learning support, e.g. counselling or mentoring.
6. Students who may be eligible for either bursary must complete an application form and provide the required evidence to the school.
7. As part of their application, students must sign a declaration stating “I understand and agree that as a recipient of a 16-19 discretionary bursary, I will be responsible for maintaining high standards of attendance at school and full commitment to my courses. I understand that bursary payments may not be made if I do not adhere to the student contract signed at the start of the school year.” **The school reserves the right to refuse bursary payments to students who break the student code of conduct in relation to minimum levels of attendance.** Absences that are authorised with proof do not count against overall attendance figures for payment of the Bursary.
8. A student awarded a discretionary or vulnerable group bursary in Year 12 will be required to submit a new application form at the start of Year 13, together with the required evidence, so that the school can confirm they remain eligible each year to comply with ESFA requirements.

DISCRETIONARY BURSARIES

9. The school receives the fund allocation from the ESFA at the start of the academic year and sets their own eligibility criteria.

10. The school has set three levels of bursary support for discretionary bursaries depending on the criteria outlined below; Level 1 recipients will receive the highest sum of support payments and Level 3 the lowest.

11. In determining the eligibility for each level, the school will consider the total household income via supporting evidence and the number of dependent children in the household.

Level 1

12. The total household income for a Level 1 will not be more than £16,500. If this is the case, parents should be in receipt of one of the benefits or credits shown below.

- Universal Credit
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Housing or Council Tax Benefit
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- NHS Tax Credit Exemption Card

Level 2

13. The total household income for a Level 2 will be between £16,500 and £20,000. If this is the case, parents should be in receipt of one of the benefits or credits shown in the table above.

Level 3

14. The total household income for a Level 3 will be between £20,001 and £25,000.

15. Students must attach supporting evidence to their application form. This should be in the form of parental bank statements, payslips, and/or documented evidence of any benefit payments as shown above.

16. Students must include on their application form details of the type and likely cost of expenditure they would claim from the bursary fund if their application is successful (see paragraphs 4 and 5 above).

17. The Assistant Headteacher (KS5) introduces the bursary to Sixth Formers in an assembly early in September to students, and at the parent's information evening, and invites applications. Students who wish to apply gather the relevant supporting evidence and return their application form to the Sixth Form Administrator. Early applications are encouraged – the school will accept in-year applications but please note that bursary payments cannot be made to cover purchases more than one calendar month before the application was submitted.

18. All applications are assessed initially by the Assistant Headteacher (KS5), who may request further evidence if necessary.

19. The Assistant Headteacher (KS5), and Headteacher meet to review each application and approve as appropriate. Both the Assistant Headteacher (KS5) and Headteacher sign each approved application.

20. The Assistant Headteacher (KS5), and Headteacher set the maximum sums of money to be awarded to each level of bursary, depending on the number of approved applications and the total fund available.

How to claim

21. Students should submit a claim form with attached receipts to the Sixth Form Administrator who will arrange for approval and forwarding to the finance office for reimbursement. Alternatively, students may submit a request for an item, e.g. a travel pass and, once approved, the finance office will arrange for this item to be purchased and the cost deducted from the student's total fund allocation. The finance office will process claims up to the total allocated amount for the academic year authorised by the Assistant Headteacher (KS5).

22. BACS payment will be made to student's bank accounts within two weeks of submission of receipts to the finance office.

23. Should a student's family financial circumstances change during the course of the year (e.g. parental unemployment), they may submit a late application to the bursary fund. The same assessment, approval and payment processes as set out above are followed.

24. A reserve sum will be retained within the central bursary fund during the course of the year to allow for late applications.

BURSARIES FOR STUDENTS IN DEFINED VULNERABLE GROUPS

25. Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups of up to £1,200. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

26. Students who meet the criteria are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from other sources.

27. The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care
- 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
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

28. The Assistant Headteacher (KS5) and Year teams will work to identify students who may be in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups by liaising with the Head of Upper site (KS4) as well as with the relevant pastoral staff from a student's previous school if applicable and with relevant external agencies.

29. Such students will be encouraged to complete the application form and provide the required evidence of eligibility.

30. All applications are assessed using the same process as above

31. The Assistant Headteacher (KS5) will inform the successful applicants of the sum awarded to them for the year and the school's finance office of the amount to draw down from the ESFA's Student Bursary Support Service.

32. Decisions on how a vulnerable group bursary will be disbursed will be taken on a case by case basis, depending on the circumstances and preferences of the student.

33. This could include the School making a fortnightly or monthly payments to the student, the student submitting receipts or requesting payment in kind for items such as a travel pass, the School holding back a sum for payment of a trip, or a combination of these. The finance office will process claims and/or make regular payments up to the total allocated amount for the academic year

F. Wilbraham

Assistant Head Teacher (KS5)

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APPENDIX A

List of examples of items that can be claimed for via the Discretionary Bursary (not exhaustive)

- Course textbooks
- Equipment for practical subjects, beyond that which would be expected as the norm (eg: The bursary cannot be used to fund purchase of pens, paper etc.). Examples would include: Calculators, Art materials, tools, computer programmes etc.
- Specialist clothing for practical subjects
- Educational trips such as those required for completion of coursework
- Travel costs to school that are not covered by 16-18 TfL Young Persons travel cards
- Travel and associated costs to university interviews
- Travel and associated costs to university open days
- Travel and associated costs for work experience placements organised through the school or organised as part of the student's school based course
- Cost of UCAS application fee
- Cost of University course entry tests eg: BMAT
- Cost of clothing permitted in the sixth form dress code
- Part or full payment towards a laptop/chrome book via the school.

Examples of items that **cannot** be claimed for by the Discretionary Bursary:

- The Discretionary Bursary fund will not subsidise Free School Meals – students should apply for that through the Local Authority
- Clothing or materials not listed on the Dress Code policy
- Any household or personal items that do not directly relate to supporting a student's study programme.

To be sure that a particular item can be supported by Bursary payments students/parents should ensure that they speak to the AHT (KS5) before purchasing the item.