



16-19 BURSARY FUND STATEMENT

QUEEN'S PARK HIGH SCHOOL

At Queen's Park High School we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they have access to their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training. The bursary fund is money that the student, or the school, can use to pay for things like books, meals, transport, UCAS fees, study trips or travel for university interviews.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by the setting. In **both** cases, the setting is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We are dedicated to:

- Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable, and easily understood.
- Ensuring that information regarding the application, award, and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Ensuring all students who are eligible for funding have access to it.

Eligibility

Students aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August before the academic year in question, can apply for bursaries for that academic year. Students under 16 will only receive bursaries in exceptional circumstances.

Students must also satisfy the residency criteria as specified in the ESFA Funding Guidance. Students who live in Wales can apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) see <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe/ema.aspx>

Students who are over 19 can apply for a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they started aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers), or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable bursary, although the school may decide the student is eligible for a discretionary bursary.

Young offenders may apply for a bursary provided that either they are serving a non-custodial sentence, they have been released early from a custodial sentence (except on temporary license), or they have been remanded to a non-secure institution.

Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in the ‘Supporting Evidence’ section below.

Bursaries for students in defined vulnerable groups (Band 1)

To be eligible for a vulnerable bursary, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- The student is in Local Authority care
- The student has recently left Local Authority care
- The student receives Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- The student receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Any student who meets these criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 (amount to be confirmed October 2021); this may be reduced where the school deems it appropriate to do so, for example, if a student is undertaking a part-time course. Alternatively, we may decide to allocate more than £1,200 if a student needs extra help to remain in education. There will be no blanket or flat-rate payments without consideration of the student’s specific financial needs.

We are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation, e.g. no travel or food costs.
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.
- A student is financially supported by their partner.

Discretionary bursaries (Bands 2, 3 and 4)

We allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. We will always assess each application on an individual basis but will broadly use the following bands and criteria as a guide:

Band 2: A discretionary payment of up to £950.00 per year (amount to be confirmed October 2021) for Students living in a low-income household who are in receipt of Free School Meals. For students living in Cheshire West, further information on eligibility for Free School Meals can be found at <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/school-meals.aspx>

Band 3: A discretionary payment of up to £650.00 (amount to be confirmed October 2021) per year for Students living in a low-income household who are not eligible for Free School Meals but whose household is in receipt of Universal Credit, Tax Credits, or other means tested benefits

Band 4: A discretionary payment of up to £400.00 per year (amount to be confirmed October 2021) for students who do not meet any of the criteria above but have an identified financial need and require financial support for transport to school or other educational costs

These bands are a guide only and there will be no blanket or flat-rate payments without consideration of the student’s specific financial needs. Alongside household income we will also consider the following:

- The level of educational costs the student needs help with e.g. the cost of equipment/clothing required by their course(s)
- The student's transport costs to school
- Whether students are from a single-parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family
- Whether students have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent

Allocation of Funds

Payments for vulnerable bursaries (Band 1) are allocated first, set up to the value of £1,200 (amount to be confirmed October 2021). The allocation of funds to discretionary bursaries (Bands 2-4), and how much will be allocated to students within each band, will be decided once all applications have been processed to ensure fairness and equality. This is because the funding provided by the government is allocated to the school in advance and is not based on the number of applicants.

Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the 16-19 Bursary Application form via the link on the school website and provide the necessary supporting documentation. All applications should be submitted by **14th September** of each academic year.

We do understand, however, that needs may arise throughout the academic year. As such, we do not implement a cut-off date for applications, but wherever possible, all should be submitted by **14th September 2021** to guarantee payment in October 2021.

Students must supply suitable evidence to support their application. Copies of this evidence will be retained for six years for auditing purposes.

The school will endeavour to assess all applications within two weeks from the date we receive it. Verifying the eligibility of all applicants is an integral feature of the assessment process. If the application form has not been completed in full, or the required supporting evidence has not been provided, then the application may be delayed.

If an application is successful, we will send an award letter to the student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind, and the payment conditions. If an application is unsuccessful, we will send you a letter explaining why, which will include details of how you can appeal.

Supporting Evidence

Students should submit the support evidence to the Finance Office as soon as possible after completing the online application form. We can accept paper or electronic copies of the supporting documents. If submitting an electronic copy (i.e., a scan or photograph) it must be a complete and unaltered image of the underlying paper document. We can also accept screenshots from online accounts. Electronic copies should be emailed to finance@tltrust.co.uk Paper copies should be placed in a sealed, clearly marked envelope 'For the attention of the Finance Office' and either hand-delivered to school reception or posted to the school address: Queen's Park High School, Queen's Park Road, Handbridge, Chester, CH4 7AE.

Please note that deliberate understatements of income may result in payments being stopped, reclaimed and if necessary, reported to the Police as an incidence of fraud.

All applicants

All applicants are required to provide the following:

- Birth Certificate or Passport to confirm their date of birth
- Bank statement or bank document to confirm the student's address, sort code and account number
- Details of the costs you need help with.

Vulnerable bursary applicants (Band 1)

Depending on their circumstances, students applying for a bursary for defined vulnerable groups will need to provide the following:

- **For students in Local Authority care or who have recently left Local Authority care:** written confirmation, such as a letter or an email, of current or previous LAC status from the relevant LA (the LA that looks after them or provides their leaving care services)
- **For students in receipt of Income Support:** a copy of the Income Support award notice, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right, and confirm that the student can be in FE or training
- **For students in receipt of Universal Credit:** copies of the Universal Credit Award notice from the last **three months**, which must evidence that the student is entitled to the benefit in their own right, as well as additional documentation to confirm their independent status, e.g. a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificate, or utility bills
- **For students in receipt of Universal Credit or ESA and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments:** a copy of the Universal Credit or ESA award from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), as well as evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

Discretionary bursary applicants (Bands 2, 3 & 4)

Students applying for a discretionary bursary will need to provide the type of evidence needed to verify their household income and transport/educational costs and therefore it is likely that the assessment will take slightly longer. Documents will include copies of the most recent Tax Credits or Universal Credit award notices, P60s / evidence of self-employed income. Evidence of Free School Meals is not required as the Local Authority provides the school with confirmation of all students granted Free School Meals.

Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds and the application form asks students to agree to these conditions. Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold or reduce payments where students breach these conditions.

The conditions are as follows:

- All bursary payments will be subject to the student's satisfactory attendance, behaviour, and attainment.
- Students must have 100% attendance at timetabled lessons unless acceptable reason(s) are provided for it falling lower or absences are authorised. Students have the right to appeal against any withheld or reduced payments through the usual appeal channels if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Before withholding any payments, the school will consider the effect that this may have on students' individual circumstances.

Payments will be stopped where:

- A student is absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more, excluding holidays or if there is evidence that they intend to return.
- A student withdraws themselves from a study programme.
- Money is not being spent for the reasons it was awarded.
- A student breaches any of the conditions for payment.

Receipt of the bursary will not affect the receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, e.g. Income Support.

Paying the bursary

Funds will be allocated in-kind rather than in cash where possible, e.g. through travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, or required books or equipment.

Where cash payments are to be made to students, rather than in-kind, the funding will be paid by BACs transfer to the student's own bank account. In exceptional circumstances where the student is unable to manage their own funds, we will consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

Payments will be made to students on a monthly basis and in arrears. A total of ten monthly payments will be made with the first payment being on or around 15th October (for the month of September) and the last payment being on or around 15th July (for the month of June). Please note that all payments are subject to sufficient funds being available and priority will be given to those recipients who qualify for the vulnerable bursary (Band 1) support.

Please note that Year 13 bursary payments are only payable until the date of the student's final external examination.

Maintaining confidentiality

Any information given to the school will **only** be used for the purpose of processing your application for a 16-19 bursary. Your information, eligibility, or application (whether successful or not) **will not** be shared with other students or staff members. Where we deem it necessary to share this information, we will only do this with your **consent**, unless the law permits us to do so. We understand the need for maintaining confidentiality and appreciate that applications for the bursary are sensitive.

The school has the duty to protect public funds that are handled by the school. The information provided on the 16-19 Bursary Application form may be used to prevent and detect fraud. For the same reason, the information provided may be shared with third party organisations who handle public money. You will be informed if your information is being shared in accordance with the GDPR. The information will be held in accordance with storage requirements defined by the GDPR and will be held for as long as necessary.

Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow our complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints Procedures Policy – this is available on the school website.

Further information

Full details and guidance is also available on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

If you have any queries regarding the 16-19 Bursary Fund, please contact the Sixth Form Administrator or email the finance team via finance@tltrust.co.uk