BURSARY POLICY

Date reviewed: September 2025
Next review: September 2026

This Policy is founded within our School ethos which provides a caring, friendly and safe environment for all members of our community.

1. BACKGROUND

A key priority for the Government is to close the gap in attainment between those from less fortunate and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16 to 19 education or training. The Department for Education [DfE] established the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2011. The aim of the Fund is to help 16 to 19 year olds continue in education, where they might struggle for financial reasons. It enables Heston students to access additional funds to support:

- participation in activities to enrich their learning experience
- pursue applications to Higher Education.
- travel cost to and from school
- buying essential books, equipment or specialist clothing [such as protective overalls, for example] that are required for their study programme. These are items that the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

Five percent of the Bursary allocation is retained by the School for administrative purposes in line with ESFA guidance. The named contact at the School for all 16-19 Bursary support/enquiries is the Hassan Naqvi.

2. BURSARIES AVAILABLE

There are two types of 16 to 19 Bursary available:

- **Discretionary Bursary** – that institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules. There is no limit to how much a Discretionary Bursary can be as long as an institution stays within its budget [ESFA]. The take up of Free School Meals at Heston does not reflect the need in the School and when students enter the Sixth Form many more apply and are eligible for the Bursary than actually claim Free School Meals. Put simply a large number of students claim a relatively small Bursary Fund. The School receives a fixed allocation from the Government to distribute to its students and cannot apply for more funding.

- **Vulnerable Bursary** – worth £1,200 per successful application depending on your circumstances and benefits.

Applications to the 2025-26 16-19 Bursary Fund are only for students aged 16, 17 or 18 at 31 August 2025 and meet the residency criteria in the ESFA Funding Guidance 2024-25. They are not open to young people aged under 16 or over 19 at 31 August 2025. Our eligibility criteria comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We not discriminate against students, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of their protected characteristics.'

3. CRITERIA TO CLAIM DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

- Heston Community School uses household income that is below £30, 000 as its main eligibility condition. However, the following are also taken into account:
  - some students from low income households get more support depending on their needs such as bus or train passes, money for educational visits, money towards exam re-sits and contributions to the costs of university open days and interviews.
  - wider family circumstances, including whether the student is from a single parent family or where the student is a career, or where there are a lot of other children in the family.
  - eligibility for free school meals – students are not automatically entitled to a bursary, but it is a good indicator of family income.
- We allow Universal Credit award notice, 3 most recent monthly award statements, a P60, or 3-6 months' worth of bank statements as evidence. The date range for applying

this year will be the 24-25 financial year beginning in April 2024 and ending in March 2025ll.

4. CRITERIA TO CLAIM THE VULNERABLE BURSARY

- You're in or you recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support [IS] or Universal Credit [UC] because you're financially supporting yourself
- you get Disability Living Allowance [DLA] in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance [ESA] or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment [PIP] in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit.

UC has replaced IS and ESA as well as other benefits, for new claimants.

The amount you may get depends on the costs you have and what you need for your course. This might include money for books, equipment or travel costs to school or college.

5. SUPPORTING INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS

- Your engagement in industry placement delivery is also encouraged to ensure your bursary policies can respond to the needs of students undertaking industry placements. A few students may find themselves facing financial difficulties due to incurring extra participation costs, for example, because they need to pay for additional travel to their placement. These students may only need support for a short period of time.

6. EVIDENCE REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE BURSARY

All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence shall be retained by the School to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential and destroyed within 1 year of the young person leaving the School. Information will also be processed in-line with updated General Data Protection Regulation 2018 [GDPR regulations] to ensure the privacy of your information at all times.

Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Discretionary Bursary are:

- evidence used to assess eligibility and determine household income, such as P60s, self-employment accounts, wage slips, a letter from DWP, copies of online statements for UC
- a copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need, including a breakdown of the calculation that has determined the amount required
- receipts for purchases or in-kind support provided to the student, for example, bus/travel pass, travel tickets, lunch receipts or book receipts
- evidence to support the value of any cash payments made to the student such as travel pass, bus tickets or meal deals
- attendance evidence to support payments where applicable.

Local authorities are also required, via the local authority section 151 officer grant return process, to confirm that they have used the funding we paid to them for the purpose it was intended. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund forms part of this process. Any funding declared by local authorities as not being used for the purpose it was intended, or which cannot be properly accounted for, is recovered.

Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Vulnerable Bursary are:

- Statement from the Local Authority confirming the young person's current or previous looked after status.
- Recent entitlement or award statement setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled, and confirming that the recipient can be in further education or training.

Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Hardship Bursary are:

- Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to exceptional reason or circumstance change can apply to access the contingency funds on an individual basis by submitting an application in writing.
- Institutions currently draw down funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups from the Student Bursary Support Service [SBSS], a third-party administrator, whenever new students are verified as meeting the criteria and having a financial need. From academic year 2025 to 2026, we will instead submit funding claims directly to the DfE at defined points in the year.
- We will provide evidence showing that the student is eligible, for example, a letter from DWP or the local authority or a copy of the student's online UC statement.
- evidence of payments received from the ~~SBSS,~~ DFE for example bank statements and remittance advices
- a copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need, including a breakdown of the calculation that has determined the amount required
- receipts for purchases or in-kind support provided to the student, for example, bus pass, lunch receipts or book receipts
- evidence to support the value of any cash payments made to the student such as travel pass, bus tickets or meal deals
- attendance evidence to support payments where applicable.

7. APPLICATION

Applications for a Bursary must be made using the correct Application Form and should be submitted by the date stated in assemblies at the start of the year. Applications made after this date will be considered provided sufficient funds are available. However, once the Bursary Fund has been depleted, it will not be possible to consider further applications.

Learning Coordinator support will be available to assist any young person in making an application where they are unable to do so due to a level of learning difficulty and/or disability.

Consideration will be given to assisting any young person in making an application where they are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from their parent/carer[s].

8. PROCESS

The 16-19 Bursary Application Panel that assesses all applications for a Bursary, comprises of:

- Head of Sixth
- Year 12 Learning Coordinator
- Attendance Manager.

They will review the application, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence and young people will be notified of the outcome by mid-November for initial applications and within two weeks of receipt for any subsequent applications.

9. QUALIFYING CONDITION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible young people will need to complete a qualifying learning period of 6 weeks before they are able to receive Bursary payments. However, any eligible young person can make an application ahead of the six week qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship, consideration will also be given for payment in advance of the six-week period.

All young people in receipt of a Bursary must meet weekly punctuality and attendance requirements of **95%** to ensure continued support. In addition, all young people in receipt of a Bursary must behave appropriately and submit work of an appropriate level and to required deadlines. If the young person does not meet these conditions, the School reserves the right to withdraw or suspend Bursary payments.

Students in receipt of a Bursary are expected to attend Private Study lessons in the Sixth Form Centre in the event of teacher absence. This will ensure that attendance figures are correct.

Students qualifying for a Bursary must have a current bank account in to which the bursary must be paid. We are unable to pay any monies for the bursary into parents' accounts.

Bursary recipients will most likely be rewarded in kind or reimbursed where they have spent their own monies via their bank accounts. Receipts for all expenditure must be submitted to support the claim.

10. PAYMENTS

Students in one of the defined vulnerable groups may receive a bursary entitlement of £1,200 for the academic year. If IT/specialist equipment or bus passes required, then the School will purchase this and the cost deducted from the student's overall award. Where a carer has responsibility for the young person's finances, meetings should be set up with them to decide how payments should be made. Additionally, all students who qualify for a Vulnerable Bursary will be offered budgeting training from their Learning Coordinator or Welfare Manager to help ensure the young person's Bursary delivers the maximum benefit. The majority of discretionary bursary allocation payments will be 'in kind', based on their needs, which may include but are not limited to:

- Essential books and equipment
- Bus pass
- IT/specialist equipment such as for Art or Science
- School academically focused trips
- Clothing to meet the dress code of the sixth form in exceptional circumstances
- Travel to open days or university interviews.

Dependent upon individual circumstances, the Bursary Fund may pay the full cost or only a proportion, with the balance being paid by the student. Any student who is in receipt of Free School Meals will continue to be entitled to Free School Meals under the Bursary scheme.

11. DECLARATION

Students and their families must be aware that if false or incomplete information is submitted, or if they do not tell institutions about any part of their income that is relevant, the matter may be referred to the Department for Education, the Department of Work and

Pensions or the Police. The student could face prosecution and we will seek to recover any payments the student is not eligible for. [ESFA Bursary Fund Guide].

12. APPEALS

If any young person or their parent/carer[s] are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Head of Sixth, Mr Hassan Naqvi, outlining their reasons why. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, then a complaint can be made through the School's published Complaints Procedure.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during processing, payment and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the young person and/or their parent/guardian/carer[s] will be told the reasons why this is necessary, prior to sharing any information further.

14. CHANGE OF YOUNG PERSON'S CIRCUMSTANCES

Financial
Any young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform the School if their financial circumstances, or those of their parent/carer[s] change [e.g. increase in household income, Free School Meals being withdrawn for a sibling]. This does not automatically mean any future Bursary payments will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped and the funds redistributed.

Transferring
Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers *out of* the School to another education/training provider in-year, the School will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete the learning aims.

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers *in to* the School from another education/training provider in-year, the School will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete the learning aims.

Withdrawing
Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary withdraws from the School, and does not transfer to another education/training provider, Bursary payments made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled payments to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

15. Further information

In addition to this Policy two documents will be used in the 16-19 Bursary process:

- Application Form
- ESFA Bursary Fund Guide 2025-26

Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found on the Education Funding Agency website.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance