

BURSARY – INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

St Thomas More Catholic Academy will administer the 16-19 Bursary Fund awarded within the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide. We aim to have clear and transparent processes including an appeals procedure.

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 which institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules

Who is eligible to apply for 16 to 19 Bursary Funding?

The over-arching aim of the discretionary bursary award is that it is to remove specific barriers to participation therefore allowing a student to remain in education.

Therefore, any student who is economically disadvantaged and at risk of not taking up or continuing in their education is eligible to apply and provide evidence.

Applications can be made throughout the year if circumstances change.

Vulnerable Bursary

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. Students will be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have up to a maximum of £1,200.

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

Evidence to support the application will be needed, for example a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled or written confirmation of current/previous 'Looked After' status from the relevant Local Authority or a copy of the UC claim form from the DWP.

Discretionary Bursary

This will be awarded on an identified needs basis and at the discretion of St Thomas More Catholic Academy to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items you will need to pay for to participate in your course.

Discretionary bursaries are awards made by institutions to individual students. They are targeted on overcoming the individual barriers to participation a student may have. How much bursary a student will receive will depend on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, eligibility based on household income, and actual financial need such as the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme. **Institutions should not make blanket or flat rate payments to all students.**

To apply for this bursary a student needs to provide evidence that they are eligible, this could be evidence with information provided from the following documentation:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Receipt of the bursary will be conditional on the young person meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour. The aim is for all students to meet the whole **school attendance target of 95%** and for effort scores and behaviour in lessons to be good or better as tracked in classcharts.

Complaints

Any student or parent who is unhappy with how their application for bursary funding has been handled should follow own complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on our website.

16 to 19 Bursary Fund and receipt of DWP benefits

Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as IS, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or, generally, UC.

If a student is in receipt of DLA (or PIP) and ESA, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

Institutions must not make bursary fund payments as payments for living costs. This is out of scope of the bursary fund and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

How does St Thomas More Catholic Academy assess applications and allocate 16 to 19 Bursary Funding?

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund and the school will prioritise allocation according to:

- Whether the student was Pupil Premium throughout school.

Pupil Premium was introduced to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their peers. By using this as a measure it ensures that all students who have accessed support throughout their 5-16 education continue to receive support where necessary.

- Or through household income.

To evidence this we will ask for your 3 most recent UC monthly award statements.

Discretionary bursary is allocated on an individual needs basis, removing barriers to facilitate success in education.

As discretionary bursary is provided to provide support in overcoming the individual barriers to participation a student faces it may be utilised for students who have incomes above the £18K set but unusually high costs that are unavoidable. Examples may include the need for music tuition, high level sport participation, audition fees etc. Again, this would be on a discretionary basis based on individual need and identified barriers to learning.

Further Support available

Free Meals

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantage' is defined by the students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits.

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Pupils who received free school meals in Year 11 will automatically roll up into Year 12.

Procedures for applying for the 16-19 Bursary

Information and Application

- Information on how to apply for the bursary will be available on enrolment day in September 2023. All initial applications should be received in writing by **21st October 2024**. After this emergency applications due to change of circumstances can be received throughout the year.
- Applications should be made on the bursary application form available from the Head of Sixth Form.
- Students in the high priority group will need to provide documentary evidence to show that they fall into one of the nominated vulnerable groups; young people in care, care leavers and those in receipt of Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance AND Disability Living Allowance.
- Applications made based on household income must be supported by relevant documents e.g. P60 for the previous financial year, wage slips, statements of benefit entitlement and benefit payments, confirmation of address.
- Bank account details will be collected so that any payments can be made directly to the account holder.
- Completed forms should be handed in to Mr Whitehouse. Where there is evidence attached please return these in a sealed envelope for our finance team to process confidentially.
- All applicants will be advised of the outcome, no later than the week after October half term.

Payments

- A simple application process is then required to identify any barriers to learning throughout the year.
- Bursary funds may also be requested on behalf of students if barriers to learning are identified by staff.
- Payments may be made by bank transfer to be spent and evidenced through providing receipts, through school purchasing equipment for you that you have requested, by school providing additional support e.g. Additional 'top up' lessons or for expenses such as travel or exam re-takes / re-marks.

'Receipt of the bursary will be conditional on the young person meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour.'

The ESFA encourages institutions to pay bursaries in-kind rather than cash as far as possible. This helps ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded and helps students to participate. There are no restrictions on what in-kind payments can be but they might include travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and required equipment. Institutions can specify that students must return books and equipment at the end of their study programme to be used again by other students where appropriate.

Appeals against non-qualification for support

If a student's application has not been processed to their satisfaction, they can appeal in writing to Mrs Todd who manages the Sixth Form. The decision will be communicated in writing to the student within five working days.

If the appeal is rejected the student can send a copy of their letter to the Head teacher, whose decision is final.

Appeals against non-payment

If a student is not satisfied with the decision to withhold or defer payment they should take the following steps:

1. Speak to the Head of Sixth Form to explain why the payment should be made in the first instance.
2. If the appeal is still rejected, the student needs to put their case in writing, again to the Head of Sixth Form. The case will be considered, and a decision reported to the student in writing within five working days of receiving the appeal.
3. If this appeal is rejected, the student should send a copy of their letter to Mrs Todd who will consider the decision of the appeal.
4. If this appeal is rejected, the student should send a copy of their letter to Mr Rayner who will consider the decision of the appeal. The Headteacher's decision is final.

Conditions

Students who have successfully applied for in-course related expenditure (equipment, stationery, clothing etc.) will be paid in the term in which the expenditure was incurred.

Any payments made in relation to examination re-sits will be paid after the exam has been taken.

Any student who leaves Trinity Sixth Form before the end of the examination year will be required to repay any unspent bursary and/or return any equipment, stationery, clothing etc. which can be made available for future use.

The Trinity Sixth Form reserves the right to withdraw any funding if evidence is submitted indicating the bursary has been received under false pretence or is not being used for the purpose for which it was approved.

Payments will be made direct into Students own bank accounts via BACS. Any student faced with difficulties in opening a bank account should immediately contact the Head of Sixth Form.

Bursary Fund Application Form for the 2024/2025 academic year

Student Details					
Title:		First name:		Surname:	
DOB:			Age:		
Address:					
Postcode:		Telephone:		Email:	
Have you the right of abode and been resident in the UK for the last 3 years?				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Bursary Criteria
To qualify you must be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2023 and meet the EFA's residency criteria. The bursary is paid to enable you to attend training with us and will only be paid if your attendance and behaviour meet the required standard.

Vulnerable Bursary Criteria	
To qualify you must fall into one of the below categories and produce the required evidence as stated.	
Care Leaver or currently looked after in care or unaccompanied asylum seeker? (evidence required - letter from Local Authority)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled student in receipt of <u>both</u> Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit equivalent and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments (evidence required, financial statement showing <u>both</u> ES + DLA/PIP)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Discretionary Bursary Criteria					
You received Free School Meals in Year 11 <input type="checkbox"/>					
IF YOU HAVE TICKED THE BOX ABOVE NO FURTHER EVIDENCE RE HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS REQUIRED					
Your household income is one of the criteria which will help us to assess your application. If your TOTAL Household income exceeds £18,000 per annum; you will not be eligible for a Bursary payment.					
Please tick to indicate what type of evidence you have provided. If you cannot provide evidence then we cannot process your application for bursary payments.					
P60	<input type="checkbox"/>	Income Support/Universal Credit (award letter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full TCAN Notice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed earnings (official tax return)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other benefits/pension (award letter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wage slips for household	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please list the names of the household members and relationship to Student:					
Name					

Please provide your bank details below, as printed on your bank card or statement.
Bursary **payments** will be paid directly into Students bank accounts only (by BACS).
Please be aware that we will also pay Bursary awards 'in kind' e.g. by purchasing any equipment required.

Account Name: _____

Name of Bank and Branch: _____

Account Number: e:

STUDENT DECLARATION

- I declare that the information on this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.
I have made this claim for Bursary payment, fully aware that any false statements can lead to withdrawal/refusal of any financial support and may lead me open to prosecution.
- I understand that if I refuse to provide information which may be relevant to my claim, the application will not be accepted.
- I understand that monies I receive under the Bursary Scheme will be paid on condition of standards of attendance and behaviour, as explained in the Bursary Fund – Information for Students.
- I will attend regularly and complete the course for which my bursary is supporting me.
- When changes to my household financial circumstances occur (which may result in changes to my claim), I confirm will notify my institution immediately.
- I will notify my institution immediately with any changes to my Bank/Building Society details.
- I understand that monies I receive under the Bursary Scheme have been awarded to provide me with financial support to allow me to continue in education, and if I leave education all financial support will stop.
- I understand that I do not have an automatic entitlement to Bursary payments, and all payments are based on the information I have provided.
- I am clear that the Bursary payments I receive are to provide me with means to remain in education and are to be used for items such as: books, equipment, travel costs, meals, additional costs i.e. trips, miscellaneous course costs.
- I understand I have the right to appeal if I disagree with the outcome of my Bursary Application.
- I confirm I have read the 'Bursary Fund - Information for Students' which was given to me with this application.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Assessment and Approval 2024-25

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Eligibility – please tick appropriate box (✓)

Student Name:	D.O.B:
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Vulnerable Bursary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those young people who receive income support/universal credit• Care Leavers or young people who are looked after children, or unaccompanied asylum seekers• Disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit equivalent and Disability Living Allowance/PIP
Discretionary Bursary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people facing financial barriers to participation in further education. Agreed standards of behaviour and attendance should be met.