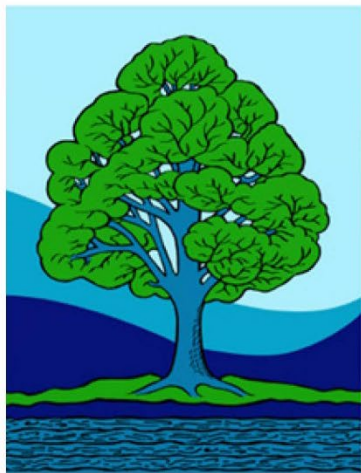




# Rivertree Free School

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**Article 28:** *You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.*

## Student Bursary Guidance

**Policy Status:** Statutory

**Review Cycle:** 1 Year

**Owner:** Headteacher

**Date:** March 2026

**Approved by:** SLT

**Date:** March 2026

**Review Date:** March 2027

## **What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is money that the government has set aside, which schools can apply for on a student's behalf and allocate to students who need financial support to stay on in further education or training.

The aim of the bursary fund is to remove financial barriers to participation in post 16 education. It can help students with essential education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including costs towards meals and transport costs. It might also provide students with extra help to buy books, clothing or equipment for school or pay for educational visits. Both bursary funding elements are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation they face, they are not intended to support costs not related to education.

To be eligible to receive funding from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, students must be at least 16 years old and under 19 years old on the 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year of application.

### **The Bursary Fund has two elements:**

#### **1. Vulnerable Student Bursary**

Students could receive up to £1,200 if they meet one of the following criteria:

- In the care of the local authority or have recently left local authority care
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- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments AND Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own name
- Receiving Personal Independence Payments AND either Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own name

NB Receiving the Vulnerable Bursary does not affect entitlement to any income related benefits. However, it is not possible to claim Child Benefit for a young person if they are claiming ESA.

We will be required to obtain proof that students meet the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups in full. In other words, that they are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers.

#### **2. Discretionary Student Bursary:**

At Rivertree Free School, students could receive a payment, (this is derived from a needs assessment) if they meet one of the eligibility criteria below:

- Students who are eligible to receive free school meals
- Students who live in a household with an income below £26,100 – evidenced either by means tested benefits or proof of earnings
- Students who have been affected by an exceptional, sudden change in financial circumstances

To apply for the 16-19 Student Bursary, students and parents will be invited by letter to complete an initial application form (see Appendix 1) stating what the fund is needed for. A second application form will then need to be completed and returned to school with supporting evidence.

#### **Procedural Arrangements for the Vulnerable Student Bursary:**

- Parents will be made aware by letter advising them to complete an application form and submit the supporting evidence by specified deadlines.

- Following receipt of the application form, form and supporting evidence will be checked by the Headteacher and appropriate Assistant Headteacher who will submit details to the Student Bursaries Support Service Portal.
- If it is agreed money will be paid directly to the student, the finance team will pay into the most appropriate bank account (as agreed with the student and / or family).

In exceptional circumstances, the payment can be made as a lump sum, for example, where the bursary is being used for the payment of an educational trip/visit, or for the purchase of a large item of equipment. In these circumstances a meeting will be held with the student and parent/carers to agree this.

### **Procedural Arrangements for the Discretionary Student Bursary:**

- At the beginning of the year, the Finance Assistant will inform the key member of SLT how much funding the school has been allocated for this element of the bursary. This will inform a decision as to the maximum payment each student could be entitled to.
- Parents will be made aware by letter advising them to complete an application form and submit the supporting evidence by the specified deadlines.
- Applications received will be considered by the Senior Leadership Team. Parents will be informed of the decision in writing, which will set out what the money will be used for.

### **Additional Information**

Payments made under the scheme will be subject to students meeting attendance requirements of 90% attendance each term.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence throughout the process. All original documentation will be returned once the applications have been verified.

If receiving the bursary directly, students will need to have a bank account in their own name through which to receive funds.

Bursary funds must only be spent on the support that has been identified as necessary to help students participate in education.

Receipts for purchases may be requested for audit and assurance purposes.

Providing incomplete or false information that leads to incorrect/overpayments may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrect funds being recovered.

This is a year on year Government Funded Grant; awards to students relate only to the current academic year and will need to re-applied for each year.