



GLEBE SCHOOL

16-19 Bursary Policy

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Statement of intent

At Glebe School, we are committed to closing the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, and ensuring that every young person participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

The bursary is intended to help eligible students with the essential costs of their studies e.g. important books, equipment and travel costs.

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 publicly available via the school website and sixth form administrator.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Monitoring and reviewing our policies to ensure effectiveness.
- School high targets and objectives to develop a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensuring adequate resources are available to implement policies, as much as is reasonably practicable.
- Sharing and acquiring best practice through partnerships with neighbouring Schools.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- ESFA (2024) '16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2024 to 2025 academic year
- ESFA (2024) 16 to 19 funding: information for 2024 to 2025
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. The School's responsibilities

The School is responsible for School eligibility criteria for students of the school and will set conditions for receiving the bursary, such as regular attendance. Arrangements for applying for bursaries will be straightforward and confidential.

The needs of each student who applies for the bursary will be assessed by the School and evidence will be obtained to support each application.

The School will claim vulnerable bursaries from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) for each eligible student.

Records will be kept by the school of all assessments and payments.

The School will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when School its criteria and will not discriminate against students because of their protected characteristics.

3. Bursary fund statement

A bursary fund statement will be published by June of each academic year on the school website. The bursary fund statement outlines the following:

- How the School will use its funding
- The eligibility criteria for the bursary;
- Terms and conditions for receiving the bursary e.g. attendance and behaviour requirements;
- The type of support offered through the bursary, e.g. with transport, lunches, books and IT equipment required to support the students learning;
- A statement explaining that the support available to students is from the bursary fund.

4. Eligibility

Students who are aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August before the academic year in question will qualify for bursaries for that academic year.

The School operates a no-cash policy, and as such, bursary payments will be paid in-kind where possible, or via the BACS system.

Students aged 19 or over can receive a bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or if they have an EHC plan, provided they remain eligible and the School determines they need the support to continue their participation.

Students aged 19 or over will not be eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are considered to be employed rather than in education – as such, they are not eligible for the bursary.

Non-employed students aged 16-19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme will be eligible to receive the bursary in the same way as any other student.

Students can apply more than once if their circumstances change. In this case, they will be reassessed, including a one-to-one interview to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.

Most students who receive a bursary will get a tailored award from the discretionary bursary. Students in need of more support can apply for a vulnerable bursary.

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assesses quality, e.g. Ofsted and be funded directly by the ESFA or by the ESFA via a local authority.

5. Discretionary bursaries

The School will ensure that discretionary funding is allocated to the students who are most in need of financial support. The School's eligibility criteria for receiving a discretionary bursary includes:

- Students who are completing a high-cost course (over £2,000) in which specialist equipment and clothing are required, including industry placements.
- Students living in a low income household.
- Students who are from a single parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family.
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent.
- Students who travel greater than eight miles to school and do not receive support from other means such as SEN transport or a Freedom Pass.

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students in low-income households. The school will use household income, in some way, to establish the amount of support awarded to a student, if possible.

The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income – this will be allocated on different levels.

Students who apply will be assessed individually. This assessment will be documented, and evidence to support the claims will be obtained and retained for auditing purposes.

The assessment will be based on a student's financial needs and the School will consider any unearned income, such as shares or investments, savings, and rental income.

The School will not make blanket or flat-rate payments to all students or students in the income bands outlined above without considering the actual needs of each student.

The School will use in-kind payments over cash payments for discretionary bursaries wherever possible.

The School will manage the discretionary bursary to keep payments within budget. Where possible, the School will retain a small emergency fund from its allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation that impacts on their ability to participate in education – evidence of a student's eligibility for emergency funds, the individual assessment and their actual participation costs will be held for audit purposes as for any other bursary award.

In individual cases of severe hardship, the bursary fund will be used where appropriate to provide food support for a student on the days they attend their programme of study. Food support will be provided where the School believes the student to be in real need, and will not require checks on household income or other evidence-gathering that would usually be required.

Where food support is provided, copies of the following records will be retained for audit purposes:

- The total number of students provided food support
- The number of days this support is given to each student
- The total value of support given to each student along with the rationale for its provision
- Signed confirmation of receipt funding by the student or actual spend receipts

The School will exercise its discretion in each case as this scheme is not intended to continue on an ongoing basis for any individual pupil. This flexibility relates to food support only.

6. Vulnerable bursaries

The School's eligibility criteria for receiving a vulnerable bursary will include students who are:

- Children Looked After CLA (this includes those classed as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child).
- Post CLA
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner.
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

Proof will be required to evidence the above eligibility criteria for the bursary.

Via the application form, the School will remind parents that they will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit if the student successfully applies for ESA.

Students who are in one or more of these categories will be able to apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200.

Where a vulnerable student is on a course lasting 30 weeks or more and is participating full-time, they will be eligible to receive up to £1,200; students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata amount. The School will consider the number of hours involved in eligible students' study programmes when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

The School may pay a student in a vulnerable group more than £1,200 if it believes the student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be paid from the School's discretionary bursary allocation or its own funds. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the School's auditable records.

The School will only pay students the amount they need to access education, based on individual assessment. Students will not automatically receive £1,200 or a set amount of funding unless this is in line with their actual financial need.

The School will only submit a funding claim to the SBSS once sufficient evidence has been provided and the School has confirmed that the student needs financial support to participate.

The institution will be responsible for assessing whether students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

The institution may decide that, although a student may be eligible for a bursary, as they fall within one or more of the vulnerable groups, the bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support. If financial needs are already met and there are no other costs or they do not require the maximum award, the institution may decide not to allocate a bursary to the student.

Where the School decides that a student is ineligible for funding in accordance with the above criteria, the School will explain to the student and/or the student's parents the aim of bursary funding and why it is appropriate to not award any in this instance by written confirmation.

If a student or the student's parents still want to claim a bursary for vulnerable groups, they must inform the School. The School will then consider the particular circumstances in each case and assess whether:

- No bursary should be awarded, as the student has no financial needs; or
- A reduced bursary should be awarded, as the level of financial help needed is limited.

The School will ensure its bursary application form is clear about the possibility of no award or a reduced award.

7. Paying bursary funding to eligible students

Payments will be paid in-kind rather than in cash – this may include, for example, travel passes, vouchers/credits for meals, required books or equipment.

Where in-kind payments are given to students within vulnerable groups, the School will explain the value of these payments to the student and how these have been deducted from the total £1,200.

If there are exceptional circumstances where payments are made to students, rather than in-kind, the funding will be paid by BACs transfer to the student's own bank account. Payments will not be paid into another person's bank account unless exceptional circumstances mean that a student is unable to administer their own account. If a student cannot manage their own funds, the School will consider who can manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

The School has the right to determine how often payments are made – when doing so, the following will be considered:

- The reason the bursary was awarded
- The student's circumstances
- Local arrangements

The School will not pay a bursary to students in large or lump sums.

In order to decide how best to use individual students' bursary funding, the School employs the following procedures:

- Every student who qualifies for a bursary is offered an interview to decide the best way to allocate their support.
- Priority areas are addressed first, including travel to school, equipment costs and support with studies.
- Students are allocated a higher amount of funding at the beginning of their course to address the priority areas.
- A percentage of the funding is kept back as a hardship funding to respond to any emergencies that may arise during the year – the total percentage held is discussed with the student during the initial interview.

If students or their parents have any queries about payments, they should contact the chief financial officer at finance@glebe.bromley.sch.uk or by phone at 020 8777 4540.

8. Conditions for receiving bursary funding

Receipt of a vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be conditional on the student meeting the agreed standards set by the School.

The conditions of payment will be clear and accessible to students, as well as being thoroughly explained as part of the induction process.

Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions will be kept for audit, such as an agreement signed by the student.

Students in receipt of bursaries should have 90% attendance at timetabled lessons, unless the absence is authorised.

Students that are absent due to sickness will be expected to present a note from a qualified medical practitioner if their absence is longer than seven days.

Vacation breaks outside timetabled school holiday times are not permitted.

Students in receipt of bursaries will be expected to abide by the Behaviour Policy of the School.

Where there are concerns regarding a student's attendance or behaviour, the School will discuss the issue with the student and consider individual exceptional circumstances before withholding any payments. In all cases, sanctioning will not occur to the extent a student's ability to attend education is undermined.

The School will ensure that all parents and students are aware of the possible impact that attendance may have on payments, outlined in the application form.

The setting will stop payments where a student is not meeting the agreed standards; however, individual circumstances will be considered before doing so.

Where a student withdraws themselves from a study programme, payments will be stopped.

Money may be taken back from students if it has not been spent for the reasons it was awarded to them. Before doing so, the School will always consider the impact of this on the student.

The School may specify that students return any books and equipment, such as a laptop, at the end of their study programme for use by other students. This will be clearly communicated to students and their parents upon confirming eligibility of the bursary.

The School will require receipts for expenditure where appropriate to confirm that funding is being used for the reason it was awarded. For standard weekly costs, e.g. travel and food, receipts will not be collected for each transaction, and will instead be evidenced initially by receipts and then paid afterwards linked to attendance. Students may be asked at various points in the year to provide further receipts. For one-off or infrequent costs, receipts will always be collected. In all cases, students will not be asked to incur expenditure and provide a receipt prior to receiving funding – payment will be made first and a receipt provided afterwards, as necessary.

The School will highlight to students and parents the impact of receipt of the 16-19 Bursary Fund on other benefits. This includes information that:

- Receipt of bursary funding will not impact the receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, e.g. Income Support.
- Receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Employment Support Allowance will mean parents can no longer receive certain benefits for that child, e.g. Child Benefit.

9. Recycling bursaries

The School can recycle unused funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups, e.g. if a student leaves early after only receiving part of their bursary.

Where the School has accrued funds as specified above, it will use these funds for another student, rather than claiming for the full £1,200, e.g. if a student left and £700 was unspent, the School will only claim £500 towards another eligible student.

If the School has enough funds to cover the costs of a full bursary (£1,200), it will submit a funding claim showing a value of zero to the SBSS and use the amount to fund the new student.

The School can add any funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups it has claimed, but no longer needs, for eligible students for discretionary bursaries. Funds will be allocated in this way on a case-by-case basis after assessing students' needs.

The School can also carry forward any unspent funds to the next academic year – any carried funds will only be used to support students and will not be added to general funds.

If the School has no other students who are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, the School will contact the ESFA and arrange to return the funds.

10. Student declarations

Students and/or their parent will sign a declaration when they apply for either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary, confirming that any evidence given in support of the application is correct.

By signing the declaration, the student and their parent are agreeing to all the conditions and eligibility criteria.

The School will retain copies of the declaration and supporting documentation for six years – this includes:

For vulnerable groups:

- A copy of the funding claim sent to SBSS.
- Evidence showing that the student is eligible, in line with this policy.
- Evidence of payments received from the SBSS, e.g. bank statements.
- A copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need.
- Evidence of payments made to the students.

For discretionary bursaries:

- Evidence used to assess eligibility, as outlined in this policy.
- A copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need.
- Receipts for purchases made, e.g. bus pass, lunch receipts or book receipts.

All data will be handled confidentially and stored securely in line with the Data Protection Policy.

11. Managing applications

The School will use its own application form for the bursary fund.

The application form will capture all the relevant information needed to assess the application in line with this policy, including:

- Household income.
- The student's actual financial needs to support their participation.
- Specific deadline dates.

The student's signature indicating they have seen and agreed to the terms and conditions of the funding and that all information provided is accurate.

All applications for the 16-19 bursary will be submitted by 31 July of each year wherever possible, to allow the setting to correctly and fairly assess overall demand and distribute discretionary awards. The setting will not, however, implement a cut-off date for applications, in recognition that some needs may arise throughout the academic year.

The date for applications to be submitted will be outlined in the bursary fund statement, the bursary application form and any marketing materials.

Application forms and marketing materials will outline that students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to receive them, e.g. if they do not have any financial needs or these needs are covered by alternative means.

12. Quality assurance

The School uses the ESFA's 16-19 Bursary Fund Checklist to confirm which documents have been provided for each student – these relate to the following:

- The application process
- The decision to award the specified amount of bursary

- The funds that have been issued to the student

The School maintains written records of the following:

- The number of applications received
- The value of all bursaries awarded
- The purpose of all bursaries awarded
- Which applications qualified for the bursary and which did not
- Brief descriptions of the School's justification for any decision to award a bursary or not

The School retains copies of any documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment, as well as any others mentioned in this section, for six years.

13. Auditing, assurance and fraud

The setting will be responsible for investigating any suspected instances of fraud relating to bursary fund applications.

The setting will ensure that appropriate processes are in place to record bursary applications and expenditure at student level. This will include:

- A breakdown of the value, including the purpose, type of cost and whether paid or not.
- A brief justification for the decision.

The setting will ensure that it can clearly evidence the following:

- The application process
- How students were assessed as eligible
- How the decision has been made to award the specific amount of bursary based on financial needs
- The funds that have been issued to each student

Copies of documents signed by students to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment will be retained.

Students and their families will be informed that providing false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect payments or overpayment may result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.

If evidence comes to light that supplied information is misleading or fraudulent, the setting will stop any further payments and will attempt to recover any payments already provided to the student.

Where significant fraud is identified, the setting will report this to the ESFA. Significant fraud involves one or more of the following:

- The amount of money is in excess of £1,200
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systematic or complex
- There is likely to be great public interest due to the nature of the fraud or the people involved.

14. Conditions for using the bursary

The bursary fund will not be used by the School for any reasons which would give them a competitive advantage over other Schools, such as:

- Enrolment or administration fees imposed by the School.
- Fees for access to facilities in the School.
- Block subsidy of the canteen.
- Block subsidy of transport.
- Block provision of equipment, material or books.
- Bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement.

Block payments to students for attendance, irrespective of their actual financial need, will not be paid.

The bursary fund will only be used for supporting students who have a genuine financial difficulty which might prevent them from continuing in education, rather than acting as an incentive for attendance.

15. Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in writing in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

If the complaint or appeal concerns operational processes or customer service for a vulnerable bursary funding claim, the SBSS will deal with the case. If the case is not resolved following this, it will be passed to ESFA.

The School will act as a first point of contact for students who have complaints and will support students as much as possible throughout the complaints procedure.

Complaints made regarding the School and the School's provision of support will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in the Complaints Policy.

16. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the finance, audit and operations committee.