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Hall Cross Academy
16-19 Bursary Policy

Author/Owner (Name and Title)	Business Manager – Kimberley Brown
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Approved By	Local Governing Board

Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Version:	Date:	Author:	Details of changes:
1	October 2022	K Brown	N/A
2	February 2024	K Brown	Dates changed, points clarified – no material changes.
3	February 2025	K Brown	Bursary payments made to students weekly, rather than monthly. New policy template used.
4	July 2026	K Brown	Dates and email address changed; qualifying criteria updated. Wording of Educational Equipment section updated to comply with the DfE policy. Confidentiality section updated, due to using Applicaa.

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Introduction

The student bursary fund aims to help and support students enrolled in the school Sixth Form who face barriers to learning, and to ensure that students can fully participate in and benefit from the 16-19 curriculum.

Policy/Controls

What is the Bursary Fund?
The Government's Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provides a limited amount of money to Schools and Academies to pass on to students aged 16 to 19 in full–time education so that financial barriers to education can be reduced or removed. Bursary awards will typically be allocated to fund course related costs such as books, educational equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) but will also be allocated to assist with transport costs, catering, curriculum trips, university open days and UCAS fees.

Aim
Hall Cross Academy (The Academy) administers the 16-19 Bursary Fund (The Fund) so that it provides financial support for students enrolled in the Sixth Form, who face the greatest barriers to learning: funding is intended to ensure that all students can fully participate in Sixth Form life.

Eligibility
A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2026 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2024 to 2025 academic year. You must also be taking part in full-time or part-time further education or training.

Students must meet the residency criteria: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision

There are two categories of Bursary payments as per Category 'A' and 'B' below.

CATEGORY 'A' – Vulnerable Group
To qualify you must be aged 16-19 in one of the following groups:

- In care (as defined by social services)
- A care leaver
- In receipt of Universal Credit (UC); because you are financially supporting yourself/or supporting someone dependent on you
- In receipt of Personal Independence Payments in your own right **as well as** Employment and Support (ESA) OR UC in your own right.

You may be entitled to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 per annum allocated in up to two parts:

1. A payment 'in kind' to cover the cost of travel, food and course requirements.
2. A weekly payment (subject to timely submission of receipts, attendance and the learning agreement conditions).

CATEGORY 'B' – Discretionary

Students experiencing financial hardship will be able to apply for a discretionary bursary if they fall into at least two of the following categories and can provide supporting evidence to confirm their eligibility.

- Combined family income below £30,000 per annum.
- Eligibility for Targeted Free School Meals.
- Single parent family.
- Family in receipt of one or any of the following:
    - Income Support
    - Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
    - Pension Credit
    - Universal Credit

Discretionary bursaries are awarded by the Academy using policies set, in line with DfE funding rules.

Students in this category will be allocated a bursary award according to the remaining funds available and the number of eligible applicants. Students are required to complete a form indicating the amount of money they anticipate will be required to support them in their studies and as far as possible. The Academy will apportion funds based on this individual need. Students will be paid on a monthly basis and will be required to detail how they have spent their money and provide receipts of purchases made using bursary monies.

Students can claim financial assistance to meet the cost of:

- **Transport**
  Contribution towards travel expenditure may be made by the Academy depending on the distance travelled.
- **Books (including revision guides)**
  Some books or other learning materials may be provided to all students by the Academy depending on your course. In some instances, the Academy will have pre-ordered supplies that it will allocate to you as part of your bursary award. Where this is not the case, we will need proof of purchase to reimburse you from the Fund for direct purchases.
- **Educational Equipment**
  Where you need to purchase essential educational equipment for example, design technology or art materials, we will need proof of purchase to reimburse you from the Fund. In some instances, the Academy may have pre-ordered supplies that it will allocate to you as part of your bursary award for example scientific calculators and/or chrome books.
- **Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment (PPE)**
  In most instances, this will be provided during lessons for all students by the Academy, at no cost. If it is not we will need proof of purchase to reimburse you from the Fund.
- **Catering**
  Contribution towards meals may be met by the Academy. Specific payment rates will be confirmed in September 2026.
- **UCAS Fees**
  Once eligibility for Bursary is determined, the Academy will reimburse your UCAS fee. Payment should be made by the student in the first instance and a screen shot of the payment taken (no receipts issued) in order for the fee to be reclaimed.

- **Curriculum Trips**
  The Academy will meet 100% of the cost of any essential trips that form part of your course of study.
- **University Open Days**
  The Academy will meet up to 100% of any reasonable travel costs and subsistence incurred for up to three university open days subject to approval by the Head or Assistant Heads of Sixth Form. We will need confirmation of the travel dates, location and travel costs to facilitate the refund.

Attendance
Eligibility for all bursary payments will be withdrawn for any students whose attendance falls below 95% without the appropriate authorisation.

The total annual amount available in any given year for discretionary bursaries depends on student numbers and demand for financial support and so payments may be subject to change.

Students are also entitled to apply for Free School Meals and can do so here.

To Apply for the 16-19 Bursary

- Complete all sections of the online Bursary application form via Applicaa.
- All information received will be treated in strictest confidence and copies of evidence of eligibility will be retained and stored securely for audit purposes.
- To avoid any delays in processing your application, please ensure you attach copies of the required evidence of income documents in the online form.
- Please email any queries to bursary@hallcross.elp.org.uk.
- A decision regarding your application will be confirmed by email.
- **The initial closing date for discretionary bursary applications is 25 September 2026.**
- **A small emergency fund will be retained to support students who face exceptional circumstances due to a change in their situation during the year that impact on their ability to participate in education.**
- Any approved payments or re-imbursement will be made into your own bank account – please ensure details are provided on your application form.
- Students who received bursary in year 12 and move into year 13 must reapply at the start of year 13.
- Please do tell us if your financial circumstances change.

Decision Making
Each application will be reviewed on its own merits.

Using the criteria above, a decision panel (comprising of the Head of Sixth Form and Sixth Form Year Manager) will meet and assess your individual need for financial support based on your circumstances, the family income evidence supplied, the participation costs being claimed and the funds available. You will be notified in writing of the award decision made by **2 October 2026** (or as soon as possible if a mid-year application is made).

In extenuating circumstances, the Academy reserves the right to make awards to individual students who do not necessarily meet all of the listed criteria, as long as they meet the base criteria set by the ESFA.

Bursaries will be granted based on the information provided. Funds will only be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been demonstrated. Not all applications will be successful. The funding available is limited, and with the exception of the guaranteed bursaries, awards will not be guaranteed. Students who apply later in the year after the budget has been allocated may not be granted an award, unless they are classed as category A.

Appeals/Complaints Procedure
An appeals process exists so that if a student or parent / carer wish to appeal against a decision regarding support from The Fund, they are treated equally and given the right to appeal.

If there is an appeal, it will be dealt with in accordance with The Academy's Complaints Procedure. The Academy's procedure is designed to ensure that students have a full opportunity to raise, individually or collectively, matters of concern to them, without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

Further evidence may be requested that would aim to prove that the original decision could be seen as having a detrimental effect on the student being able to continue in the Sixth Form.

Any appeal should be made, in writing, within four weeks of the payment decision, stating the grounds for appeal to the Business Manager, Kimberley Brown – k.brown@hallcross.elp.org.uk.

In deciding the outcome of any appeal, the following evidence will be considered:

- The 16 to 19 Bursary Policy (this document).
- The extent to which the young person has met the agreed standards set out on enrolment.
- The evidence presented in support of the application.
- The guidance set out in the '16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2026 to 2027' published by the ESFA.

The 16 to 19 Bursary is an auditable fund; responsibility for audit sits with the ESFA. Audits will be carried out around The Academy's adherence to their published policies and procedures for the administration and distribution of both the vulnerable and discretionary elements of The Fund.

Payments
The total annual amount available in any given year for discretionary bursaries depends on student numbers and demand for financial support and so payments may be subject to change.

The Academy will try and ensure that the first payments of the academic year are made in October however, this depends on the number of applications that require assessment, and whilst awards will be backdated you may need to allow for this.

In accordance with the Education Funding Agency 16-19 Bursary Fund Guidelines for 2024-25 – best practice, wherever possible, bursary payments will be made 'in kind' rather than cash. For example, providing funding for curriculum trips/visits, provision of stationery boxes each term, curriculum materials and equipment – textbooks, revision guides, clothing allowance, laptop scheme, funding for university visits. All purchases will need prior approval that they fall within the bursary guidelines.

Once the bursary application has been approved, **any payments due are made once a week**, subject to any supporting evidence, i.e. proof of purchase, being provided by Thursday; for payment the following

Friday (term time only).

Bursary payments may be reduced if **students have several instances of negative behaviour recorded on the student behaviour records system**.

Students must notify the Academy of any changes in their circumstances throughout the year, they will not normally be expected to repay an award, but their entitlement to further payments may be affected. Students are not allowed to have debts with the Academy. Vulnerable and Discretionary Bursary awards will be reduced by the amount of any outstanding debts.

Confidentiality
The Academy handles all bursary applications confidentially. Applications and supporting evidence are submitted and processed securely through Applicaa. In accordance with audit requirements and data protection regulations (including UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018), electronic copies of all documentation will be retained securely for a period of six years and made available for official audit purposes.

Equality Act 2010
No applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Contact Us
If you would like help completing the application form or have any queries, please contact bursary@hallcross.elp.org.uk.

Consultation

This policy was put together by staff within The Academy.

Sources and References

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2026 to 2027 Academic Year

Policy Review and Development

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Business Manager and Principal.