16-19 Discretionary Bursary Funding Information

Dear Parent/ Carer

The Department of Education provide bursary funding directly to the school to enable us to support our pupils aged between 16-19, this is known as the vulnerable bursary fund and the discretionary bursary fund.

Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries
Please note**:** the following eligibility criteria will be assessed in addition to the individual pupil's actual financial needs.

- Pupils must be aged 16 or over, but under the age of 19 on 31st August 2026 to be eligible for the 26/27 academic year.
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Pupils must be enrolled in the school's post 16 provision.
- Pupils must meet the residency criteria in the DFE funding rules for 16 to 19 provision.

There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

Discretionary bursary
The discretionary bursary is a fund that is provided directly to the school from the Department of Education. The fund is intended to support pupils aged 16 – 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. We can use the fund to provide pupils with support to fund:

- Transport
- Books & equipment
- Lunch
- Educational visits
- Clothing
- Specialist equipment
- Emergency meal support

We will provide support for pupils from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. The funding will not be provided in cash form, or as regular payments for living costs.

To enable the pupil to be eligible for the discretionary funding, we must provide certain evidence to show that the pupils who receive the funding meet the individual criteria as set out by the Department of Education.

A pupil may be eligible for the discretional bursary if they meet any of the criteria below:

- If the pupil is entitled to free school meals or has a sibling who is entitled to free school meals.

- Total household income (excluding disability living allowance & child benefit) of below **£43,000**.

If the total household income is less than £43,000 per year, you will need to provide us with any of the following evidence of the total household income received:

- P60 for the last tax year
- 3 months wage slips for household
- Self-employed tax return for the last tax year
- Income support/ universal credit award letter

Vulnerable bursary

The vulnerable bursary is a fund in which the school can apply for up to £1200 per pupil per academic year to support with travel costs, resources and equipment for the individual pupils needs.

To qualify, the pupil must fall into one of these categories:

- Be a care leaver or in care.
- Be in receipt of income support or universal credit because they are financially supporting themselves or supporting someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.
- Be in receipt of disability living allowance or personal independence payments, as well as employment support allowance or universal credit in their own right.

How to apply -The process

Please contact the school office to request an application form, alternatively you can download an application form using this link - School Website - Bursary information

All completed application forms should be submitted via email to bursaries.riverwalk@consortiumtrust.org.uk.

Applications should be submitted by 30th November to allow enough time for the schools to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. However, we do acknowledge that pupil's circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

A Bursary panel for the school will sit in December to assess each individual claim and authorise applications.

Funding is not guaranteed by acceptance of an application form. Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or letter) whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If an applicant wishes to appeal the outcome of their application, they must follow the school's complaints procedure. Any appeal should be made in writing within 10 school days of the outcome being communicated to the applicant.

Pupils will need to reapply and be reassessed for eligibility each academic year.

No pupil will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.
Funding provided to each eligible pupil is based on their actual participation needs (supported by evidence) and not a flat or fixed rate payment that does not reflect the actual costs they face.

Evidence
All applications for 16 – 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence (as set out above) which we will verify.

Conditions of receiving the bursary funding:

- Receipt of a vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be conditional on pupils meeting the agreed standards of behaviour set by the school.
- Pupils in receipt of bursaries must have 85% of statutory attendance, unless the absence is authorised. Consideration will be given to the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

Change in circumstances
If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents and carers must notify the school without delay. Any change in circumstance that leads to incorrect/ overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered.

For further information, please visit DFE Bursary guidance. You can also view the Trust's bursary funding policy on our school website at Trust policies.
Alternatively, you can contact the school at bursaries.riverwalk@consortiumtrust.org.uk with any queries.

Please be assured that all information provided is treated in the strictest confidence. Data is only collected to confirm eligibility and is retained in accordance with our data protection policy.

Kind regards,

Lukasz Rumanowski
Academy Head