

HAMSTEAD HALL ACADEMY

16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Policy



Updated	September 2026
Approved By	Hamstead Hall Academy Local Governing Body
Date of Approval	24 th September 2026
Next Review Date	September 2027

1. Aims

Our academy aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
- Make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide for the 2026 to 2027 academic year. The funding rules form part of the Academy's funding agreement and must be followed when eligibility, actual financial need, awards and payments are assessed.

3. Definitions

- 'In care' is defined as: children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- 'Looked after child' is defined as: a child in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions for more than 24 hours (section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- 'Care leaver' is defined as:
 - A young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16, or
 - A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our academy, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to Jon Mortimer, Executive Headteacher.

In our academy, monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to Lee Billingham, Assistant Headteacher – Post 16.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. Eligibility alone does not guarantee an award. Every award must reflect the student's individual, evidenced and actual financial barriers to participation. See section 6 for eligibility criteria.

The fund supports students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. It is not intended to fund general living costs, non-essential or extracurricular activities, or learning support and pastoral services that the Academy ordinarily provides.

The Academy will apply its criteria consistently and comply with the Equality Act 2010. Individual reasonable adjustments and relevant personal circumstances will be considered without making blanket or discriminatory assumptions.

Awards will take account of other available provisions, including local-authority transport arrangements and free meals, so that support is coordinated and public funding is not duplicated.

The Academy may use no more than 5% of its allocation for permitted administration costs. Unspent bursary funds may be carried forward for no more than one academic year and will otherwise be reported and returned in accordance with Department for Education requirements.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries
-

We use the fund to provide students with support for:

- Bus passes to support travel to and from the Academy
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days
- Essential books, equipment, stationery, field trips and other materials that are required to achieve or support the student's study programme goals or course objectives
- Essential Academy or specialist clothing where it is genuinely and directly required for participation
- Meals, taking account of any free meals entitlement so that support is not duplicated
- UCAS fees

5.1 Technology and Academy laptop loans

We can offer a direct financial contribution towards the purchase of a laptop where a student is purchasing the device themselves, and the Academy has assessed that access to a laptop is essential for the student's study programme, and the student has evidenced financial need.

The bursary contribution will be limited to a percentage of the total purchase cost and will not exceed £200. The student and/or their family will be responsible for meeting the remaining cost of the laptop. The amount of the contribution will be deducted from the student's assessed bursary award and available bursary allowance. The contribution and its purpose will be recorded and communicated to the student.

Students must not purchase a laptop on the assumption that the full cost will be reimbursed through the bursary. Any financial contribution must be agreed and approved by the Academy in advance of the purchase, and appropriate evidence of purchase, such as a receipt or invoice, must be provided before payment can be made.

Any laptop purchased by the student or their family with a bursary contribution will remain the property of the student or family and will not be the property of Hamstead Hall Academy.

Headphones, tablets and tablet accessories cannot be purchased or funded through the bursary fund.

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

6.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2026 to 2027 academic year, students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they:

- Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.

6.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- Be funded directly by the Department for Education, or by the Department for Education via a local authority;
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification, up to and including level 3, that is accredited by Ofqual or is approved for funding; or

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision](#).

6.4 Asylum seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education but are not entitled to public funds. If necessary, they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials.

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:

- Are the responsibility of the local authority;
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need

When these students reach 18 years old, we will consider their immigration status. They will still be eligible for a bursary as a student from a defined vulnerable group if the asylum claim is in their favour and will be treated as a 'care leaver' until they reach the upper age limit.

6.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (NB: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after);
- 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; or
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), in addition to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC), with all benefits received by the student in their own right

For this vulnerable-group category, receipt of DLA or PIP alone is not sufficient: the student must also receive ESA or UC in their own right. Evidence must confirm receipt of all applicable benefits.

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary. Students will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (for example, because their financial needs are met from other sources and/or because they have no relevant costs).

For a study programme lasting 30 weeks or more, vulnerable-group funding of up to £1,200 may be available. The Academy will assess each student's actual participation costs and will claim and provide only the amount required. No student is automatically entitled to £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, and provide more than £1,200 per year if such would be necessary in all the circumstances for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

If a student's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

We will provide support in kind where possible. Bursary funding will not be provided as payments for general living costs or as blanket, flat or fixed-rate awards.

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to meeting the criteria in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, students may apply for a discretionary bursary where they have an evidenced financial need and one or more of the following circumstances applies. These indicators do not create an automatic entitlement; the Academy will assess actual participation costs individually.

The Bursary is available to students whose families meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Student is in receipt of Free Schools meals.
- Family is in receipt of Income Support/ Universal Credit.
- Family is in receipt of Working Tax Credits.
- Household is in receipt of Pensions Guarantee Credit.
- Household is in Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Evidence of eligibility, household income and actual participation costs will be required. Evidence must be current and sufficient to allow the Academy to calculate annual household income reliably. The student must complete and sign an application each academic year; a parent or carer must also sign where their household information supports the application. Signatories declare that the information supplied is complete and accurate. Applications and supporting evidence will be handled confidentially.

Students who do not satisfy any of the criteria listed in this section, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may apply for a discretionary bursary.

In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

- Level of household income
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or a location for a placement
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- The requirements of their study programme
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help

There is no set maximum for a discretionary bursary award. The Academy will manage the number and value of awards within its available allocation. Every decision and amount will be based on the

student's individual circumstances, evidenced actual participation costs and value for money; blanket or fixed-rate payments will not be made.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

6.7 Evidence

All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:

- A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the student's name
- Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bills
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority
- A current Universal Credit statement or award information from the Department for Work and Pensions; other evidence may include P60s, recent wage slips for household members, self-employment accounts, or current benefit or pension award letters

7. Application and payment process

7.1 Applications

Applications are made through the Applicaa online system, accessed via the Academy website. The application must capture eligibility, household income where relevant, and the student's actual financial participation needs. It must be signed by the student and, where household evidence is supplied, by the relevant parent or carer. [Hamstead Hall Academy \(applicaa.com\)](https://www.hamsteadhallacademy.com/applicaa.com)

Applications should ideally be submitted by 30 September 2027 so that the Academy can assess overall demand and make discretionary awards fairly. The deadline will be communicated through an assembly, Microsoft Teams and the application information.

Students' circumstances and needs may change, so applications will remain possible throughout the academic year, subject to available funds. The Academy may retain a small emergency fund for eligible students who face an unforeseen change that affects participation.

Applicants will be notified through Applicaa whether their application has been successful, the approved support and its value. Funding is limited and there is no guarantee of an award, including for a student in a defined vulnerable group who has no evidenced participation costs. A student with a concern should first contact the Assistant Headteacher - Post 16. If the matter is not resolved, the student or parent or carer may use the Academy's complaints procedure.

7.2 Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

- Provide support in kind where possible, such as travel passes, essential books or equipment, or meal vouchers. Students will be told the value of in-kind support and how it has been deducted from their bursary award, where applicable.
- Where a cash payment is necessary, make payment by BACS to the student's own bank account, except in documented exceptional circumstances. Payments must relate to approved participation costs and be supported by appropriate evidence. The Academy will avoid requiring a student to incur an unaffordable cost before support is provided.

All proposed purchases or spending must be approved through Applicaa before an order is placed or a cost is incurred. The Academy will normally purchase approved items directly. It is not obliged to reimburse an item bought without prior approval.

Where reimbursement has been agreed in advance, the student must provide a clear itemised receipt or other evidence of the actual cost. The Academy retains the final decision on whether a requested item is essential, proportionate, good value and permitted by the funding rules.

7.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Payments of the bursary are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

- Attendance above 95%, subject to the Academy considering illness, disability, caring responsibilities and other exceptional or individual circumstances
- Following the sixth form code of conduct

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld, but we will always take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

We will stop bursary payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

We reserve the right to recover money where it was not spent for the approved purpose or where false, incomplete or misleading information resulted in an incorrect award or overpayment. The Academy will investigate suspected fraud and report significant fraud to the Department for Education where required.

We will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so, and any decision will be confirmed to the student in writing.

8. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances which may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/carers must notify the academy without delay.

9. Record keeping

The Academy will keep bursary records securely for 7 years, electronically or in hard copy, in line with data protection requirements. Records will include signed applications and conditions, eligibility and household-income evidence, individual assessments of actual financial need, award calculations and reasons, receipts, in-kind support, payments, attendance evidence where relevant, equipment loan and return records, and any recovery action. Records will be available for audit and assurance.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher - Post 16 at least annually, and sooner where Department for Education funding rules or legislation change. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Executive Headteacher.