

# **St Mary's Sixth Form Bursary 2025-2026 Policy**



## **Introduction**

The 16-19 Bursary Scheme provides financial help to young people aged 16 to 19 who face financial barriers to participating in education or training, provided they meet agreed standards of attendance and behaviour.

Only students in defined vulnerable groups or experiencing the greatest financial disadvantages and course-related costs, can be supported using the 16-19 bursary funds.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two alternative elements:

\* An enhanced bursary of up to £1,200/year for young people in the following defined vulnerable groups: in care; care leavers; young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit; and disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments.

The school may award a discretionary bursary to students to help with the cost of meals, books and equipment, including stationery and help with travel to and from school. This award can vary due to the individual circumstances of the student. The basic eligibility criteria are for those students in Year 12 and Year 13 who are currently in receipt of free school meals.

\* Students who do not meet these criteria but are experiencing hardship should in the first instance speak to the 16-19 Bursary Administrator, their Head of Year or a member of the Sixth Form Pastoral Team regarding their circumstances.

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary in the 2025/26 academic year, the young person must be aged 16 or over on 31 August 2025. Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.

To qualify for free school meals a recipient first needs to apply to Newcastle City Council by searching on the City Council website for "Free School Meals Application" or following the link:

[Application for Free School Meals at Newcastle City Council](#)

After this form is completed online, the City Council will notify St Mary's Catholic School of participation and a bursary, including a daily free school meals allowance usable at St Mary's Catholic School catering facilities, is awarded to the student.

If you have previously received free school meals, you may need to reapply as the award often ends at the end of Year 11. Only the administration of Free School Meals eligibility is overseen by the Newcastle City Council. All other provision is administered by St Mary's Catholic School.

If you do not qualify for a standard bursary, it is still possible to make limited awards to help students purchase materials that will directly be relevant to their programme of study with the award of the discretionary bursary via a written application outlining exceptional circumstances.

## **Vulnerable Bursary**

In 2013, there was a phased introduction of two new benefits: firstly, Universal Credit, to replace both Income Support and Employment Support Allowance; and secondly Personal Independence Payments, which replaces Disability Living Allowance.

There may be some 16-19 year old students affected by these benefit changes and therefore students in the following situations are also now eligible for a vulnerable student bursary:

\* Young people who receive a Universal Credit payment in their own name.

\* Young people who are disabled and receive Employment Support Allowance and a Personal Independence Payment in their own name.

Therefore, the defined vulnerable groups are:

\* Young people who are looked after (in care);

\* Care leavers;

\* Young people in receipt of income support (or Universal Credit) in their own name;

\* Disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments).

Young people in the defined vulnerable groups are eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200.

St Mary's Catholic School is responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for a vulnerable student bursary payment. To do this, evidence must be provided by the student and copies of evidence must be retained for potential financial inspection of the school by the Educational Funding Agency. Confidentiality and GDPR will be respected by the school throughout. The following are examples of appropriate evidence:

Students in Care (Looked After Children):

Letter from the Local Authority confirming care status. Placement agreement or social worker confirmation.

Care Leavers:

Letter or statement from the Local Authority Leaving Care Team or social worker confirming care leaver status.

Students in Receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC):

Award notice/letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming the benefit.

For UC: the most recent statement (normally the last three months) showing the student's name and entitlement.

Students in Receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP):

ESA award letter/notice from DWP. DLA or PIP award letter showing current entitlement.

## **Assessment and Payment of Bursaries**

In determining arrangements for assessment and payment of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, St Mary's Catholic School is subject to equalities legislation and will not discriminate against students, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of their protected characteristics. St Mary's Catholic School is also subject to the public sector equality duty in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Discretionary Bursary**

To be eligible for a Discretionary Bursary, students must meet **all** four of the following conditions:

1. Attend St Mary's Catholic School.
2. Be starting Year 12, 13 or 14 in September 2025.
3. Be aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2025 (note exceptional circumstances of EHCP plan).
4. Living in a household currently entitled to Free School Meals as recognised by Newcastle City Council.

## **Part Discretionary Bursary Award**

Students ineligible for the Discretionary Bursary may still be entitled to a part bursary award. Where a student is experiencing exceptional financial hardship, a written application may be submitted.

This application can be written by:

The student themselves, or

Their parent/carer.

The written application must clearly outline the circumstances creating hardship and the type of support requested.

## **Items that can be funded by bursary payments**

Items from the 16-19 Bursary Award will be purchased by the student and then reimbursed by St Mary's Catholic School in the first instance.

Examples of items that can be funded are listed below.

All items listed below must be linked to the learning outcomes of the educational courses students are enrolled on.

These are for the named student only; parents and siblings cannot be funded.

### **Dress Code:**

\* This includes any aspect of appropriate Sixth Form Dress Code including appropriate school shoes (up to the value of £50). Please see the Sixth Form Dress Code for further guidance.

\* Winter school coats and boots (up to the value of £50).

\* School bags (up to the value of £30).

\* *Students in Year 13 should not be claiming for uniform after the Easter break.*

### **Educational materials:**

\* Academic books, revision guides and workbooks.

\* Materials for resource intense subjects like Art, Drama, etc. Please check with your teacher that they are appropriate.

\* Stationery, folders, paper, pens, calculators, etc.

\* Locker key deposits.

\* School trips (potentially in full) and related items of clothing, e.g. waterproofs (£50 per item).

\* Educational related costs, e.g. exhibition entry, etc.

**School Meals:**

\* Breakfast/breaktime in school in all facilities, up to the value of £2.50 per day, are placed on your account at the start of the week, for biometric use. Unused funds will be rolled forward to be used the following week.

**Future Destinations** e.g. University, related items:

\* Annual railcards for visits (and cost of 2 train tickets to events directly related to studies or university visits).

\* Training courses - booked online through the Finance Office e.g. UCAT training courses; Oxbridge; Apply days, etc.

\* Entry to university admissions tests e.g. UCAT or LNAT.

Students not living in their own homes can access other funds – please let us know and we'll help as much as possible.

Discretionary funding for those not in receipt of a bursary but in need of additional needs can be distributed on a by-need basis but reasons may be needed to help in this funding (e.g. change in home situation; low income; changes in employment status; number of UCAS interviews, etc.).

These could cover:

\* Transport

\* Meals

\* Books

\* Equipment

\* Railcards

Please discuss these requests with the 161-9 Bursary Administrator in the first instance.

## **Eligibility Conditions**

Bursary support may be paused, reduced, or withdrawn if students fail to meet the required standards.

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to maintain an attendance rate of above 90% across all timetabled lessons, study sessions, and compulsory Sixth Form activities.

Absence will only be authorised where it is supported by medical evidence, advance permission from the Sixth Form Pastoral Team, or another valid reason as agreed by the school.

## **Punctuality**

Students must arrive on time for lessons, registration, and Sixth Form commitments.

Persistent lateness without valid reason will be considered a breach of bursary conditions.

## **Behaviour and Attitude to Learning**

Students must demonstrate acceptable standards of behaviour, in line with the Sixth Form Expectations.

They are expected to show dedication to their studies, completing independent learning, coursework, and homework on time.

Disruptive behaviour, repeated failure to meet academic expectations, or breaches of school rules may lead to bursary support being reviewed.

## **Notification of Concerns**

Where a student fails to meet one or more of the above conditions, the Assistant Headteacher – Sixth Form will issue a formal letter of concern.

The letter will:

State clearly which condition has not been met (e.g. attendance below 90%, repeated lateness, unsatisfactory behaviour).

Explain the potential impact on continued bursary support.

Invite the student to meet with the Assistant Headteacher – Sixth Form / a member of the Pastoral Team to discuss the issue.

Allow the student an opportunity to provide an explanation or evidence (e.g. medical circumstances) if they believe the decision is incorrect.

## **Review and Decision**

Following the meeting, the school will decide whether bursary support will:

Continue in full (if a satisfactory explanation or improvement plan is in place).

Be suspended temporarily pending improved standards.

Be withdrawn fully where concerns are serious or ongoing.

Students and parents/carers will be notified of the final decision in writing.

## **Application Process**

Application Form:

Students (or parents/carers where appropriate) must complete a New Student Bursary Application Form at the start of the academic year.

Supporting evidence (e.g., benefit statements, FSM eligibility confirmation, letters from local authority) must be submitted.

FSM eligibility is administered by Newcastle City Council. Students must apply directly with Newcastle City Council, and once approved, the Council notifies the school.

### **Submission & Deadline:**

Completed applications should be submitted to the 16-19 Bursary Administrator by **Friday September 26<sup>th</sup> 2025** for the initial cycle of funding.

Though applications will remain open for students whose circumstances change mid-year and require use of the contingency fund.

### **Review & Notification:**

The Assistant Headteacher – Sixth Form and the 16-19 Bursary Administrator will review and approve applications.

Students and parents/carers will receive confirmation of the outcome and details of the bursary support awarded.

### **Review of Eligibility**

Annual reviews of discretionary awards take place from Year 12 into Year 13. If circumstances have changed, the award of bursary may be altered or withdrawn. Students moving from Year 12 into Year 13 do not need to reapply for bursaries each year, however applications for further awards can take place throughout a student's time at Sixth Form.

### **Appeals Process**

To ensure fairness and transparency, students and parents/carers have the right to appeal decisions regarding:

Eligibility for the bursary (if an application is rejected or deemed ineligible).

Eligibility for the bursary (if allocation is changed due to a failure to meet the expectations of the bursary outlined).

Allocation of resources/services (if a student is awarded the bursary but not granted the specific items or support requested).

### **Appeals Procedure:**

Appeals must be made in writing to the Assistant Headteacher – Sixth Form within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

The appeal should set out the grounds for reconsideration and include any additional evidence if available.

Appeals will be reviewed by a panel consisting of:

Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher – Sixth Form

Director of Finance and Support Services.

A written outcome will be provided to the student and their parent/carer within 15 working days of the appeal submission.

The decision of the appeals panel will be final.

### **Contact Information**

For any questions about the 16-19 bursary scheme please speak to the Sixth Form Pastoral Team or contact:

Email: [admin@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk)

Post: St Mary's Catholic School,

Benton Park Road

Newcastle upon Tyne

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