



16 to 19 Bursary Policy

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Statement of Intent

The Laurus Trust is committed to closing the attainment gap between students from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure that every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education and training.

The Trust is committed to:

- The distribution of 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 school websites, the Director of Sixth Form and the Sixth Form Academic Services Manager.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Monitoring and reviewing our policies to ensure effectiveness.
- Setting 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.

Eligibility

General

A student must be aged between 16 and 18 years old on 31st August at the start of the academic year in which he/she starts a full-time study programme. Students should satisfy the residency criteria as specified in the DfE's [Funding Guidance](#).

Students aged 19 and over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Students aged 19 or over on 31st August at the start of the academic year in which he/she starts a full-time programme of study are not eligible for the bursary for students in vulnerable groups.

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

Bursary for students in vulnerable groups

A bursary of up to £1,200 may be available to students who meet the criteria below. The final value of the award will be dependent on the financial need of the student as assessed by the Bursary Awards Panel and the essential costs required to participate in education. Awards will not be made on a fixed or automatic basis. To qualify for this bursary award students must be either:

- in the care of the local authority or a recent care leaver of the local authority
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

The bursary will be paid “in kind” (e.g. the Sixth Form may purchase bus passes, equipment, books etc. on behalf of the student) where possible. In exceptional cases, payments may be made to the student’s bank account. The timing and value of any payment will reflect the assessed needs and costs of the individual student rather than a standard instalment structure.

The Trust understands that students in vulnerable groups may be harder to identify or engage in education and are less likely to be aware of the support available from the Bursary Fund. The Trust will therefore actively seek out and encourage students in vulnerable groups to apply for support.

Claims for students in vulnerable groups will reflect the assessed support required and will not automatically be made at the maximum value.

Discretionary Bursary

The Trust welcomes applications for the Discretionary Bursary Award from students whose gross annual household income is below £35,000 per year. The Discretionary Bursary Award is to help students with essential participation costs such as transport, equipment, books and eligible school trips and in cases of severe hardship, to provide food support during the school day to enable them to attend and complete their study programme. The bursary will not be used to support general living costs or non-essential activities that are not required for participation in the study programme. Applications should be explicit in outlining the exact expense details. Where possible the bursary will be provided in the form of equipment or services e.g. travel tickets etc. Only in exceptional cases will money be provided for expenses. Payments to support additional educational expenses will be made at the point of approval of application.

The Trust may also look to provide support through the Discretionary Bursary fund to students who are not automatically eligible for an award but who face exceptional circumstances during the academic year which impact on their ability to participate in full time education. Proof of income or hardship will be asked for and awards are dependent upon available funds.

Asylum Seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers may receive in-kind support if they have not had their application for asylum refused and are deemed to be eligible for the discretionary bursary by the Bursary Awards Panel. Under no circumstances will cash be given to asylum seekers. Unaccompanied asylum seekers are the responsibility of the local authority and are treated as looked after children. They are therefore eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups funding claim if they have a financial need.

Assessment

All bursary awards will be based on assessment of both eligibility and actual financial need. Applications must demonstrate the specific financial barriers to participation faced using appropriate evidence that could include:

- A recent benefit entitlement letter
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked after status from the local authority which looks after the student
- Recent P60
- Tax Credit Award Notice
- Universal Credit Award Notice (most recent three months)
- Evidence of self-employment income
- Receipt of Free School Meals as confirmed by the local authority
- Number of dependent children in the household
- Anticipated participation costs (for example travel, equipment, course related expenses)

Each school in the Trust has a Bursary Awards Panel that assesses each application for 16-19 bursaries. The Bursary Awards Panel consists of the Director of Sixth Form, the Trust Financial Controller and the Sixth Form Academic Services Manager. The Bursary Award Panel is accountable to the Local Academy Committee.

Students who wish to make an application to either the bursary for students in vulnerable groups or the discretionary bursary should do so no later than the end of September. To apply for the discretionary bursary and/or bursary for students in vulnerable groups please download a copy of the application form from the Sixth Form section of the relevant school's website. Alternatively, please request an application form from the Sixth Form Academic Services Manager. We recognise that individual circumstances may change later in the year, so would encourage any student to discuss later application eligibility with the Sixth Form Academic Services Manager.

Awards will be calculated based on evidenced participation costs. The Trust will not make flat-rate or standardised payments that are not supported by evidence of need.

A record is kept of individual student's claims throughout the year to ensure fairness and that the

claims do not exceed the government grant. The Trust will maintain a clear audit trail linking applications, supporting evidence, assessed need and payments made to ensure compliance with the Department for Education funding rules.

Students in receipt of either the bursary for students in vulnerable groups or the discretionary bursary should notify the Sixth Form Academic Services Manager if their circumstances change.

Conditions

Funding may be withdrawn for students who fail to attend regularly. Students in receipt of bursaries will be expected to abide by the schools Sixth Form Learning Contract.

Appeals

Each school in the Trust has a Bursary Appeals Panel consisting of the Head of School and a member of the Local Academy Committee, to consider appeals relating to the award or administration of 16-19 bursaries. Students that appeal to the Bursary Appeals Panel should outline their reasons why a decision was incorrect with specific reference to the circumstances, attendance and/or behaviour standards that determined the original decision. The Appeals Panel will assess an appeal to ensure the Awards Panel have complied with the policy and the Department for Education's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide. The Appeals Panel will also ensure the Awards Panel have acted with impartiality and fairness.

The Bursary Appeals Panel will consider and respond to appeals within two weeks (term time) of receipt. If the appeal is upheld, it will be referred back to the Bursary Awards Panel with recommendations.

If the appeal is not upheld the appealing party will be directed to the School's Complaint Procedure.

Review

The Bursary Award Panel should draft and submit an annual report to the Local Academy Committee outlining how the bursary is spent with outcomes. The 16-19 bursary policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account the views of the Trust, young people, the Local Academy Committee report, and statutory guidance, specifically the Department for Education's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide.

Equality Impact Statement

Names and title of people involved with this assessment	Rachel Robinson Assistant Trust Director of Inclusion
Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics	☒ Race ☒ Disability ☒ Sex ☒ Age ☒ Religious belief ☒ Sexual Orientation ☒ Gender Reassignment
Summary of any issue/proposed changes	Changes to reflect the updated DfE's 16-19 Bursary funding guidance for 2027-27. No impact on EIA
Date	June 2026
Date of next review	June 2027



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