

Trinity Catholic High School



16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds.
- make clear to parents/guardians and students the type of support that is available and the means of applying for it.
- make clear to parents/guardians and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds.

2. Introduction

At Trinity, we believe that every student should have equal access to the opportunities that will help them thrive and succeed.

Trinity Catholic High School administers the 16-19 Bursary 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.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups

Higher-priority students (those from vulnerable groups) who, subject to financial need, will receive a bursary of up to £1,200.00 per year from the school.

2. Discretionary bursaries

Discretionary bursaries awarded to other students according to individual needs.

Both types of bursary funding are to help eligible students with essential costs of participating such as travel to and from school or to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (protective overalls, for example) that are required for their study programme. These are items a student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that we give to students, for example, counselling or mentoring - or to support extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the students' study programme or to provide living costs support.

This policy covers the academic year 2025 to 2026 and is informed by the guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

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. How we use the bursary fund

We use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

- Course textbooks
- Equipment for practical subjects
- Specialist clothing for practical subjects
- Educational trips such as those required for completion of coursework
- Travel costs to school that are not covered by TfL 16+ Zip Oyster
- Travel and associated costs to university interviews
- Travel and associated costs to university open days
- Travel and associated costs for work experience placements organised through the school
- Cost of UCAS application fee
- Cost of University course entry tests eg: BMAT
- Technology, such as laptops or software if needed for learning
- Cost of clothing permitted in the sixth form dress code

This list is not exhaustive.

Items that **cannot be** claimed from the Discretionary Bursary:

- The Discretionary Bursary will not fund Free School Meals; students should apply for this support through the Local Authority.
- Clothing not included in the school's Sixth Form Dress Code policy.
- Any household or personal items that are unrelated to supporting a student's study programme.

We have flexibility to use the bursary fund in individual cases of severe hardship for meal support without undertaking the checks on household income for the discretionary bursary or gathering other evidence that would normally be required. We expect this to only apply to a very small number of the cohort and be a short-term arrangement.

5. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

Students must meet the age and residency criteria that follows to be eligible for help from the bursary fund.

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed in addition to the individual student's actual financial needs. No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.

5.1 Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in academic year 2025 to 2026.

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

- are continuing on a study programme or course that 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.

In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to these younger students. However, if these students are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible for bursary funding.

5.2 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 the below groups:

1. Be funded directly by the DfE or via a local authority.
2. Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the DfE's list of qualifications approved for funding.

5.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in [DfE funding rules](#) for post-16 provision. This document also specifies the evidence the school must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility).

5.4 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.

5.5. Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

Students will be funded to reflect the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have.

Students with a financial need, who meet **one** of the following four criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 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 Payments (PIPs) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

The managed move of legacy benefits claimants to UC means that new claims for the legacy benefits have not been possible since 2018. This means young people who are aged 16 to 18 now will not be

in receipt of the legacy benefits listed above. However, any students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (such as those with an EHC plan) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits.

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary. Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on a particular student's needs. Students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and will not automatically receive £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 may be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

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.

5.6 Foster care, including privately arranged foster care

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group if they have a financial need.

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and then left care via achieving permanence through an order such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so, the period of weeks and age range set out above). If they do, they are eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

The school will decide which students receive discretionary bursary support and how much they receive, based on our own policies. Foster carers' income does not need to be taken into account before awarding support. Eligibility for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups is based on the student meeting the criteria for one of the defined groups. All students will have their need for support assessed individually, to determine the type and amount of support they need, but vulnerable groups students are not subject to a household income assessment and we will not consider foster carers income.

5.7. Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if total household income does not exceed £25,000 and/or they are in receipt of means-tested benefits and can demonstrate genuine financial need.

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:

- the level of household income
- The distance to travel between the student's home and the school, 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 limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

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.

Block, blanket or flat rate payments are not permitted. The financial support from bursary funds will reflect the actual costs the student has.

Any books or equipment provided by the school must be returned at the end of the study programme.

5.8 Evidence

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

Vulnerable groups

- For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority. This is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority.
- For students in receipt of UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. For students in receipt of UC, we must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on.
- For students receiving UC/ESA and DLA and PIP, a copy of their UC award notice from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP.
- UC claimants can print off details of their award from their online account or provide a screenshot to the school.
- Students can also contact their UC work coach (or relevant benefit office if they are receiving IS or ESA) and ask them for help in providing evidence of receiving benefits.

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- Most recent three consecutive payslips for all working adults in the household.
- Recent Universal Credit award letter showing income details and payment amounts.
- Current Tax Credit Award Notice (most recent).
- Letter confirming entitlement to means-tested benefits (e.g., Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance).
- Evidence of self-employment income (e.g., recent tax return or accountant's letter).

All evidence must be official, original documents or certified copies. Documents must be clear, legible, and from official sources. Documents older than 3 months will generally not be accepted. The school reserves the right to request additional information or verification if needed. Failure to provide required evidence will result in the application being delayed or declined.

6. Application and payment process

6.1 Applications

All applications are made through the Bursary 16+ Applicaa platform, which is a secure, efficient system that makes allocating funds easier for both staff and students, while maintaining a clear audit trail for the Department for Education (DfE).

The Sixth Form will notify parents and guardians when the application platform opens at the start of the academic year and will provide all necessary guidance.

Applications should ideally be submitted by **30 September 2025** to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

Applicants will be notified via the platform whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

6.2 Payment process

Payments are processed as follows:

- In-kind support, where appropriate – this may include travel passes, books, equipment, or meal vouchers.
- Direct reimbursement – payments are made by the Finance Office to the student.

6.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Trinity Catholic High School reserves the right to withhold the bursary if students fail to meet expectations for attendance, punctuality and behaviour, as outlined in our policy documents.

Students must fully comply with the Sixth Form Attendance and Punctuality Policy, understanding that regular attendance and punctuality are essential for academic success.

Students should maintain an attendance rate of at least 95% and serve as role models for younger students. Students must be punctual to all of their timetabled lessons. Effective time management and keeping up with assignments and home study are also expected.

All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions on the application platform.

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 reserve the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

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.

7. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/guardians must notify the school and Director of Sixth Form without delay.

8. Record keeping

Any paperwork and documents we retain for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, documents as evidence and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with our data protection policy, privacy notices and record retention schedule.

9. Unspent funds

Funding for discretionary bursary funding cannot be carried forward for more than 1 year. Unspent funding will be reported to the DfE specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to, no later than 31 March each year.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by The Director of Sixth Form every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.