

Wood Green Academy 16 – 19 Bursary Scheme

1. Students entitled to receive a free school meal

Complete online forms 1 (Public transport) and / or form 2 (Additional course costs, work experience or university open day / interviews) by 15th October 2021

2. Students with a Household income between £16,191 and £36,120

Complete online form 1 (Public transport) and / or form 3 (Additional course costs, work experience or university open day / interviews) by 15th October 2021

3. Vulnerable Students

Complete online form 4 by 15th October 2021

Note: Apply for a free school meal if you think you might be eligible:

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200151/education_benefits/2176/free_school_meals

1.0 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is government funding devolved to schools to provide financial support to help students remain in education. ESFA is the government agency that oversees the Bursary programme. This section of our policy is an ESFA summary taken from www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022:

Eligibility Criteria: Discretionary Bursaries

Institutions make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to:

- provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring
- support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme
- support general household incomes
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Institutions must base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, eligibility based on household income, and actual financial need such as the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme.

Examples of documentation ESFA auditors expect to see include:

For the discretionary bursary:

- evidence used to assess eligibility and determine household income, such as P60's, self-employment accounts, wage slips, a letter from DWP, copies of online statements for UC
- a copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need, including the calculation that has determined the amount awarded
- receipts for purchases or in-kind payments, for example, bus pass, lunch receipts or book receipts

It is best practice for students and/or their families to sign a declaration when they apply for help from the bursary to confirm that the evidence, they have provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. Students and their families should be made aware that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered. They should also be informed that this might result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution. ESFA encourages institutions to pay bursaries in-kind rather than cash as far as possible. This helps ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments can include travel passes, required books, and required equipment.

2.0 Wood Green Academy

Wood Green Academy is responsible for managing ESFA discretionary bursary funding received. Funding is allocated, in kind or directly, in line with this policy. Students and parents / carers should read this policy completely before making an application.

3.0 Eligibility

Only eligible students can benefit from the bursary fund; to be eligible, students must:

- satisfy UK residency and asylum criteria
- be in full or part-time further education at Wood Green Academy and be between 16 and 19 years of age on the 31st August in the year of application
- meet the requirements of either category 1, 2 or 3, (see below)
- have signed and returned the admissions contract and consistently ensured that all elements of the contract are adhered to
- satisfy the school's application requirements by fully completing the appropriate application form(s) by the deadline(s) set and providing evidence of financial need.

4.0 Application Requirements - Outline

Students will receive online bursary application forms by way of email; any student who requires support completing an online form should ask for help at the sixth form office. Students should complete applications themselves but will need the support of parents / carers, especially where evidence of financial need is required.

Form 1 – Discretionary bursary: Public Transport Costs *1

This form is for students entitled to receive a free school meal (category 2) and from households where household income is between £16,191 and £36,120, (category 3)

Form 2 –Discretionary bursary: Additional Course Costs

Only students entitled to a free school meal should complete.

Form 3 - Discretionary Bursary: Additional Course Costs – Household Income between £16,191 and £36,120

Only students where household income is between £16,191 and £36,120 should complete.

Form 4 – Vulnerable Student Bursary

Only students who receive financial assistance in their own name should complete.

4.0 Online Application Form – Funding Restrictions

Students are responsible for stating how any bursary funding awarded would be used to support their education. In general, Bursary funding may be awarded to:

1. Help pay for a travel pass, (See Appendix 1, note 1)
2. Purchase subject-based equipment needed to complete a course,
3. Purchase additional course related books, (see Appendix 1, note 2)
4. Attend course specific field trips
5. Help with the cost of attending industrial placements, work experience and university open days and interviews

ESFA states that bursary fund is not intended to:

- Provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring
- Support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme, or
- Support general household incomes

5.0 Application Requirements Continued

Application form(s) and original copies of supporting documentation (evidence of earnings, (see appendix 1 note 3), required must be completed and returned to the 6th form office by the deadline. Supporting documentation must be the most recent received eg, for the 2020/21 financial year and must be in date.

Late, incomplete, or spoiled applications with insufficient or out of date supporting documentation may not be considered.

6.0 Approval of Bursary Applications, Benefits, Withdrawals and Appeals

The Head of 6th Form will review applications with a member of the Academy's senior leadership team; the Academy may accept, partially accept, or refuse an application.

Bursary fund applications will be treated confidentially and based on the information provided and fairly. The Academy is required to comply with GDPR and the Equality Act.

As stated in 1.0, ESFA preference is for bursary funding to be awarded in kind, (ie: iPad, laptop computer, books, and equipment). Where direct payments are made to eligible students, (Appendix 1, Note 4), they may be paid by BACS each month or in two equal payments over the academic year.

The Academy will only make direct and or in-kind payments where students consistently meet expected standards of academic progress, behaviour, and attendance in each of their subjects, in study support sessions and in the 6th form generally.

Reasons for refusing a bursary application or withdrawing future benefits will normally be explained to students personally. Any decision to withdraw bursary fund benefits may be extended to future terms. The Academy's decision on whether to partially accept, reject, hold back, or terminate any or all bursary fund benefits is final.

Subject to funding availability and application numbers, the Academy may make a base award to applicants to resource generic learning and revision needs. This is intended to smooth the application process, especially where the quality of applications is variable and this might result in equality concerns and funds / benefits not reaching those in most financial need.

Students who receive a direct bursary fund payment from the Academy may be asked to provide a receipt to show that funds have been used for their intended purpose. Failure to provide a receipt may result in future payments being cancelled and any paid funds being claimed back from student(s).

7.0 Bursary Fund Payments

Any approved direct financial payments will be made by cheque or BACS directly to the student's bank account only.

8.0 Applications Timetable

Students will be told about the Bursary application process in an assembly in the first half term of each academic year. The deadline for applications is shown on the front cover of this policy.

9.0 Misuse and Fraud

The Academy will report any suspected misuse or fraud in connection with bursary fund applications or the use of bursary funds to the police / ESFA. Any funds gained fraudulently will be reclaimed and may lead to prosecution.

11.0 ICT Equipment / iPADS

The Academy has previously declined most applications for ICT equipment. Following significant investment in a new ICT network and wi-fi, the Academy is now able to provide ICT equipment and support to students.

The Academy aims to issue an iPad / lap top computer to every 6th form student to support each student's individual learning.

A number of these devices would have been fully or partially funded through the Bursary. Once all bursary applications have been received and considered, therefore, any unspent Bursary funding may be used to contribute to the overall cost of the devices issued to students. This is to recognise that many in the community served by the Academy are just about managing, that the quality of bursary applications is variable and that some students might not apply for a bursary or free school meal when they could / should.

12 Bursary Fund Categories

The 3 categories of Bursary award are:

- Category 1 – Students in care, (High Priority)
- Category 2 – Students who are entitled to receive a free school meal, (Medium Priority)
- Category 3 – Students living in households where combined income is between £16,191 and £36,120, (low priority)

Students can only apply for 1 category.

13 Category 1 - Vulnerable Student Bursary, (High Priority)

Students can apply to receive bursary fund benefits / a direct payment up to £1,200, (£400 per term), to support their educational needs if they:

- are in local authority care, or have recently left local authority care; or
- receive Income Support, or Universal Credit, in their own name; or
- are disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payments in their own name.

Students applying for this level of support must provide written evidence of their eligibility. For example:

- a letter setting out the benefits to which the young person is entitled
- written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked after status from the local authority which looks after them, or provides their leaving care services

More information is available on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2021-to-2022>

13.0 Category 2 - Discretionary Bursary, (Medium Priority), Students entitled to receive a free meal at the Academy

In addition to in kind benefits issued when they start at Wood Green Academy, (iPad / laptop / text book), students may receive further in kind benefits or a direct payment of up to £390 / year, (£130 per term), to support their educational needs if they:

- are entitled to receive a free school meal

In addition, students may apply for funding to support the cost of public transport. The maximum amount payable / in kind is the full cost of that transport for the academic year, (subject to sufficient bursary funding being devolved to the school by government).

Students whose parent / legal guardian receive any of the following are entitled to a free school meal:

- Universal credit
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance – Income based only
- Employment and Support Allowance - Income based only
- Guaranteed Pension Credit, (Including Child Tax Credit)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Child Tax Credit, with an annual income of less than £16,190

Students who receive a free school meal at the Academy **do not** need to provide documentary evidence to show that they are in receipt of the above, unless requested, as it is a free school meal eligibility requirement.

Students who wish to apply for a category 2 bursary, who are not in receipt of a free school meal must apply for a free school meal first. In these circumstances, the bursary application will be considered if the free school meal application is accepted.

Parents in receipt of Working Tax Credit are not entitled to receive a free meal at the Academy.

12.3 Category 3 – Low Priority Group

In addition to in kind benefits issued when they start at Wood Green Academy, (ipad / lap top / text book), students may receive further in kind benefits or a direct payment of up to £240 / year, (£80 per term), to support their educational needs if they:

*Are from a household where gross annual household income for the tax year 2019/20 was between £16,191 and £36,120 p.a

In addition, students may apply for funding to support the cost of public transport. The maximum amount payable / in kind is the full cost of that transport for the academic year, (subject to sufficient bursary funding being devolved to the school by government).

Low priority group applications will be considered for a bursary award once the category 2 applications have been considered. Category 3 bursary awards are progressive; this means that students in lower income households are more likely to receive an award than higher income households.

To be awarded a Category 3 bursary, students must provide evidence of financial need for each parent / carer in the household. For example:

- P60 for the most recent tax year
- Self-employed accounts for the most recent tax year
- Wage slips for the past 3 months
- Evidence of benefits (in date)
- Copies of the last 3 months Universal Credit award notice
- Tax credits award notice

Appendix 1

Contributions

Note 1: Contributions to bus journeys are normally only supported when a student lives more than 1.5 miles away from the Academy, (for occasional journeys – due to weather and the time of the year and to recognise that some students may live close to the full bus pass cut off point. Depending on the level of devolved government bursary funding and the number of applications, this is usually 3 miles away from the school). Distances are calculated on a post code basis so may not be completely accurate. The Academy's decision regarding public transport / bus passes is final. The academy is likely to pay for public transport bus passes is final. The academy is likely to pay for public transport / bus pass directly where the full cost is met.

Note 2: The Academy's subject departments will provide students with the required course textbook(s) and some additional resources where needed. Students must return their course textbooks as required.

Note 3: students must provide their personal bank account details.

Note 4: a photocopy will be taken and the original returned at a later date. The Academy is accountable to the Government.