De Lisle College
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

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Policy Title:	16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy
Date of Policy:	November 2026
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Summary of bursaries

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- **Vulnerable pupils' bursary:** A bursary for defined vulnerable groups of **UP TO** £1,200 a year. Students should be in Key Stage 5, aged over 16 but under 19. Students need to meet any of the following criteria:

  - in care (CLA)
  - care leavers (PLAC)
  - 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 vulnerable pupils' bursary is to help with transport, books and equipment, educational trips and other course-related costs. The bursary can also support towards costs incurred from attending college/job interviews and open days.

- **Discretionary bursary:** A bursary can be awarded to meet individual needs for students in Key Stage 5 (aged 16+), for example, help with the cost of travel, meals, to buy essential books, specialist clothing and equipment to support students to stay engaged with education and training. Students in receipt of Free School Meals or with a household income of less than £30,000 per annum are eligible to apply for a discretionary bursary.
- We will also consider applications if:

  - The student provides evidence that they provide care to a sick or disabled relative and are not receiving Carers Allowance.
  - Short-term unemployment or redundancy creates financial hardship in the household.
  - There are multiple dependents in the family.

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Each year the College is allocated an amount of money by the government for discretionary bursaries.

Passing the eligibility threshold for either bursary **does not** guarantee funding. The individual circumstances of all applicants, the funding available and the nature of the funding request will be taken into account.

Evidence of Eligibility

Vulnerable pupils' bursary must meet one of the following bullet points:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, we require written confirmation of the current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after the student 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 Income Support or Universal Credit and live independently. We require a copy of their Income Support or Universal Credit 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 Universal Credit, institutions must also see a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- for students receiving Universal Credit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their Universal Credit claim from the Department for Work and Pensions (UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment must also be provided.

Defining in care and care leavers
The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' 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) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'

A '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.

Discretionary bursary:

- Students in receipt of Free School Meals do not need to provide further financial information.
- If the learner is not currently in receipt of Free School Meals, evidence that the household income falls below £30,000 per annum should be provided. Applications must be supported by evidence (photocopies accepted) to enable an assessment to be made.

Examples of types of acceptable evidence include P60, evidence of income from self-employment, benefit entitlement/award letters, tax credit award notice.

- Student provides care to a sick or disabled relative and are not receiving Carers Allowance. A letter from the parent carer would be required.
- Short-term unemployment or redundancy creates financial hardship in the household. A letter from the parent carer would be required.
- There are multiple dependents in the family. A letter from the parent carer would be required.

A copy of the evidence submitted will be securely stored within College. This will be processed by the College office and destroyed six years after the application has been dealt with, in accordance with statutory financial regulations. The College must be informed immediately of any changes to status otherwise money may have to be paid back to the College. All unsuccessful applications will be shredded after a period of six months from the date of the receipt.

Please note, by applying and receiving bursary funding, this will not affect the benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Personal Independence Payment and Housing Benefit.

Application

Application forms must be submitted with any accompanying evidence of eligibly as listed in this document. All potential new and existing 6th Form students will receive an application to complete at the start of the new academic year (initial deadline for applications is 30 September). Students experiencing a change of circumstances during the course of the academic year may submit an application at any time. Late arrivals/applicants will receive a proportion of the bursary in line with the remaining time on the course.

Allocation of bursaries

The Director of Sixth Form in liaison with the Headteacher will determine the allocation of bursaries. Of the total annual budget allocation - 10% will be held back as contingency, 5% will be retained for administration purposes, the remainder will be allocated in-year.

Awards will be made according to the following criteria:

1. Meeting the eligibility
2. Nature of the application – priority will always be given to essential curricular requests
3. The finances available within the fund
4. Exceptional unforeseen circumstances which would affect the learner's ability to participate in their programme of study

Please note that meeting the criteria for a bursary does not automatically mean funding will be given. There is no guarantee of an award, you may receive a full, partial or no award based on the outcome of the assessment of your application.

Students need only apply to the Discretionary Bursary once each academic year.

In some cases, a student might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary but their financial needs are already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award. For example:

- a student in the care of the local authority whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority and does not require assistance with travel.
- The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

In these circumstances, we can refuse the student's application. We will write to explain to the student and/or the student's parent carers the aim of bursary funding and why we are not awarding any bursary.

If an application is successful, all the requested bursaries will be administered by the Finance Officer. The Finance Officer can process any orders for items requested or can reimburse families on production of receipts. Claims may be presented at any time for contributions towards trips or other expenditure as agreed on the application. All awarded bursaries must be spent in the allocated academic year. Bursaries cannot be carried over to the next academic year.

If the College purchases books or equipment for a student with the bursary, these must be returned when the student leaves the College so they can be used again by another student.

Students may reapply each academic year, should they continue to meet the eligibility.

Appeals

If a student, or the student's parent carers, still wants to claim a bursary for vulnerable groups, we will consider the particular circumstances in each case. We will assess whether no bursary should be awarded (because the student has no financial needs) or to award a reduced amount (because the financial help needed is limited).

A two stage appeals process exists:

- **Stage 1:** SLT to review application, check that no error was made in declining application.
- **Stage 2**: Written appeal to the Head Teacher.

At no point in the process will the circumstances of other bursary awards be discussed for reasons of confidentiality.

Appeals must be made within two weeks of notification of the award decision. If the matter is unresolved, the Appeal Stage 2 will be heard, as soon as a meeting can reasonably be convened.

Monitoring and review

This policy has been approved by the governing body and will be reviewed annually or in the light of new guidance from the Department for Education.