

Sir William Robertson Academy 16 – 19 Bursary Fund Statement 2023/24

➤ **What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?**

The Government has set aside some money for schools, colleges, training providers and local authorities to allocate to young people who need financial support to stay on in further education or training. This is called the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

It could help you with any education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to your school, college or training provider. Alternatively you might need extra help to buy books, clothing or equipment for your course, or pay for educational visits.

➤ **Who can apply?**

To apply for a bursary, you must be at least 16 years' old and under 19 years old at the start of the 2023/24 academic year (in 2023/24 this is the 31st August 2023). You must also be taking part in full-time or part-time further education or training.

➤ **How much will be awarded?**

There are two types of bursaries:

Vulnerable student bursary – you could receive up to £1,200 if you are:

- ✓ in local authority care or you have recently left local authority care
- ✓ receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because you are supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and someone who is dependent on you and living with you such as a child
- ✓ Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in your own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in your own right.

Discretionary bursary – You can apply for a discretionary bursary if you aren't eligible for a vulnerable bursary, but you need financial help to stay on in further education or training. Your school, college or training provider will decide whether you will receive a discretionary bursary, how much you could get, and what it should be used for.

Additional Help - Under exceptional circumstances (and for any students who are experiencing short-term financial hardship), students who are not automatically eligible for an award can also apply for help with one-off course related expenses (proof of income or hardship will be asked for).

Consideration of applications for additional help for students whose parent(s)/carers gross annual household income is between £16,191 and £30,000, will be subject to the level of available funding remaining after applications for a vulnerable student/discretionary bursary have been awarded. Applications from students where the family income is above £30,000 will be considered where there is evidence that funding may/will be required due to the individual circumstances of the family. Applications for additional help will be considered on an individual basis.

The level of support which the school can offer is dependent upon the total funding available and the number of applications it receives. Please note: there is a limited amount of funding which means that it will not be possible to support every application and priority will be given to those students from the families with the lowest household income and/or highest demonstrated need. The level of funding may vary during the academic year.

➤ **Decision Making**

Every effort is made by Sir William Robertson Academy to consider each application on its own merits. In extenuating circumstances the school reserves the right to make awards to individual students who do not necessarily meet all of the listed criteria. Bursaries will be granted based on the information provided. Funds will only be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been demonstrated. Not all applications will be successful. The funding available is limited, and with the exception of the guaranteed bursaries, awards will not be guaranteed. Students who apply after the budget has been allocated may not be granted an award. If a student eligible for a guaranteed bursary applies after all funds have been allocated, the school can apply to the Government for additional funding, although additional funding is not guaranteed to be available.

➤ **How will the bursary be paid?**

The Sir William Robertson Academy passports bursary payments to students 'in kind' in most cases – this means that instead of receiving money, students could get a public transport travel pass, free meals or course equipment, students should approach the Bursary administrator for guidance on how to purchase resources in the first instance.

➤ **Payment Conditions**

Sir William Robertson Academy adheres to the following payment conditions.

- ✓ All bursary payments will be directly linked to **attendance, behaviour and performance**. See below for further details.
- ✓ There must be no unauthorised absences during the school day
- ✓ All bursary payments 'in kind' will be paid directly to the student by BACS transfer
- ✓ Eligible students must be at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2023 and enrolled on a non-fee paying course at the school.

- ✓ Vulnerable students studying part time, or on a course lasting less than 30 weeks, can apply for an appropriate proportion of the Bursary
- ✓ Applications for the Discretionary Bursary received after the Christmas holiday will not be backdated for the first term.
- ✓ If a student leaves school, they will not be eligible for any further payments. Cash, meal and most advance travel payments will not be recovered. Books and some equipment will need to be returned to the school.

Time Keeping/Lateness

Evidence of time keeping will be taken from the marked Attendance Records. A pattern of lateness may result in the bursary payments being affected.

Absence/sickness

If the student is unwell or unable to attend a lesson they must phone the Student Services Attendance Officer before their lesson has started on each day of absence.

The student will usually be required to have a minimum of **90%** attendance in order to receive any bursary payment.

An emerging pattern of non –attendance due to sickness is unacceptable. It is not acceptable to regularly miss the same days/lessons. Student Services will use discretion in accepting isolated periods of genuine sickness.

Any un-notified absence will be considered to be unauthorised, unless a suitable explanation is given.

If the student knows in advance that they are going to be absent, they should apply for authorised absence (i.e. religious celebration, hospital appointment, university open days).

If the student did not know about the absence in advance, Student Services will consider whether the absence was really unavoidable. The Student Services Attendance Officer will take into account the student's overall attendance record.

Doctors, Dental appointments, driving lessons and holidays should be made outside the academy timetable.

➤ **Staff Responsibilities**

Stoppage of Bursary payments

Bursary payments may be stopped for any of the following reasons:

- ✓ Unauthorised absence from lessons/patterns of absence
- ✓ Lateness to lessons.
- ✓ Any breach of the Student Learning Agreement/Student Code of Conduct
- ✓ Attendance falls under 90%. Where there is a problem with absence (attendance under 90%), punctuality, work assignments not being completed or any breach of the student code of conduct, the matter can be referred back to the 16-19 Bursary panel. It is normally the discretion of the 16-19 Bursary panel if the payment is agreed.

➤ **The Appeals Procedure**

An appeals procedure is in place to ensure that all learners who are unhappy about the decision made regarding their help from the 16 – 19 Bursary Funds are treated equally and are given the right to appeal, by writing to the Clerk to the Governors of the Academy.

The Student Services Finance Administrator will inform the student why their payment has been stopped. If the student feels that the decision to stop the payment was unfair, they can try to resolve the problem directly with the 16-19 Bursary panel. If this is unsuccessful the student/ parent/guardian has the right to appeal.

The Student will be given the opportunity to present their case within 10 working days and have a representative present (e.g. student rep or student union officer). The academy is obliged to provide only one appeal hearing and an appeal decision is final.

➤ **Confidentiality**

Sir William Robertson Academy will ensure that applications are handled confidentially. For audit purposes, however, hard copies of all documentation for learner support will be kept for a period of six years. The information will be made available for audit purposes. Some records may be computerised but these will be held securely and in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

➤ **Equal Opportunities**

No applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account the views of the school, young people and their parents and guidance from the Department for Education and the ESFA.