

# THE WEALD SIXTH FORM BURSARY FUND INFORMATION 2025 - 2026



## **The 16-19 Bursary Fund**

We do not want any student to be prevented from continuing their education as a result of financial barriers. If you are concerned about how to meet the cost of transport, necessary equipment for your course and/or trips then you should consider applying for a bursary. All information provided to us in this regard will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Weald Sixth Form aims to optimise the use of the 16-19 Bursary funding to provide support to those young people facing the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education. We are committed to ensuring that the fund is used to support financially disadvantaged young people to achieve their learning aims. For more information, see the most recent [Government guide](#)

The Head of Sixth Form is the person responsible for overseeing the management of the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

All applications will be assessed by the bursary panel, consisting of the Head of Sixth Form and a Sixth Form Manager.

## **Eligibility criteria (all bursaries)**

To be eligible to receive a bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year the student must

- Meet the residency criteria in [ESFA funding regulations](#) for post-16 provision. This document also specifies the evidence institutions must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility).
- Be aged 16 or over, but under 19 at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025, except for the following exceptions:
  - Be aged 19 or over at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) (not applicable for the Vulnerable Student Bursary).
  - Students aged 19 are eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16-18 (not applicable for the Vulnerable Student Bursary).

## **Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)**

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute, they can apply to the Home Office (HO) for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, you can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment, or a travel pass. Under no circumstances should you give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

## **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not receive cash support from the HO and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group) if they have a financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, you must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a bursary as a student from a vulnerable group until they reach the upper [age](#) limit. Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard/the

appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

## **1. Vulnerable Student Bursary**

Eligible students could receive a bursary worth up to £1200, dependent on their circumstances.

Students need to be able to satisfy at least one of the following criteria;

- you're in, or you have recently left, care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself
- you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments in your name **and** either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in your own right

This fund can provide up to £1200 per year for students on a course of at least 30 hours per year, and will be assessed on evidenced actual need rather than a blanket payment.

It's important to understand that we may decide that, even though you may be eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups because you're in one or more of the defined groups, you don't actually need any financial help from the scheme. The bursary fund is to provide help with costs so that students can participate in education. If you don't have any actual financial need, for example, because your local authority is already meeting your costs, we may decide not to award you a bursary, or to award you a lower amount of bursary. If this is the case, we will explain our decision to you.

### **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:

1. 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
2. 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

### **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 the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering 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.

Where possible, we are encouraged by the Government to provide support from the bursary fund by making payments in kind rather than as a cash payment.

### **Evidence of eligibility**

We are required to obtain proof that students meet the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups in full. For example:

- 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 (a letter or an email clearly from the LA)
- for students in receipt of UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS claim/award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefit 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 etc

- for students receiving UC/ESA and DLA and PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP

## **2. Discretionary Bursary**

This fund is for students who face genuine financial barriers to participating in education and is awarded on an individual needs basis, for items such as public transport to Sixth Form, essential course equipment or resources, essential course trips, registration fees, travel to university interviews and UCAS fees. This fund cannot provide support for items such as counselling or mentoring, or for extra-curricular activities or trips that are not essential to a study programme here. It also cannot provide support for living costs.

The order of priority for discretionary bursaries are:

- Students living permanently in a household where the gross annual income is £25,000 or less (including benefits/Universal Credit).
- Students living permanently in a household where the gross annual income is more than £25,000 but equal to or less than £30,000 (including benefits/Universal Credit). Students in this category may not be able to claim a canteen subsidy.
- Students living permanently in a household where the gross annual income is more than £30,000 but equal to or less than £32,000 (including benefits), **and** work/child tax credit or Universal Credit is being provided. Students in this category may not be able to claim a canteen subsidy.
- Students who have an extreme financial problem, for example a specific education cost which cannot be met

Under exceptional circumstances, help in the form of one-off payments for course-related expenditure may be awarded to students who do not meet the requirements above. Applications will be considered on an individual basis and are dependent upon the availability of funds. Evidence of income or hardship will be requested.

### **Evidence of Eligibility**

We are required to use household income as part of the process to establish both eligibility and the amount of support offered. This can be evidenced by:

- Copies of your parent(s)/carer(s) **3 most recent** Universal Credit monthly award statements. These must show:
  - The take-home pay figure AND
  - The amount and reason of any deductions
  - The amount of UC after all deductions

An example of an acceptable UC award notice can be found [here](#)

A copy of your parent(s)/carer(s) Tax Credit Award or their most recent P60 (Tax Return if self-employed).

- Copies of yours and your paren(s)/carer(s) **3 most recent** pay slips

### **Claims**

We are encouraged to pay both defined vulnerable group and discretionary bursary funding to students in-kind rather than cash as far as possible. This helps ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. If you are seeking support with transport to 6th form, text books, stationery, essential course supplies etc, we will purchase these for you.

Where it is not possible for us to pay for items on your behalf, we will reimburse the cost into a bank account in the student's own name (which must accept BACS payments), where a valid receipt has been provided, and a claim form completed. You **MUST** check with the Sixth Form Managers/Head of Sixth Form that the item you wish to purchase is eligible for funding from the 16-19 bursary fund **BEFORE** you purchase it. Failure to do so will result in the claim being denied.

All claims (whether purchased by yourself or the college) must be made on the 16 - 19 Discretionary

Bursary Claim Form, which you can obtain from the Sixth Form Office. Claims will be processed once a month.

### **Conditions**

- All bursary payments are directly linked to excellent attendance (95%), progress, attitude to learning ('always' or 'often' in all subjects) and behaviour
- Students and their parent(s)/carer(s) are required to sign a declaration before any payments can be made
- All absences must be notified by a parent/carers, giving the reason for absence, by one of the following methods:
  - Ringing the absence line on 01403 787283
  - Emailing [sixthformoffice@theweald.org.uk](mailto:sixthformoffice@theweald.org.uk)
  - In the case of planned absence eg university open days, medical appointments etc, the student must complete and submit an Absence Request Form which must be signed by a parent/carers in advance of the absence.
- Mid-course leavers will be required to repay any bursary payments made during the half term in which they leave
- Examples of authorised absence include:
  - An evidenced medical appointment which cannot be arranged for outside of college hours
  - Study visits relating to your College courses
  - Attendance at a funeral of a close relative or close friend
  - Attendance at a university open day or a careers related appointment
  - A driving test (not driving lessons)
  - Representing the College at a sporting event
  - Other events at the discretion of the College
- Examples of unauthorised absence include:
  - Holidays
  - Driving lessons
  - Leisure activities
  - Absences for full or part-time work which is not a part of the student's College courses

### **Application Procedure**

Complete and sign the application form and ensure all relevant evidence of income is attached. Any omissions will result in a delay. The Bursary panel aims to review all applications within 2 weeks of receipt of the application and supporting evidence

Return the form and evidence by hand to the Sixth Form Office or by post to

The Sixth Form Office  
The Weald School and Sixth Form  
Station Road  
Billingshurst  
RH14 9RY

Applications will be processed from September 16th 2025 through to the end of the academic year 25/26 or until the funding has been fully allocated, whichever is sooner.

### **Appeals Procedure**

The student or their parent/carers have the right to appeal against the decision made about their application. Should you disagree with any decision made, firstly contact the Head of Sixth Form. If you are not satisfied, you have the right of appeal in accordance with The Weald Complaints Policy which is published on our website.

### **Further Help**

Contact the Sixth Form Office during term-time on 01403 787283 or [sixthformoffice@theweald.org.uk](mailto:sixthformoffice@theweald.org.uk)

All applications will be treated in confidence.