

July 2024

Next Review date: July 2025

16–19 Bursary Policy

This policy applies to Kimberley Sixth Form College, managed by Wootton Academy Trust (WAT).



Person responsible: Head of College

Reviewed by: Chief Finance and Operating Officer

1. Introduction.

A key priority for the Government is to close the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16 to 19 education or training.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education. WAT administers the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund on behalf of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year
- discretionary bursaries, details of which are set out in this document

The ESFA determines the eligibility criteria for the vulnerable bursary whilst WAT determines the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursaries. The Trust ensures students are eligible for either bursary through the application process. With both types of bursaries, the actual amount paid will be dependent on the specific financial needs of each student.

The Trust expects the College to ensure that the operation of its bursary funding policy does not impact adversely on any particular group.

2. Eligibility.

To be eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary, a student must be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31st August 2024. The only exceptions are where a student aged 19 or over is continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Students must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in the ESFA funding regulations, namely a student must have a legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their study programme.

Students should be participating in a provision that is "subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality and funded within the relevant guidelines". Attendance at Kimberley College meets this requirement.

16-19 Bursary Funding is provided to support students in the following categories:

Level 1a: Payments to Students in a defined vulnerable group (up to £1,200 per annum)

- Young people who are in the care of the Local Authority or who have recently left Local Authority care;
- Young people receiving universal credit or income support in their own name;
- Disabled young people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments (in their own name) as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit.

Students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate and institutions should not automatically award students £1,200 if they do not need the full amount. Equally a vulnerable group student can be paid more than £1,200 if an assessment confirms they need extra help to remain in education. Any such payment would be through the discretionary bursary fund.

Level 1b: Discretionary payment

Payments of up to £1,200 per annum where a student lives in a household where the gross income or equivalent meets the free school meal eligibility criteria (currently £16,190* or less per annum).

Level 2: Discretionary payment

Payments of up to £1,000 per annum where a student lives in a household where the gross income is between £16,191 and £29,999*

Level 3: Discretionary payment

Payments of up to £850 per annum where a student lives in a household whose gross annual household income is between £30,000 and £34,999*.

** Household income boundaries increase by £1000 for each additional child under age of 18, after the first 3 children.*

In line with the bursaries for defined vulnerable groups, students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate and the college will not automatically award students maximum payment if they do not need the full amount.

Free School Meals (FSMs)

The government allocates provision for FSM through the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Therefore, eligibility for FSM will be assessed during the bursary application process. The criteria to be eligible for FSMs are a household receiving one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Child Tax Credit but no Working Tax Credit where combined annual income is not above £16,190;
- guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Universal Credit – if you applied on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If eligible, a student is entitled to up to £3.35 a day of the cost of food (meal) purchased at the College café and canteen.

Notes

1. Annually, the ESFA indicates the maximum level of bursary funding for vulnerable students. The maximum level of funding per vulnerable student in 2024-2025 is £1,200 per annum.
2. It is not envisaged that the maximum level of funding for discretionary bursary allocations will ever exceed the figure for vulnerable students.
3. The total funding available in each College is dependent on a formula determined by the ESFA based on the socio-economic profile for the college. In 2024/2025 the level of funding allocated to Kimberley College is £55,377.
4. WAT reserves the right to withhold up to 5% of the fund to meet administrative costs associated with administering the bursary.
5. WAT reserves the right to adjust the household income thresholds upwards at any point during the year. If this happens it will publicise the change on its websites and in Sixth Form Assemblies.
6. Please note 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. This may result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.

3. Review of the policy.

The policy will be reviewed **annually**. The Head of College will lead the policy review. The review process will include the following:

- The views of students will be sought;
- A comparison with the 16-19 Bursary Policies of other 16-19 providers to ensure the policy remains relevant and robust;
- Reviewing any best practice guidance from the ESFA and the Department for Education.

Following each review, any updates and amendments will be proposed to the Chief Finance and Operating Officer, who, in consultation with the Executive Headteacher, will be responsible for approving changes.

4. Policy.

1. It is our policy to publicise and promote the availability of this funding to students, parents/carers, tutors at regular intervals including:
 - At the point of application;
 - At the point of induction;
 - At the point of registration/commencement of studies;
 - At termly intervals after the commencement of courses;
2. It is our policy to promote bursary funding using:
 - Verbal information, leaflets and emails;
 - Kimberley Sixth Form College website;
 - Year 12 and Year 13 Assemblies and guidance sessions.
3. It is our policy to invite applications from students using the Applicaa Bursary 16+ platform as from September 2024.
4. Where we believe other students may be eligible who have not applied using the above process, it is our policy that a member of the Bursary Team will meet with these students (for example, where information on the sixth form admission questionnaire indicates students may be eligible for a bursary or where the Sixth Form Team is given other information by students, parents/carers or professionals).
5. Applicants must complete their application on the Applicaa Bursary 16+ platform.
6. It is our policy that successful applications should be assessed and the amount awarded according to the level of income and number of qualifying applicants. The level of income being initially set at up to £16,190 for L1 bursary payments, up to £29,999 for L2 bursary payments and up to £34,999 for L3 bursary payments.
7. It is our policy that the applicant must provide supporting evidence to confirm household income details. Household income can be evidenced by receipt of benefit and P60, Tax Credit Award Notice or evidence of self-employment income. All evidence of household income will be in strict confidence.
8. It is our policy that all applications will be reviewed by the WAT Bursary Approval Panel. This will normally consist of the Sixth Form Bursary Administrator, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Lead) and the Finance Team. All applicants will be informed as to the outcome of their application. In the case of unsuccessful applications, the reasons why will be recorded and if there are any issues arising from decisions made by the panel they will be referred to the Head of College in the first instance.

9. It is our policy that where possible payments are made in kind (e.g. payment in kind: purchase of travel pass, purchase of books), otherwise payments are *normally* made half termly into students' bank accounts by an electronic payment. However, where appropriate, or necessary, payment can be made using other timescales and means.
10. Typically, bursary funding is to offer support with transport, books and equipment, field trips and other course-related costs. Bursary support is available to contribute to the costs of attending industry placements, university interviews and open days.
11. It is our policy that before each subsequent payment is authorised the eligible young person needs to re-confirm their eligibility by completing a claim on the Applicaa Bursary 16+ platform – including comment on what they have used funding for under given headlines (travel costs, course costs, school trips, meal costs* and other specified course related costs).

**if students are eligible for a FSM, they can claim up to additional £3.35 per day for meals/drinks (receipts must be retained and submitted)*

**If students are not eligible for a FSM, they can claim up to £6.80 per day for meals/drinks (this must include at least one meal) (receipts must be retained and submitted)*

12. It is our policy that the young person eligible for the discretionary bursary must reach specific performance targets linked to their progress and key areas within the Stepping Stones to Success, such as attendance, punctuality, homework engagement and attitude to learning.
13. A student's attendance to individual subjects (including tutor sessions) should be at least 92% and they should not pick up more than 3 negative behaviours for homework, punctuality or attitude to learning within any individual half-termly qualifying period combined with no unauthorized absences (or exclusions) in order to qualify to receive further payments. Attendance includes all timetabled lessons, tutor sessions, assemblies and any additional interventions which are put in place for the student. Holidays will not be counted as authorized absence. Approved Examination Study Leave, participation on approved educational trips, or approved representative activities will be counted as attendance. If students do not meet the criteria stated above, their payments will be decreased by each week this failure applies.
14. The Chief Finance and Operating Officer (CFOO) and Head of College will authorise the subsequent payments having confirmed these conditions have been met.
15. It is our policy to monitor the use of bursary funding using the information provided to the Trust by students.
16. It is our policy that where an application is not approved, or where a subsequent payment is withheld, the applicant will be told in writing and be entitled to request a meeting to appeal the decision with the Head of College.
17. It is our policy that students may submit applications during the academic year after the deadline for initial applications. In these circumstances, it is our policy that those applications approved will lead to payments being made from the next payment point.
18. Senior staff will monitor the progress and attainment of students receiving the 16-19 Bursary Funding and where necessary intervene to provide additional support.
19. It is our policy that each year, an annual report of how the funding was allocated to young people and what it was used for will be produced for the Kimberley College Local Governing Board. If appropriate, these reports might include case studies. Where these are used it is our policy that the identity of the student will remain anonymous.
20. If any equipment is purchased from the Bursary funds that are necessary for a student to complete their study programme, this must be returned at the end of the study programme so that it can be used again by another student.