

## 16 - 19 Bursary, Free Meals and Hardship Policy

### Mission Statement

We are a Catholic Sixth Form dedicated to the education and development of the whole person, so that all students can realise their full potential.

To achieve this as a community we will:

- Provide the highest standards of teaching and learning.
- Expect students to show commitment to their studies and the Christian values of the Sixth Forms.
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement.
- Build and further develop a partnership with parents, schools, parishes, higher education, employers and the local community.
- Value staff and support their professional development.

In doing this we will reflect Christ's teaching in the life and work of the whole Sixth Forms.

### 1. Introduction

The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is made available through the Government's Education, Skills and Funding Agency (EFSA) so that Christ the King Sixth Forms (CTK) may provide financial support to those students whose participation in education might be hindered due to financial hardship. The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is to provide financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so that they can remain in education.

The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund made available for supporting students to access equipment and materials that are specifically for and essential to, the completion of their post-16 programme of study. The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund, is intended to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study programme it is not intended to support extra-curricular activities or provide learning support – services that institutions give to students – such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring'. It is not intended to cover living costs or to supplement general household income. There is not a flat rate paid to students, instead each student's individual need for support is assessed. CTK will allocate bursary funds in-kind rather than in cash, as far as possible.

Students and parents/guardians/carers will be invited and encouraged to apply during the enrolment process and throughout the academic year. Once the allocation has been spent no further funds will be available.

The 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is designed for students who are aged under 19 on 31 August, each year. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing a

programme of study that they began aged 16 - 18 or have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

CTK receives an allocation from the ESFA to contribute towards the administrative costs relating to the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund. Allocation of 16 - 19 Bursary Funding will be subject to Terms and Conditions as set by CTK and which are outlined in the Student Bursary Agreement Document. The distribution of the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is at the discretion of the CTK.

### **1.1 Residency Criteria**

To be eligible to apply for the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund, students will need to confirm that they have legally lived in the UK for the 3 years before their enrolment at CTK.

### **1.2 Eligibility**

The ESFA has set eligibility criteria to ensure that 16 - 19 Bursary Funds go to those who need it the most. Any student who meets the eligibility criteria can apply for a 16 - 19 Bursary Fund. Applications are means-tested based on total household income and original documentation will be required to support any application. In line with EFSA requirements, CTK will assess the actual financial need as well as eligibility before allocating funds to support students.

Once eligibility for the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund has been established, CTK will assess the individual needs of students and determine the essential items necessary for their continued participation in education. Assessment will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis by the site Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing.

At the beginning of each year of study, continuing students already in receipt of the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund, will have to complete a form declaring that their financial situation has not changed in order to receive financial support in that academic year.

#### **1.2.1 ESFA funded students aged 16 - 19 who meet the residency criteria for ESFA funding.**

- Accompanied asylum seekers are eligible for education but not public funds
- They may apply to the Home Office for support if they are destitute
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers are treated as looked after children and are eligible for the vulnerable bursary

#### **1.2.2 19+ continuing students who have previously been eligible as point 1, are in scope for the Discretionary Bursary only**

#### **1.2.3 19+ students who hold an EHCP and are eligible as point 1, are in scope for the Discretionary Bursary only**

### **1.3 Support for Eligible Students**

CTK will typically use the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund for:

- Educational books and equipment
- Uniform and footwear, needed to be worn to Sixth Form
- Specialist kit
- Trips and visits that are an essential part of a student's programme of study
- Travel to or from Sixth Form, where the eligible student does not already receive free travel
- Industry or work-related placement costs
- Authorised university visits (e.g. university interviews)
- Assistive technology

## **2. Support at Christ the King Sixth Forms**

Support at CTK has four elements, these are:

- The Defined Vulnerable Groups Bursary
- The Discretionary Bursary
- Hardship Fund
- Free Meals

### **2.1 The Defined Vulnerable Groups Bursary**

Funds up to £1,200 for each academic year that the student is eligible.

Students who are eligible to receive 16 - 19 Bursary for vulnerable groups are not entitled to receive the discretionary bursary as well. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

## 2.2 Eligibility Criteria and Evidence required for the Vulnerable Bursary

Eligibility Criteria	Evidence Required
Young people who are in or have recently left local authority care	Written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority
Young people who get Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name because they are financially supporting themselves	A most recent copy of the 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  For students who are in receipt of Universal Credit, we must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement or utility bill in the student's own name
Young people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independent Payment (PIP) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in their own name	A copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided

## 2.3 Discretionary Bursary

The Discretionary bursary award is to help to overcome the financial barriers to education, this could include but is not an exhaustive or exclusive list:

- Essential books
- Equipment including specialist clothing and IT equipment
- Activities that are an essential part of the students' 16 - 19 study programme. For example, study visits within the programme of study and activities outside the curriculum that build the ASPIRE graduate qualities
- Public transport
- Food while at the Sixth Form
- University open days and interviews

## 2.4 Eligibility Criteria for the Discretionary Bursary

To qualify for the discretionary bursary, your total household income must not exceed £24,000. (Childcare costs and housing benefit are not included in the calculation of eligibility. Students, who meet the criteria for the discretionary bursary must provide-evidence of household income as listed:

Evidence Type	Required Documents
Universal Credit Award statements	Most recent 3 months of statements prior to date of application
Employment Pay Slip	Most recent 3 months of statements prior to date of application
Child Tax Credits Statement	Statement must be for current Financial Year. All pages of document must be supplied
One of the following: Job Seekers Allowance Employment Support Allowance Income Support	Current letter certified from Department for Work and Pensions, confirming receipt of the particular Benefit
State Pension Statement	Current statement certified by Department for Work and Pensions
Any other Department for Work and Pensions benefit	Current statement certified by Department for Work and Pensions

## 2.5 Severe Hardship Fund

In cases of extreme hardship students may request consideration for additional support from the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and individual needs assessed by the Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing. Requests will need to be appropriately evidenced. There is no right of appeal should the request be unsuccessful.

## 3. Qualifying Condition Requirements

The student will need to complete a qualifying learning period before they are able to receive 16 - 19 Bursary Funds.

## 4. Bursary Applications

Applications for a 16 - 19 Bursary Fund must be made using the correct Application Form and should be submitted in full along with the required evidence by October Half term each academic year. CTK acknowledges that student financial circumstances can change, and Applications made after this date

will be considered, if sufficient funds are available. However, once the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund has been used, it may not be possible to consider further applications. Consideration will be given to assisting the student to make an application if they are unable to do so due to a level of learning difficulty and/or disability. Consideration will also be given to assisting the student in making an application if they are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from parent/guardian/carer(s).

Successful 16 - 19 Bursary Fund awards will only require evidence on application. Thereafter an annual 16 - 19 Bursary Fund eligibility self-declaration form needs to be completed by the student to confirm that their household income circumstances have not changed.

## **5. Free College Meals**

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students and this funding forms part of the overall 16 –19 Bursary Fund designed to overcome the financial barriers to participation. Free meals are provided using the on-site catering facilities for every day that the eligible learner attends for their programme of study. This includes examinations, and work experience or industry placement that the student undertakes as part of their programme of study.

### **5.1 Free College Meals Application**

Current eligibility for free college meals only requires a single check of household income for each phase of education e.g. 16 - 19. **Requests will need to be appropriately evidenced.**

To qualify for free college meals students must be in receipt of, or have parents/guardians who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Students who received Free School Meals on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 are eligible for Free College Meals during the academic year 2024-25
- Income support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), support under part VI of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999, The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit)
- Have an annual gross income of no more than **£16,190.00** as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding **£7,400.00** per annum after tax and not including any benefits received

### **5.2 Emergency Meal Support**

In individual cases of severe hardship, we can provide meal support on the days a student attends their study programme, where the student is considered to be in real need, without undertaking the checks on household income or gathering other evidence that would normally be required. This is expected to only apply to a very small number of the total 16 - 19 student cohort. For audit purposes, we must retain a copy of:

- A record of the number of students supported in this way
- The number of days this support is given
- The £'s value of support given to each student along with the rationale for the meal support
- The signed confirmation by the student of receipt of funding to be spent on food that day, if actual spend receipts are not obtained

This arrangement is not to continue on an ongoing basis for any individual student – we will exercise our discretion in each case and will be mindful that this flexibility relates to food support only.

## **6. Process**

The named contact at CTK Sixth Forms for all 16 - 19 Bursary support/enquiries is Mrs Salmon Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing, who can be contacted at [r.salmon@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:r.salmon@ctksfc.ac.uk).

For audit purposes, copies of all documentation for the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund will be kept for a period of 6 years. This documentation must include evidence of the application process, documents relating to how the student was assessed and the funds issued.

The site Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing will review the application, supporting evidence, information provided in relation to participation needs and any other personal circumstantial evidence. The student will be notified of the outcome.

## **7. Appeals**

If a student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) is dissatisfied with Christ the King's decision not to allocate funds from the 16 - 19 Bursary funds, the student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) should discuss this in the first instance with the Mrs Salmon Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing by emailing [r.salmon@ctksfc.ac.uk](mailto:r.salmon@ctksfc.ac.uk).

If the student or their parent/guardian/carer is still unsatisfied following the conversation with Mrs Salmon, then the student (not someone on his/her behalf) can make an appeal. The appeal should be made to Deputy Principal Mrs Crampton either by email or in writing, within one week of the decision.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student and parent guardian/ carer by email, within one week of the appeal being received. The outcome of the appeal is final.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16 - 19 Bursary Application Panel and in the event of an appeal those involved in the bursary appeal. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during processing, and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the student and/or their parent/guardian/carer(s) will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to obtaining further information.

All evidence and data received and retained for audit purposes will conform CTK's GDPR policy.

## **9. Equality**

In determining the allocation of the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund, students will not be discriminated against on the basis of their protected characteristics.

## **10. Change of Financial Circumstances**

If a student is in receipt of a 16 - 19 Bursary Fund, they have a duty to inform Christ the King should their, or those of their parent/guardian/carer(s), financial circumstances change (e.g., increase in household income that would affect entitlement to Free College Meals). This does not automatically mean any future bursary will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16 - 19 Bursary Application Panel to determine current need.

## **11. Fraud**

Students and their families are required to make a declaration (whether paper or electronic) that the information and evidence provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. False or incorrect information or failing to update CTK about changes in household income that affect the 16 - 19 bursary that leads to overpayment may result in payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered.

## **12. Further Help and Guidance**

The 16 - 19 Bursary Policy will be reviewed annually. Should you require further help or advice regarding the CTK 16 - 19 Bursary Policy, please contact your site Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing.

**Date Revised: May 2024**  
**Next Review Due: May 2025**