16 - 19 Bursary, Free Meals and Hardship Policy

Christ the King Sixth Forms have a long tradition of excellence, underpinned by our Catholic values, and we take pride in our strong sense of community. Our staff are our greatest resource, and this core value is enshrined in our mission statement.

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 Department of Education (DfE) 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. Students and parents/carers will have the opportunity to apply as soon as they have enrolled at CTK.

Students should submit their application before the end of September, so that a full needs analysis can be undertaken. We endeavour to come back to applicants within a three-week window of the

September deadline, to acknowledge if eligibility criteria have been met. CTK receives an allocation from the DfE 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 Fund Guide. The distribution of the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is at the discretion of the CTK.

1. Qualifying Condition Requirements

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

2. Bursary Applications

New 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 the end of September each academic year. This should be submitted to the following site email address:

- CTK Aquinas: aquinasbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk
- CTK Emmanuel: emmanuelbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk
- CTK St Mary's: stmarysbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk

CTK acknowledges that student financial circumstances can change, and applications made to the Bursary Fund will be considered after this date if funds are available. However, once the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund allocation has been spent, it will 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 or 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 and parent/guardian/carer(s). to confirm that their household income circumstances have not changed. However, previous receipt of a 16–19 Bursary Fund award does not guarantee eligibility for, or receipt of, an award in subsequent academic years. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the revised eligibility criteria applicable to the relevant academic year.

3. Eligibility – All bursaries

Students must meet the age and residency criteria which follow to be eligible for help from the bursary fund. The DfE 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 DfE 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 led by the site Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing.

3.1

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 to be eligible for help from the bursary funds (discretionary and defined vulnerable groups) in academic year 2026 to 2027.

A student aged 19 and over is only eligible for the discretionary bursary if they:

- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- continue on the same study programme they started between 16 to 18 years (19+ continuers)

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary.

Bursaries are intended for students aged 16 or over.

3.2 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.

3.2.1 The following persons will be eligible for bursary funding

A person who is 'settled' in the UK, and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (that is including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the 'relevant date'. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or indefinite leave to remain (ILR), being an Irish citizen or having the right of abode in the UK. Students who are eligible for bursary funding include:

- British citizens who hold a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland passport
- Irish citizen
- EU citizens or family members of EEA and Swiss workers (resident in the UK before 1 January 2021) with settled status
- Students who are children of Turkish workers where the Turkish worker has been lawfully employed and resident in the UK before 1 January 2021
- British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
- Those whose passports have been endorsed to show they have right of abode in the UK
- Those who have a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen
- Those with Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O) visa who have been given Home Office permission to reside in the UK

In addition to the groups outlined above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years) to be eligible for funding:

- Someone with (or their spouses, civil partners and children with) refugee status (RS), humanitarian protection (HP), discretionary leave (DL), exceptional leave to enter (ELE) or exceptional leave to remain (ELR)
- Someone with recently settled status (this means those having been granted ILE or ILR, right of abode or British citizenship within the 3 years immediately preceding the start of the course)
- Someone granted pre-settled status following our exit from EU

In addition to the groups above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years), aged up to and including the age of 18, as eligible for funding as follows:

- Those who are accompanying or joining parents or spouses or civil partner who have the right of abode or leave to enter or remain in the UK (or accompanying or joining relevant family members, usually parents, who are UK or Irish citizens), or those who are children of diplomats
- Those who are dependants of teachers coming to the UK on a teacher exchange scheme
- Those who are residing legally in the UK (including those entering the UK in the last 3 years who are or were not accompanied by their parents) who are British (or Irish) citizens or those whose passports have been endorsed (or as part of move to digital immigration systems, either a biometric residency permit, or an equivalent digital status and/or an endorsement letter) to either show they have the right of abode in this country or to show that they have no restrictions on working in the UK
- Those who are dependants of adults residing legally in the UK who have been given immigration rights as workers to reside in the UK
- Those who are dependants of foreign students where the accompanying parent or legal guardian has a student visa.
- Asylum seekers
- Those having been granted leave under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the 'Dubs' amendment)
- Those having been granted Calais leave to remain
- Those who are (including unaccompanied asylum seekers) placed in the care of social services or those receiving section 4 support

In addition to considering students in the categories listed in the paragraphs above, the funding body will consider other exceptional circumstances. When an institution believes that a student should be considered for DFE funding under exceptional circumstances, it must contact DFE for guidance before claiming funding.

- For funding eligibility purposes only, we have defined the EEA on 31 December 2020 as including Switzerland, as well as all members of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway and each of their overseas territories. Students who are citizens of certain British Overseas Territories are eligible for funding. Certain European Overseas Territories citizens will also be eligible for funding but only if they moved to the UK before 1 January 2021.

- Someone who has 'no recourse to public funds' included in their passport stamp would not be in breach of their immigration conditions if they had access to state-funded education in the UK. 'Public funds' are defined in the immigration rules, and the benefits and services listed do not include education or any education funding. This condition in a passport therefore makes

no difference to a student's eligibility, which must be determined under the normal eligibility criteria described in the paragraphs above.

3.2.2 Accompanied Asylum Seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused student support can be provided with in kind support such as books, equipment, or a travel pass.

3.3.3 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary categorised as 'in care' if in financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, their immigration status must be considered. If the claim is decided in their favour, the local authority will treat them as care leavers.

As care leavers, they continue to be eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary 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 and the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds.

4. Bursary 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 School Meals (FSM)

4.1 The Defined Vulnerable Groups

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

4.2 Eligibility Criteria and Evidence required for the Vulnerable Bursary

Eligibility Criteria	Evidence Required
Young people who are in local authority care	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'. Only students who meet this definition are eligible if they have a financial need. Written confirmation of their current looked-after status from the relevant local authority.
Young people who are in or have recently left local authority care	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 Only students who meet this definition are eligible if they have a financial need. Written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority.
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. Written confirmation of their current or foster care status from the relevant local authority.
Privately Fostered	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.
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.

4.3 Eligibility Criteria for the Discretionary Bursary

To qualify for the discretionary bursary, your total household income must not exceed **£30,000** (Childcare costs and housing benefit are not included in the total 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 most recent statements prior to date of application
Employment Pay Slip	Most recent 3 months most recent 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

4.4 Support for eligible students

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

- Travel to or from Sixth Form, where the eligible student does not already receive free travel
- Educational books
- To enhance the FSM rate
- Assistive technology such as laptop
- Specialised curriculum equipment
- Protective clothing or clothing relevant to a programme of study
- Clothing in exceptionally circumstances, depending on needs assessment which meets our Sixth Form Dress Code, such as footwear /coat.
- Curriculum trips and visits that are an essential part of a student's programme of study
- UCAS Application for those not in receipt of FSM
- Work-related learning costs
- Authorised university visits (e.g., university interviews)

The allocation of funds will focus on assessing individual student eligibility and actual need. Needs assessment will be undertaken to ensure financial support is available to those students whose participation in education might be hindered due to financial hardship.

4.6 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.

5. Free College Meals

5.1 Student Eligibility for Free 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. Lessons are timetabled in a way that all students are expected to be on site each day or attending a work placement as part of their programme of study. For students who undertake work related learning they will be given a voucher that is made directly into their bank accounts to ensure that they can purchase a meal whilst off site, or a packed lunch such as a sandwich will be provided for them.

5.2 Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 to be eligible to receive a free meal. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they either:

- are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- have an EHC plan.

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals:

- students aged between 14 and 16 (these students are already covered by FSM provision)
- students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme unless they have an EHC plan or are a 19+ continuer
- apprentices, including those with an EHC plan.

5.3 Residency

A person who is 'settled' in the UK, and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (that is including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the 'relevant date'. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter (ILE) or indefinite leave to remain (ILR), being an Irish citizen or having the right of abode in the UK. Students who are eligible for free meals include:

- British citizens who hold a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland passport
- Irish citizen
- EU citizens or family members of EEA and Swiss workers (resident in the UK before 1 January 2021) with settled status
- Students who are children of Turkish workers where the Turkish worker has been lawfully employed and resident in the UK before 1 January 2021
- British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
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In addition to the groups outlined above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years) to be eligible for funding:

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In addition to the groups above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years), aged up to and including the age of 18, as eligible for funding as follows:

- Those who are accompanying or joining parents or spouses or civil partner who have the right of abode or leave to enter or remain in the UK (or accompanying or joining relevant family members, usually parents, who are UK or Irish citizens), or those who are children of diplomats
- Those who are dependants of teachers coming to the UK on a teacher exchange scheme
- Those who are residing legally in the UK (including those entering the UK in the last 3 years who are or were not accompanied by their parents) who are British (or Irish) citizens or those whose passports have been endorsed (or as part of move to digital immigration systems, either a biometric residency permit, or an equivalent digital status and/or an endorsement letter) to either show they have the right of abode in this country or to show that they have no restrictions on working in the UK
- Those who are dependants of adults residing legally in the UK who have been given immigration rights as workers to reside in the UK
- Those who are dependants of foreign students where the accompanying parent or legal guardian has a student visa.
- Asylum seekers
- Those having been granted leave under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the 'Dubs' amendment)
- Those having been granted Calais leave to remain
- Those who are (including unaccompanied asylum seekers) placed in the care of social services or those receiving section 4 support

In addition to considering students in the categories listed in the 3 paragraphs above, the funding body will consider other exceptional circumstances. When an institution believes that a student should be considered for DFE funding under exceptional circumstances, it must contact DFE for guidance before claiming funding.

- For funding eligibility purposes only, we have defined the EEA on 31 December 2020 as including Switzerland, as well as all members of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway and each of their overseas territories. Students who are citizens of certain British Overseas Territories are eligible for funding. Certain European Overseas Territories citizens will also be eligible for funding but only if they moved to the UK before 1 January 2021.

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5.3.4 Accompanied Asylum Seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused student support can be provided with in kind support such as books, equipment, or a travel pass.

5.3.5 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary categorised as 'in care' if in financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, their immigration status must be considered. If the claim is decided in their favour, the local authority will treat them as care leavers.

As care leavers, they continue to be eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary 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 and the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds.

Eligible Benefits for Free Meals

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in FE defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled.

Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit may also be entitled to a meal.

5.4 Verification of student eligibility

All students must apply (either the student or by a responsible adult on their behalf) by completing an application produced by CTK.

As part of the application, the student (or their parent/guardian) are asked to provide evidence of the award of qualifying benefits. This might be an award notice or letter from DWP or HMRC. Applicants will be asked to submit this evidence as part of the application process for free meals.

5.5 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, CTK will retain information relating to:

- 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 Crampton who can be contacted at:

- CTK Aquinas: aquinasbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk
- CTK Emmanuel: emmanuelbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk
- CTK St Mary's: stmarysbursary@ctksfc.ac.uk

For audit purposes, copies of all documentation for the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund will be kept for 3 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. CTK Purchase and Value for Money

At CTK, we are committed to ensuring value for money in all purchases. This means regularly reviewing the balance between cost and quality to ensure all items:

- Are fit for purpose
- Are suitable for the duration of the student's study

Due to the rapid pace of technological advancement and the planned limited lifespan of certain items such as laptops these items are not subject to return. This reflects the strategic decision to procure lower-cost items that meet immediate functional needs. The same approach applies to items such as clothing and books: There is no expectation that these items will be returned once issued.

8. 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 Assistant Principal for Character and Wellbeing at the site they are based.

If the student or their parent/guardian/carer is still unsatisfied following the conversation with the site based Assistant Principal, then the student (not someone on his/her behalf) can make an appeal. The appeal should be made to Deputy Principal of Christ the King Sixth Forms, Mrs Crampton by email c.crampton@ctksfc.ac.uk within 5 working days 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.

9. Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16 - 19 Bursary Application and Free Meals Panel and in the event of an appeal those involved in the bursary / free meals 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.

10. Equity

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

11. Change of Financial Circumstances

If a student is in receipt of a 16 - 19 Bursary Fund or Free Meals, 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 a review of your 16 - 19 Bursary Application to determine current need.

12. 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 items that were purchased and the cost of these will be asked to be recovered.

13. Further Help and Guidance

The 16 - 19 Bursary and Free Meals Policy will be reviewed annually or when new guidance becomes available. Should you require further help or advice regarding the CTK 16 - 19 Bursary Policy, please contact Mrs Crampton.

Date Revised: June 2026
Next Review Due: June 2027