

Altrincham Grammar School for Boys

Bursary Fund Policy 2023-24

1. Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation that they face, so that they can remain in education. Key information about Altrincham Grammar School for Boys' 16-19 Bursary Fund is outlined below. Bursary funds are intended to support students with essential costs in education such as books, equipment and travel expenses.

2. Eligibility

All Bursary applicants must be in Year 12 and Year 13, aged at least 16 and under 19 on 31st August 2023. They must also satisfy the residency criteria as stated in the document EFA Funding Guidance for 2023-24 (available on the DfE website www.education.gov.uk).

Category 1: Vulnerable Bursary (High Priority)

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. This applies to students who are:

- in care
- recent care leavers (please see definition below)
- receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

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

Evidence to support the application is required, such as a letter or award notice setting out the benefit to which the student is entitled, written confirmation of current/previous Looked After status from the relevant local authority, or their Care Review Document. Eligible students can receive a Bursary of up to £1200 per year.

Students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from other sources. They may receive a lower amount of bursary or no bursary, if they do not have any actual participation costs.

Category 2: Discretionary Bursary (Medium Priority)

This category applies to students who:

- are in receipt of Free School Meals

- have parent(s)/carer(s) who are in receipt of means-tested income support.

Eligible students can apply for contributions towards the cost of transport, uniform, essential course equipment, books, trips, exam resit fees, university open days etc. Amounts paid will be subject to the number of students in the category and the availability of funds.

Category 3: Discretionary Bursary (Low Priority)

This category applies to students who:

- live in a household where the gross annual household income is less than £25,000

Eligible students can apply for contributions towards the cost of transport, uniform, essential course equipment, books, trips, exam resit fees, university open days etc. Students will be considered for financial support, subject to availability of funds, after those in the other priority groups have been awarded, and support is not guaranteed.

3. Applications and Payment Process

Students should apply for the Bursary by Wednesday 13th September 2023, however it is possible to apply later in the academic year if individual circumstances change. All applications will be reviewed by the Head of Inclusion and a member of the Finance team. If the application is unsuccessful, students will be made aware of the outcome in writing.

Government guidelines for this academic year state that 'current eligibility for free meals only requires a single check of household income for each phase of education (Primary, Secondary or 16 to 19). In making decisions about bursary awards, institutions can now exercise discretion as to whether they carry out checks annually or just once at the beginning of a student's study programme' (gov.uk). As a result of this advice, ASGB can accept a signed self-declaration form from any Year 13 students who received Bursary support last year, in lieu of financial evidence, providing that it confirms that their household circumstances have not changed.

Successful applicants will also be notified in writing and will be asked to submit their bank details so that contributions/reimbursements to be made using BACS transfer. Payment can only be made into an account which is held in the student's name. Payments will be made 'in-kind' wherever possible e.g. travel passes.

Successful applicants must seek approval for any contributions towards expenditure prior to purchase, by filling out the Spending Approval Form on the AGSB website and detailing their proposed spending. If their spending is approved, they will receive a contribution towards the costs. Approval will be dependent on the amount of funding the student has available and the nature of the expenditure (which must support their learning).

Applications are valid for 2023-2024. Students may need to reapply in the following academic year, should they remain eligible and wish to continue receiving Bursary support. This will be determined by the relevant government guidance released at that time.

4. Accountability

ASGB will administer the Bursary Fund by following the Department for Education and EFA 16-19 Bursary Guidelines. We aim to have clear and transparent processes and to administer the Bursary

in a discreet and confidential manner. In determining payments of the 16-19 Bursary Fund students will not be discriminated against on the basis of their protected characteristics. Payments are also subject to the public sector equality duty in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act.

AGSB reserves the right to stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

Students and their families are required to sign a declaration, as part of the application process, confirming that the information they have provided is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. Providing false and/or incomplete information that leads to incorrect/overpayment may result in future payments being stopped and any incorrectly paid funds being recovered.

AGSB's Complaints Procedure is in place to cover queries/disagreements over applications for both the Vulnerable and Discretionary Bursary Funds.