



THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL

Bursaries Policy

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Introduction

The objective for all students at The Holmewood School is to ensure they develop the independence needed to live successfully within the community, while helping them to achieve their full academic potential.

We are committed to closing any attainment gap between students from different backgrounds and where the degree of affluence limits a student's ability to engage and participate, different bursaries may be available to help students reach their potential.

The Department for Education (DfE) operates a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The Holmewood School can assist students/parents/carers with applying for these funds, but the final decision of funding will be made by the DfE.

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.

The DfE operates two types of 16 to 19 Bursary Funds:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries

In addition to these bursaries operated by the DfE, The Holmewood School operates its own Hardship Bursary.

This policy sets out:

- The role of The Holmewood School London in administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds operated by the DfE:
 - To ensure that bursaries for 16 to 19 year olds are administered in accordance with DfE/EFSA guidelines and policies
 - Make clear to students/parents/carers the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
 - Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds granted by the DfE
 - To describe the eligibility criteria
- To explain the eligibility criteria and application process for The Holmewood School's Hardship Bursary

Consultation

This policy was written by Marco Klein, Bursar, in consultation with:

- Lisa Camilleri, Executive Head Teacher – May 2021
- Tara Young, Head of Sixth Form – May 2021

Legislation and guidance

This document is based on [current advice provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency](#) published on 30 April 2020.

Categories of bursaries

DfE Bursaries for Defined Vulnerable Groups

The government has agreed that some students may be entitled to a grant or bursary of the maximum £1,200 per year. A student could receive this level of funding if they are in one of the following categories:

- Living in care, or have recently left living in care
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own name **as well** as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own name
- Must be aged 16 or over at 31 August 2020 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

The School may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. Institutions can refuse a student's application on this basis. Similarly, students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate.

The School must only submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) online portal when they have seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups, and ensured they have assessed the amount of financial help the student needs to participate.

Proof of eligibility

Eligibility under this category will be verified using the following documents:

- Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority which looks after them
- A copy of the benefits paperwork to which the young person is entitled

DfE Discretionary Bursaries

A discretionary bursary might be available to students who are eligible to receive Free School Meals or who have a gross annual household income of below the threshold of £25,000.

A student must be aged 16 or over at 31 August 2020 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Discretionary bursaries are targeted at students who cannot stay in education without financial help, e.g. for transport, books, equipment, field trips, specialist clothing or other course-related costs. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

Proof of eligibility

- Certified letter from the LA regarding Free School Meals eligibility

Eligibility under this category for students who aren't eligible for Free School Meals will be verified using the following documents:

- Payslips from the previous 3 months
- P60 End of Year Certificate
- Self-Employment Income evidence
- Benefits statements from a government department or local council
- Other means tested certification

Proof of income is needed for all adults in the student's household who contribute to household costs.

THSL Hardship Bursaries

The Holmewood School recognises that in addition to students who qualify for a student bursary on the grounds listed above, there are others that might need financial support to overcome barriers to participation in learning during their time at The Holmewood School, e.g. where parents/carers may struggle to provide students with all the books and specialist equipment they need or to cover all their travel costs to college for example. The School also welcomes applications from students who fall into this category. Applications should be made for either the Bursaries operated by the DfE or the THSL Hardship Bursary.

Each application will be considered on an individual basis, subject to funding being available, and to a maximum per student of £750 in any academic year.

Students facing financial hardship and whose family income is below the threshold of £25,000 but who are not eligible for the first two bursaries, are invited to apply for assistance with school course-related costs.

Applications should be made prior to the expenditure being incurred. Failure to do this may result in you incurring expenses that are not then reimbursed by the school. The school may choose to

procure any items required by students, directly and to “loan” them to students for the duration of their course of study. In such instances the items will remain the property of the school and should be returned to the school at the end of the course for use by future students. Such purchases will be considered to form part of the bursary award.

All applications will be assessed on an individual basis and any allowances or other sources of financial support received by the student will be taken into account when deciding to award a hardship bursary.

The school may also seek evidence of any unearned income (shares/investments, savings, rental income) and will take this into account when assessing applications.

The bursary will be paid on the submission of evidence of actual expenditure. In most cases this will be a receipt from the supplier clearly showing the date, items purchased and cost.

Proof of eligibility

Eligibility under this category will be verified using the following documents:

- Payslips from the previous 3 months
- P60 End of Year Certificate
- Self-Employment Income evidence
- Benefits statements from a government department or local council
- Other means tested certification

Proof of income is needed for all adults in the student’s household who contribute to household costs.

Procedures and practice

Bursaries will be awarded according to eligibility. In addition, 16 to 19 Bursary Funds operated by the DfE will be awarded according to funding received and advice and guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Local Authorities.

The School will make the initial assessment and confirm to parent/carer any qualifying bursary awards and make requests for further documentation to be signed. The school will keep a record of eligibility checks, signed forms and payments made for audit purposes.

Process

1. A student applies to the School if they are eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursaries operated by the DfE or THSL Hardship Bursary by completing the *Bursaries Application Form*. A member of the admin team at THSL or the individual’s social worker, employment consultant (or similar) can also do this on their behalf.
2. The *Bursaries Application Form* is returned with supporting evidence to the Office Manager.
3. The School reviews each application to ensure the required criteria is met, and also to consider any exceptional circumstances.

4. For 16 to 19 Bursaries operated by the DfE:
 - a. The School will contact the relevant local authority (home authority of the student) and provide them with the proof of eligibility.
 - b. The local authority will submit the funding claim to the ESFA.
 - c. If the application is successful, the local authority will pass on the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to the School.
 - d. Once the School has received the funding, the student will receive funding from the School to support their individual educational needs in accordance with the procedures and criteria described in this policy.
5. The school will inform the student of the outcome and, if the application is successful, pass on the bursary to the student in accordance with the procedures and criteria described in this policy.

Responsibilities - DfE Bursaries

Local authorities are responsible for submitting funding claims for students who they have placed in independent provision if they are eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups and have a financial need.

The independent education institution is responsible for verifying that students meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups, including obtaining evidence and assessing their actual need for help. Once they are satisfied the student is eligible for support, they should contact the relevant local authority.

The Student Bursary Support Service will pay the funding to the local authority if the funding claim is successful. Education institutions making funding claims through local authorities must ensure they liaise with the local authority finance contact to ensure the bursary funds are redirected to them as appropriate.

Commitment Conditions

The Holmewood School reserves the right to withhold payments if the following conditions are not met. The student should:

- Attend timetabled lessons, sessions or activities (at least 95% attendance, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the Executive Head Teacher).
- Have no unauthorised absence and never truant a lesson
- Complete all homework / coursework on time
- Keep the conditions of the learning agreement where applicable

Should a student not meet the conditions above, their Bursary will cease to be paid and the school may ask for repayment.

Audit

The bursary fund is subject to audit so the School must retain all documentation relating to each claim, whether it was awarded or not and a brief justification. In particular documentation should include:

- Application forms
- Evidence showing the student is eligible
- Evidence of payments received
- Evidence of payments made to the students

All documentation must be kept for a period of 6 years.

Misuse and Fraud

The School has a duty to investigate instances of suspected fraud when a student is applying for bursary funds.

Students in receipt of bursary funding are required to make the school aware of any change in financial/home situation as they arise.

When evidence is found that misleading or fraudulent information has been knowingly submitted by a student or parent or carer, resulting in the student receiving a bursary that they should not have received, the School will attempt to recover overpayment from the student. The matter may also be referred to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their parent or carer facing prosecution.

Examples of individual financial barriers to participation in learning

Transport

- Transport on the days the student goes to college or work experience
- Travel for university open days or interviews

Essential course-related costs (if not covered by the School)

- Contributions to teaching materials
- Contributions to hire of external PE facilities
- Exam resits

Trips

- Residential trips
- Educational trips

Clothes

- School uniform
- PE kits

- To meet the dress code of the sixth form

Materials for college course or work experience

- Books
- Equipment
- Specialist clothes (e.g. safety boots, hard hats etc)

These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate in learning.