16-19 Bursary Policy

About this document:

Purpose

This policy sets out Isebrook School's approach to administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund. The fund is provided by the Department for Education (DfE) to support students aged 16-19 who face financial barriers to participation in education. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure fair and consistent allocation of bursary funds
- Support students who need financial assistance to participate fully in their education
- Outline eligibility criteria and application procedures
- Define the responsibilities of staff and students
- Ensure compliance with DfE funding rules

Role	Purpose
Governors	To provide strategic oversight by approving the policy, ensuring the school remains compliant with DfE funding rules, and monitoring the overall effectiveness and impact of the bursary provision
Leaders	To manage the fair and consistent administration of the fund, including assessing eligibility, overseeing applications, reporting on impact, and monitoring student welfare and attendance to ensure participation
Students & Parents / Carers	To identify and remove financial barriers (such as costs for travel, meals, or equipment) that hinder education, while understanding the rights-respecting framework and the responsibilities regarding attendance and engagement

ISEBROOK SCHOOL 16-19 BURSARY POLICT 2026 - 2028

Complied by: SEND and Inclusion Lead	**Date:** Jun 26
Committee: LGB	**Date approved by Governors:** Jun 26
Review Cycle: 2 years	**Review Date:** Jun 28

Wellbeing in our Trust

At Creating Tomorrow Trust, we believe that when our people thrive, our learners and communities thrive too.

Physical, emotional and mental wellbeing are essential to a thriving, collaborative and values-driven organisation, and we are committed to creating an environment where every colleague feels supported, respected and able to flourish.

We recognise that wellbeing needs can change over time, and anyone may experience challenges. We work together with openness, compassion and trust, ensuring that help is accessible when it is needed.

Health and wellbeing are everyone's responsibility, and we encourage a positive culture where concerns can be raised without judgement. The Trustees take their duty of care seriously and are committed to ensuring that support for all employees is available through:

- Effective and supportive line management
- A fair and manageable workload
- A professional, safe and inclusive working environment
- Access to wellbeing and employee support services through our Employee Assistance Programme:
    - *08000 856 148*
    - *educationsupport.org.uk*

We are committed to continuous improvement. All Trust policies are reviewed for their impact on staff wellbeing, ensuring our values are reflected not only in what we say, but in what we do.
Together, we create tomorrow by caring for one another today.

Rights Respecting and Trauma-Informed Approach to Bursary Support and Participation
This policy reflects our commitment to upholding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly:

- **Article 3** – the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all decisions relating to bursary support and participation
- **Article 12** – the right of young people to be heard and taken seriously in matters affecting them
- **Article 19** – the right to protection from harm and neglect
- **Article 28** – the right to education

In practice, this means that decisions about bursary allocation, conditions of award and ongoing eligibility are implemented with **fairness, dignity and compassion**, and are values-led. We ensure that students are supported to access education in ways that reflect their **individual needs, circumstances and barriers**, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

We actively listen to students and families, involve them in decision-making, and ensure financial support is used as a tool to **remove barriers to participation, engagement and wellbeing**.

As a trauma-informed school, we recognise that many of our students and families may have experienced

adverse life events, disrupted education, or ongoing challenges related to mental health, physical health, SEND, or family circumstances.

Our approach to bursary support prioritises:

- **Emotional and physical safety** – ensuring financial decisions do not place additional pressure or hardship on students and are informed by safeguarding and wellbeing
- **Trust and transparency** – communicating clearly about bursary processes, expectations and any conditions attached to funding
- **Collaboration and partnership** – working alongside students, parents/carers and external professionals to identify and reduce financial and practical barriers
- **Flexibility and responsiveness** – adapting bursary support and conditions (including attendance and engagement expectations) in line with a student's individual context
- **Empowerment and student voice** – enabling students to express their needs, preferences and challenges and taking these into account in decision-making
- **Early intervention** – identifying risks to participation (including financial hardship or emerging attendance concerns) and responding proactively
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Through this rights-respecting and trauma-informed approach, Isebrook School aims to ensure that bursary funding is used effectively to **promote inclusion, sustain participation, and enable every student to feel safe, valued, understood and supported to succeed in their post-16 education**.

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Types of Bursary

Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students in one or more of the following categories may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per year:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit

Discretionary Bursary

Students who do not meet the vulnerable student criteria but face financial barriers to participation may apply for discretionary support. This is subject to available funding and individual circumstances.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a bursary, students must:

- Be aged 16-19 (or aged 19-24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Be enrolled at Isebrook School
- Meet the residency requirements as set out by the DfE
- Demonstrate financial need (for discretionary bursaries)
- Meet Isebrook School's Values and attendance expectations

What the Bursary Can Cover

Bursary funds may be used to support costs including:

- Travel to and from school
- Meals during the school day
- Books, equipment and materials required for the course
- Educational trips and visits
- Clothing/uniform requirements
- Other costs that create barriers to participation

Application Process

Students should:

1. Complete the bursary application form available from the SEND & Inclusion Lead and/or Transition Manager
2. Provide evidence of household income or benefit entitlement

3. Submit the application to the SEND & Inclusion Lead

Assessment

Applications will be assessed initially by the SEND & Inclusion Lead and then by The Headteacher based on:

- Eligibility criteria
- Level of financial need
- Available funding
- Supporting evidence provided

Notification

Students will be notified of the outcome of their application by the school. If successful, they will receive details of:

- The amount awarded
- How and when payments will be made
- Conditions attached to the award

Payment Methods

Bursary funds may be paid:

- **In kind** – the school pays for items/services directly (e.g. travel passes, meals, equipment)
- **By reimbursement** – students pay for items and are reimbursed upon providing receipts
- **Direct payment** – payments made directly to the student's bank account (for vulnerable student bursaries)

Payment method will be determined based on individual circumstances and the type of support required.

Conditions of Award

Students receiving a bursary must:

- Maintain good attendance based on their context and individual needs
- Demonstrate engagement with their curriculum
- Use the funds for their intended educational purpose
- Inform the school of any changes in circumstances
- Provide receipts or evidence of expenditure when required

Monitoring and Review

Attendance and Values Monitoring

Bursary recipients' attendance and display of School Values will be monitored in line with Isebrook School's reporting windows, namely Termly

Where attendance falls below the required level or display of School Values concerns arise:

- The student will be contacted to discuss the issues
- Support will be offered to address any barriers
- Payment may be suspended or withdrawn if concerns are not resolved

Continuing Eligibility

Students must reapply for the bursary each academic year. Students continuing their applications may need to be prioritised if funding is limited.

Appeals Process

Students who are dissatisfied with:

- A decision about their eligibility
- The amount awarded
- A decision to suspend or withdraw their bursary

may appeal by:

4. Submitting an appeal to the SEND & Inclusion Lead and Headteacher within 2 weeks of the decision. Students may be supported to do this by their Class Teacher, Transition Manager or another trusted adult within the school of their choosing.
5. Providing any additional evidence to support their case

Appeals will be reviewed by the Headteacher & SEND & Inclusion Lead and the outcome communicated within 5 working days.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

- Approve the bursary policy
- Ensure the school complies with DfE funding rules
- Monitor the effectiveness of bursary provision

The Headteacher

- Oversee the administration of the bursary fund
- Ensure fair and consistent application of the policy

The SEND & Inclusion Lead

- Assess eligibility
- Ensure that the evidence is appropriate and the application is accurately completed.
- Report on bursary allocation and impact
- Instructs Finance team to arrange payment and maintain records

The Senior Welfare Manager

- Monitor student attendance and engagement

The Transition Manager and Family Support Worker

- Provide guidance to students and families

Students

- Apply for the bursary in a timely manner
- Provide accurate information and evidence
- Use funds for their intended purpose
- Maintain required attendance and School Values standards
- Inform the school of changes in circumstances

Parents/Carers

- Support their child's application
- Provide necessary evidence
- Encourage good attendance and engagement

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information provided in bursary applications will be:

- Treated confidentially
- Processed in accordance with data protection legislation
- Shared only with staff who need to know for the purposes of administering the fund
- Retained in line with the school's data retention policy

Equality and Inclusion

Isebrook School is committed to ensuring equal access to bursary support. We will:

- Make reasonable adjustments for students individual needs
- Provide application materials in accessible formats where appropriate for the student
- Offer support to complete applications where needed
- Ensure decisions are free from discrimination

Fraud Prevention

Isebrook School takes fraud seriously. Any student found to have:

- Provided false information
- Misused bursary funds
- Failed to declare changes in circumstances

may have their bursary withdrawn and may face legal consequences for their actions. Students will be supported to navigate this should the situation arise.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the SEND & Inclusion Lead and submitted to the Governing Body to ensure it remains effective and compliant with DfE requirements.