

Southfields Academy

Bursary Fund - policy 2025/2026

Introduction

The Sixth Form Bursary Fund is set up to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can stay in education. There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

- A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for students in one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- Discretionary bursaries that institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, course related trips, university interviews/open days, open days, transport, meals, books and equipment.

Vulnerable bursary

An application for a vulnerable bursary can be made where the applicant is in one of the groups below:

- in care
- previously been in care
- 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

Funding is based on the individual needs of each student.

Discretionary bursary

- The academy's policy is to offer the discretionary bursary to those students who are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) in KS5. (Students will be encouraged to apply for FSM when they enrol.) Free School Meals (FSM) are ratified by Wandsworth Local Authority.
- We use Free School Meals to determine household income. GDPR rules prevent us from collecting unnecessary parent income data.
- Discretionary awards are not for a guaranteed sum of money but are dependent upon the level of funding allocated to the school each academic year and the individual needs of each student (e.g. to cover the cost of essential books and equipment). It is also dependent on the number of applications received.

Notes:

- All students will complete a Google Form to determine eligibility and need.
- No payments will be made before the October Census count. Thereafter, payments will be made every half term (excluding the second half of the summer term).
- The school reserves the right to make discretionary additional payments, as required. Other students who need financial support to help them to stay in

education may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the cost of, for example, transport, meals, books and equipment.

- Payments may be made “in kind”. For example, the academy may use the bursary fund to pay for books, equipment and trips. These payments will be arranged on an ad hoc basis. Any equipment bought for students remains the property of the academy.
- The finance department will administer the bursary scheme. Payments will be made by BACS.
- 95% attendance to school is normally required. The rate of a student’s attendance will directly affect the level of bursary payment they receive.
- Students will be expected to sign the “Bursary student learning agreement” before receiving their first payment. This can be found on the KS5 student Google Classroom pages.
- Receipts for items such as travel costs, equipment, clothing should be retained and handed into the Finance Office.

How to apply

Bursary packs are available for collection from the Sixth Form office. This pack includes bursary information, detailed eligibility criteria and the bursary learning agreement. The student is required to fill out and sign the bursary learning agreement. All this information should be handed to Ms Hess in the Sixth Form office by the specified date. Any applications made after the deadline may miss the initial payment/payments.

Right to Appeal

If any student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Head of Year outlining their reasons. The Head of Year will convene an Appeals Panel consisting of one member of staff and two members of the Trustee Body to consider the case. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld, it will be referred back to the Application Panel with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld, the appealing party will be signposted to the school’s Complaints Procedure.

Change of Student’s Financial Circumstances

Any student in receipt of a bursary has a duty to inform the school if their financial circumstances change, or those of their parent/guardian/carer(s) change. This does not automatically mean any future bursary payments will be stopped.

Student Withdrawing

Where a student in receipt of a bursary withdraws from the school and does not transfer to another education or training provider, bursary payments made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled payments to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

Student Transferring

Where a student in receipt of a bursary transfers out of the school to another education/training provider in-year, the school will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of bursary payments to enable the student to complete their learning.

Unspent funds

Unspent funds will only be carried forward one academic year, and will be spent in line with the Bursary funding rules.

Approved by the Chair of Trustees

Signature

Date