



Red Kite Academy

Red Kite Special Academy

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Chairperson's Signature: *D. Withers*

Approved by Governors: **30.04.26**

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Review Cycle: **1 year**

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1. Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help pupils overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. The fund is allocated to post-16 providers by the Department of Education (DfE). Pupils may experience financial difficulties with costs such as transport, offsite educational activities, equipment or other study related costs. Eligibility is based on the pupil meeting residency requirements and being on a means-tested or disability benefit.

The Bursary Fund is **not** intended to provide learning support – services that are already supplied to pupils e.g. counselling, mentoring or extra-curricular or non-compulsory activities, or to provide living costs support.

The funds are limited so the academy retains the right to close applications or stop payments if the budget is exhausted.

2. The Bursary Scheme

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. Higher-priority claimants (defined vulnerable groups) eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per year.
2. Discretionary bursaries awarded to meet individual needs.

The Academy is responsible for managing both types of bursary. Pupils who wish to apply for support from the Bursary Fund must complete and submit an application form (see Appendix 3).

Note: pupils will be funded for what they need not automatically the maximum eligible amount

3. Eligibility criteria – all bursaries

To be eligible for either type of bursary the pupil must:

- Be aged over 16 and under 19 at the end of the academic year.
- Meet the residency criteria in section 3 of the DfE document '[Funding rules for 16 to 19 provision 2025 to 2026](#)'. Section 3 of this document also specifies the evidence the academy must see to confirm eligibility.

3.1 Criteria for Higher Priority Claimants (defined vulnerable groups)

In addition, the pupils must fall into **one or more of the categories below** to be able to apply for a vulnerable bursary:

1. In care (see Appendix 1 for definition)
2. Care leaver (see Appendix 1 for definition)
3. Young person in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (see Appendix 2) 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

4. Young person in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right (see Appendix 2).

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups, but their financial needs are already met. Therefore, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award.

3.2 Criteria for Discretionary Bursaries

Pupils from households in receipt of working tax credit or Universal Credit (Free School Meals eligibility criteria), may apply for a lower level of support determined by their specific needs. You will be asked to provide recent evidence that you are in receipt of one of these benefits.

See section 5 below regarding how each fund is allocated.

4. Applications

The fund will be open for applications for the following academic year in August each year. Application forms must be completed and submitted to the School Business Manager – the deadline for application submissions is 30th September.

Note: Funding is not guaranteed

5. Allocation

A bursary panel will review each pupil's application and supporting evidence to assess individual circumstances and documented financial need. The panel shall consist of:

- Headteacher
- School Business Manager

The panel will decide which pupils receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive. Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or via letter) by 31st October whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded.

Allocations will vary from pupil to pupil depending on, for example, household income, number of dependent children in the household, distance travelled to school and requirements of individual study programmes. The bursary amounts will also be dependent on the actual funds available for the academic year.

- up to 5% of the fund will be allocated to cover administrative costs.
- where a pupil is required to attend a curriculum related trip a contribution from the fund will be deducted.

If a pupil wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the steps outlined in Section 6.

6. Appeals

Pupils have the right to appeal a decision. Pupils, or their parent/guardian, will be required to put an appeal in writing within 21 days of receiving confirmation of an award or a rejection.

6.1 The letter should set out the reasons for the appeal, which must prove that the pupil has been wrongly assessed as falling outside the eligibility criteria, plus any further evidence to support the Appeal. It should be sent to the School Business Manager.

6.2 The Appeals panel will consist of:

- a Governor
- an Executive Officer of the Trust

The Appeals Panel meeting will be clerked by a member of the school's administrative/finance team.

6.3 The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and will be given in writing within 14 days of the decision.

7. Payment

The academy will base all decisions about which pupils receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each pupil's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

The academy will not make bursary fund payments as regular payments for living costs as this is out of scope of the bursary fund.

Wherever possible, the academy will directly cover the cost of course materials, equipment and offsite educational activities etc. Pupils/families will need to itemise their requirements and seek approval from the academy for expenditure.

- Where the academy cannot provide the services directly pupils must provide a receipt of evidence and the academy will process a reimbursement.
- Prior approval **must** be obtained for all expenditure
- The academy reserves the right to cease bursaries where a pupils' attendance or behaviour is deemed unacceptable.

8. Individual Meal Support

In individual cases of hardship, the Academy will assess whether they provide meal support on the days that pupils attend school without undertaking the checks on household income or gathering other evidence.

9. Audit

The fund will be audited in line with the Trust's financial audit each Academic Year.

10. Monitoring and Review of the Bursary Fund

The School Business Manager will oversee the operation of the Bursary Fund on a termly basis.

This policy, and its operation, will be reviewed by the Business Manager and the wider Senior Leadership Group at the end of each academic year to review the allocations and criteria for awards for the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Appendix 1: Definitions: 'In Care' and 'Care Leavers'

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'.' A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- 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

- 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

The allocation of these funds will be subject to audit so the Academy will require proof that the application is genuine in the form of written evidence from the young person and their key worker. The academy will seek and retain copies of evidence from the young person, bearing in mind confidentiality. Appropriate evidence for pupils who are in care or a care leaver includes: written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority. This is the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services. This could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority.

Appendix 2: Income Support, Universal Credit, PIP and Disability Living Allowance

More information about **Income Support** can be found at: www.gov.uk/income-support

More information about **Universal Credit** can be found at: www.gov.uk/universal-credit

More information about **Personal Independence Payments** can be found at: www.gov.uk/pip

More information about **Employment and Support Allowance** can be found at: www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance

The allocation of these funds will be subject to audit so the Academy will require proof that the application is genuine in the form of written evidence from the young person and their key worker. The academy will seek and retain copies of evidence from the young person, bearing in mind confidentiality. Appropriate evidence includes:

- For pupils in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (UC), a copy of their Income Support or UC award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the pupil's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefits in their own right. The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training. For pupils in receipt of UC, institutions must also see a tenancy agreement in the pupil's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on.
- For pupils receiving UC/ESA and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment must also be provided.

Appendix 3: 16 - 19 Bursary Fund Application

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Application - CONFIDENTIAL		
1. Pupil Full Name:		
2. Date of Birth:		
3. Address:		
Post Code:		
Email address:		
Telephone/mobile number:		
Bursary Fund applied for: delete as appropriate	Defined Vulnerable Group	Discretionary
4. Please provide details of the items for which you require funding (e.g. transport, offsite educational activities, equipment or other course related costs)		
Signature of Applicant:		
ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE APPROPRIATE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP		
----- Submission deadline: 30th September -----		
Office use only:		
Return to: <u>Louise.holmes@redkite.school</u>		