



The Talentum Learning Trust



LEEK HIGH SCHOOL

16-19 Bursary Fund Statement 2023/2024

At The Talentum Learning Trust, we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they can access their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. The bursary is intended to help students with the essential costs of their studies, e.g. important books, equipment and travel costs. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by The Talentum Learning Trust. In both cases, the Academy is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We will:

- Distribute 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood
- Ensure that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all
- Widen access to, and participation in, 16-19 education
- Ensure all students who are eligible for funding have access to it

Eligibility

Students aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August 2023 will qualify for bursaries for the 2023/2024 academic year.

Students aged 19 or over can receive a bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or if they have an EHC plan, provided they remain eligible and the setting determines they need the support to continue their participation.

Students aged 19 or over will not be eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

We will only pay bursaries to students aged under 16 in exceptional circumstances. We will use our discretion to decide whether a student's individual circumstances make them eligible for a bursary, e.g. where a student is following an accelerated study programme.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are considered to be employed rather than in education – as such, they will not be eligible for the bursary.

Non-employed students participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are eligible for bursaries in the same way as any other student.

Students on distance learning provision will not likely need help from the bursary, but in instances where they require financial help, support in-kind will be provided, e.g. a temporary travel pass to attend exams.

Young offenders can apply for a bursary if they:

- Are serving a non-custodial sentence.
- Have been released early from a custodial sentence, except on temporary license.
- Have been remanded to a non-secure institution.

As with all bursaries, we will provide in-kind support to young offenders rather than cash payments wherever possible.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our 16-19 Bursary Application Form.

Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once. In this case, the student will be reassessed.

The level of actual financial need will be assessed for all students, and a set amount of funding will not be automatically awarded.

Vulnerable bursaries

Students who meet one of the following criteria may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary:

- LAC (this includes those classed as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child).
- Previously LAC (PLAC).
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner.
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right.

Any student who meets the above criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 per year if their study programme lasts for 30 weeks or more; students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata amount.

We will consider the particular circumstances of each individual case, and may choose to award a reduced amount, e.g. where the financial help needed is limited. We will make clear in the application form that there is a possibility of no award or a limited award.

We are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student attends specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full.
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation, e.g. no travel or food costs.
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.

Where a vulnerable bursary is refused, we will explain to the student and/or the student's parents/guardians or support worker in writing the aim of bursary funding and why it is appropriate not to award any in this instance.

Discretionary bursaries

We allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries will be reviewed each year the student requires support. The rationale for all bursary awards will be included as part of the academy's auditable records. Our eligibility criteria for a discretionary bursary includes the following:

- Students who are completing a high-cost course (over £2,000) in which specialist equipment and clothes are required, including industry placements.
- Students living in a low-income household.
- Students who are in receipt of Free School Meals.
- Students who travel greater than three miles each way to the academy (six miles total), where the academy is the nearest training provider that offers the course/courses being studied.

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students from low-income households. The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income, relevant to the following levels:

Level	Minimum	Maximum
L1	£0	£16,190
L2	£16,191	£21,845
L3	£21,846	£27,500

However, if a student's household income is above £27,500 and they still need additional financial support then we encourage them to apply for the bursary. These applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis and their success is dependent upon the student's circumstances and funding availability. Students will be asked to provide details of why they need bursary funding in these circumstances.

The above income levels are reviewed annually and are subject to change.

Where possible, we will retain a small emergency fund from its allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation that impacts on their ability to participate in education. Evidence of the student's eligibility, the individual assessment and their actual participation costs must be held for audit purposes as for any other bursary award.

Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the application form and provide the necessary supporting documentation. All applications should be submitted by 30 September of each academic year; however, we do understand that needs may arise throughout the academic year, and we will still consider applications after this date where appropriate.

Our application process will maintain the student's confidentiality.

If an application is successful, we will send an award letter to the student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind, and the payment conditions.

Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds – these are explained to all students during the application process. Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions will be kept for audit, by way of the initial application form signed by both the student and their parent/guardian.

Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold payments where students breach these conditions; however, the student's individual circumstances will always be considered first and sanctioning will not occur to the extent that a student's ability to attend is undermined.

The conditions are as follows:

- Students must have 90 percent attendance at timetabled lessons, unless the absence is authorised;
- Students must provide copies of receipts where requested in the award letter following successful application of the bursary;
- Students must be present for all internal and external examinations;
- Students must be up to date with all class work, homework, and have handed in all course work in advance of any deadlines.

Receipt of the bursary will not affect the receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, e.g. Income Support.

Paying the bursary

We will pay funding in equal instalments by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account on a fortnightly basis. Payment dates will be adjusted to accommodate the year 13 study programme.

Bursary funds will not be given to students in large lump sums.

Using the bursary

The following priority areas will be considered when determining the bursary award:

- Travel costs e.g. bus passes and travel cards;
- Equipment costs, e.g. books, stationery, or clothing;
- Meals;
- Any other educational support, e.g. attendance at university open days and educational visits where they are an exam board requirement;
- Costs related to industry placements.

We reserve the right to request that, if a student has had books or equipment bought for them through the fund, they return it at the end of their study programme. We may also request that the equipment is kept on the college site.

Where a student has their own car and chooses to drive to college, or travels to college via taxi, any fuel/travel costs claimed will be capped at the equivalent cost of a bus pass unless in exceptional circumstances.

Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow our complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints Policy and Procedures – this is available on The Talentum Learning Trust's, Westwood College's, and Leek High School's website.