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Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

16-19 Bursary Fund

You may be aware that the Government has established a Bursary Fund to assist young people facing financial hardship with some of the costs of their education, enabling them to continue in full-time education. It is a scheme to help young people facing genuine financial barriers with some of the costs of their learning, i.e. books and equipment.

Two types of bursary will be available to young people aged 16-19 who commence their training in the year 2026 – 27:

Discretionary Bursary

Students who require financial support to continue their education may be eligible to claim a smaller discretionary amount to cover equipment and other course-related expenses. This support will be available where the combined household income is less than £22,500 per year. The household income is the total gross income of the adults in the home. This income would also include step-parents and partners who contribute to the household's income. This does not include brothers or sisters who are earning money. To apply, you must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31st August 2026. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue on a study programme they began between the ages of 16 and 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Evidence of household income below £22,500 must be provided with the application before assessment can be made.
- Based on the information received, if financial hardship is identified, a member of the Post-16 team will conduct a financial needs assessment to discuss the support the student may require. Once it has been agreed on what help a student will receive, students must complete a 'Student Request for Assistance' form to claim this additional support.

Vulnerable Bursary

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Students will be eligible for a yearly bursary of up to £1,200. A student must be 16 or older but under 19 on August 31, 2026, to qualify for assistance from the bursary fund in the 2026-2027 academic year. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups. Evidence to support the application will be required, such as a letter stating the benefit to which the young person is entitled



or written confirmation of their current or previous 'Looked After' status from the relevant Local Authority, or the Leaving Care Review document. Students eligible for a Vulnerable Bursary will have a financial needs assessment carried out by a member of the Post-16 team to discuss the support they may need.

Other Support

Financial assistance may be awarded on a needs-based basis and at your school's discretion to cover costs such as books, equipment, transport, meals, exam resits, and other miscellaneous items associated with learning.

From September 2026, students whose household receives Universal Credit will also be eligible for Expanded Free School Meals (FSM). Evidence of Universal Credit provided as part of the bursary application will be used to confirm FSM eligibility and update the student's record accordingly.

The school administers the fund, and the funding arrangements have been agreed upon locally across schools within the Olympus Academy Trust, following guidelines set out by the Department for Education. The fund is not expected to contribute to students' maintenance expenses beyond the specific costs associated with attending school. Students should see it as a means to support their education. All payments are made directly to students.

Bursary payments will be made in kind whenever possible. This helps to ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it is awarded. In-kind payments can include travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books, and required equipment. Schools' bursary funds are limited, so not all requests may be approved.

All bursary payments will be made conditional upon students meeting the agreed-upon standards set by the school regarding attendance, coursework and homework, assignment completion, and behaviour. Every student must sign a copy of the Student Agreement to acknowledge receipt and confirm acceptance of its conditions. It is a student's responsibility to check their attendance records weekly for any issues. Failure to do so will result in delayed payment; in some cases, payment may be withheld.

Institutions are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that all claims are valid. We need evidence of student or family income to proceed with this. The easiest way to do this is to provide us with a copy of your last three months' Universal Credit award notices. You can also provide a photocopy of your latest Tax Credit Award Notice (form TC602). This should be a complete copy showing the amount of earned income, working tax credit and child tax credit for the current tax year. Alternatively, you can provide a P60 (or, if self-employed, a SA302), along with three months of bank statements.

Any financial information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and securely stored. It will also be destroyed in accordance with local standards of best practice.

If you and/or your son/daughter might qualify for this funding, please complete the enclosed Application Form, Student Declaration form and BACS payment form and return them to the Post 16 administrator together with your evidence of household income.

Any Year 12 or 13 students (under 19) who received Bursary funding in the last academic year must reapply.



You will be informed in writing of the result of your application by the Bursary administration team. If you disagree with the decision of the Bursary administration team, you can submit a written appeal request within 28 days.

An internal appeals team, comprising members of the Senior Leadership Team who are not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the sixth form, will review the original application and any additional evidence submitted. You will be informed in writing of the result of your appeal.

Should you not agree with the decision of the bursary appeal, you can, within 28 days, submit in writing a request for a final appeal, in which a review will take place by a panel selected from members of the governing body and Olympus Academy Trust trustees.

Parents/carers are responsible for informing the Post 16 team of any changes to their circumstances or household income that may affect bursary eligibility. This includes changes to employment, benefits, living arrangements, or any other financial adjustments. Students remain eligible for bursary support for up to two academic years, provided they continue to meet the eligibility criteria. Failure to share updated information may result in bursary payments being paused, reviewed, or withdrawn.

We trust that you will find this helpful information and will be happy to support students in applying for the 16-19 Bursary Fund. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's Head of Post 16 in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Sadie McCombe
Director of Olympus Post 16

