



16-19 Bursary Funding Policy

Next Review Date:	February 2027
Governing Board Committee Purview:	Resources
Frequency of Review:	Annually

Vision:

At the East SILC we believe in Exceptional Education for Exceptional Lives

Values:

Vision:

Exceptional Education for Exceptional Lives.

Values:

- Kindness



- Integrity



- Ambition



- Collective Responsibility



1.The purpose and scope of the policy

The 16–19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help eligible learners overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Support is for essential participation costs—for example, travel, required books/equipment, specialist clothing, or meals on the days a learner attends. It is not intended for living costs, learning support services (e.g., counselling), or non-essential extra-curricular activities

There are two types of 16-19 bursaries and this policy refers to both:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries.

2.Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on the [16 to 19 bursary fund for the academic year](#)

3.Definitions

'In care' is defined 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)

'Looked after child' is defined as: a child in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions for more than 24 hours ([section 22](#) of the Children Act 1989)

'Care leaver' is defined as:

- A young person aged 16 or 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

4.Eligibility

1. Age

Learners must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 to be eligible in academic year 2025–2026. Learners aged 19 or over are only eligible for discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a programme begun aged 16–18 (19+ continuer) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

2. Residency

Learners must meet the residency criteria set out in DfE funding rules for post-16 provision. Institutions must verify and retain appropriate evidence. [DfE funding rules for 16 to 19 provision](#)

3. Programme of Study

The fund supports participation in **state-funded study programmes** subject to quality assurance (e.g., Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- Be funded directly by the DfE, or by the DfE via a local authority
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the DfE's [list of qualifications](#)
- Non-employed learners aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme are also eligible to receive a bursary in the same way as any other learner participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

Learners are not eligible if:

- They are on an apprenticeship programme
- They are participating in any waged training

Learners who are studying via distance learning are not likely to require financial help from the bursary fund. If they do require financial help, we will provide support in kind, such as a travel pass to attend exams. Details of this shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

4. Asylum Seekers

Accompanied asylum seekers under 18 with an adult relative or partner, and asylum seekers aged 18 and above are entitled to education but are not entitled to public funds. If necessary, they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials.

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are:

- The responsibility of the local authority
- To be treated as 'looked after' children
- Eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need

When these learners reach 18 years old, we will consider their immigration status.

They will still be eligible for a bursary as a learner from a defined vulnerable group if the asylum claim is in their favour and will be treated as a 'care leaver' until they reach the upper age limit.

5.Bursary Types Available

Group 1 - Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups

Learners with a financial need, who meet one of the following criteria below, in addition to the eligibility criteria above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups

The defined vulnerable groups are learners who are:

- In care (N.B. those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after)
- Care leavers
- 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 (PIPs) in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

UC has replaced IS, as well as other benefits above, for current and future young people aged 16 to 18.

Learners will be funded to reflect the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have.

Learners who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary.

Learners will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (for example, because their financial needs are met from other sources and/or because they have no relevant costs). Should we refuse the application on this basis, we will discuss this with the learner and their support worker/parent/carer where applicable.

Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on a particular learner's needs. Learners will only receive the amount they actually need to participate and will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to provide more than £1,200 per year if it is necessary, in all the circumstances, for the learner to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from the school's discretionary bursary allocation or the school's own funds.

If a learner's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, this will be considered in the assessment for the bursary amount provided as they may not request as much financial support as those on longer programmes. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a learner's study programme when deciding the correct bursary amount to ensure it is appropriate.

We will review the learner's eligibility position each academic year. Learners will only continue to receive a bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

Group 2 – Discretionary Bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in the eligibility section above, learners can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy the following criteria:

- Must have a household income of £30,000 gross or less per annum.
- Must have at least 90% attendance
- No fixed term exclusions (FTEs) and have good behaviour
- The bursary can only be used for Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) and/or School Meals

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to learners. We will base all decisions around which learners receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each learner's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

We will review the learner's eligibility position each academic year. Learners will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

6. Application Process

6.1 How to apply

Learners (or parents/carers where appropriate) complete the East SILC Bursary Application Form and submit required evidence (see 6.2). Applications are invited from June for the following academic year and accepted on a rolling basis.

Deadlines – Initial consideration for term-start payments: last Friday of September (late applications welcome; support is subject to remaining funds).

Help with applying – The Post-16 team can assist with forms/evidence, including for care-experienced and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) learners. (UASC are treated as looked-after children and may meet Group 1 criteria subject to need.)

Decision & notification – Applicants receive a written award letter/agreement stating the type, amount (or items), payment schedule/format, and conditions.

6.2 Evidence requirements

- **Identity, age and residency** evidence as per DfE funding rules;
- **Vulnerable group** status (e.g., LA letter confirming care/care-leaver status; DWP award notices where benefits are in the learner's **own name**);
- **Household income** (for discretionary bursary), e.g., UC statement, P60/payslips, benefits letters, self-assessment accounts;
- **Participation costs** (quotes/receipts for required kit, travel, etc.). **Blanket/flat awards are not permitted**; awards must reflect evidenced **actual costs**.

7. Assessment, Prioritisation and Award Levels

Every application undergoes an individual financial needs assessment; no automatic or block payments.

Prioritisation when funds are limited:

1. Group 1 learners with verified financial need;
2. Group 2 learners with lowest household income and highest essential costs;
3. Other eligible Group 2 applicants by assessed need date-order. (A small contingency is held for in-year changes.)

Award Levels

Group 1: Awarded **up to the amount required** to meet participation needs (not automatic).

Group 2: East SILC may award **up to £600 per year per learner**, subject to assessed need and budget.

8. Payment Methods

In-kind support first: Wherever feasible we will purchase items/services directly (e.g., travel pass, books, protective clothing) and retain receipts; this is DfE best practice.

Cash/BACS payments: Where in-kind is not possible, we pay via BACS to the learner's account (or, where appropriate and in the learner's best interests, to a parent/carer or third party). Award letters will set out frequency (e.g., monthly/termly)

Evidence/receipts: For reimbursements, receipts must be provided within the timescales stated in the award letter.

9. Payment Conditions

East SILC may attach conditions (attendance, punctuality, conduct, meeting agreed targets) to bursary payments provided these are set out in advance and applied fairly and proportionately.

Where concerns arise (e.g., attendance persistently below 90% without acceptable reasons), payments may be reduced, paused or stopped until issues are resolved—this will be communicated in writing with right of appeal (Section 13).

10. Changes of Circumstances

Learners must inform East SILC promptly of changes affecting eligibility (household income, benefit status, living arrangements, programme changes). Awards may be reassessed and adjusted up or down accordingly.

11. Fraud, Error and Overpayments

Providing false or incomplete information may result in support being stopped, recovery of funds, and potential referral to the police. Overpayments (e.g., due to withdrawal) will be recovered where appropriate. Records must evidence eligibility, need, and spend for audit.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All applications and evidence are handled under GDPR. Only staff involved in assessing/authorising bursaries will access the data. Records are retained securely for audit in line with DfE guidance.

13. Appeals and Complaints

- Stage 1 (Appeal): Submit a written appeal within 10 working days of the decision to the Post-16 Lead (or delegate), stating reasons and any additional evidence.
- Stage 2 (Review): If unsatisfied, request a review by the Senior Leader with oversight of Post-16 (not involved in the original decision).
- Complaints: If concerns remain about process, use East SILC's Complaints Policy.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

- Governing Body/Executive Principal: Approves and oversees this policy; ensures compliance and transparency.
- Bursary Panel (Business Manager, Post-16 Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead: Assesses applications and monitors spend.
- Finance Team: Processes payments, maintains audit trail and receipts.

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ensures learners in care/care leavers are supported to apply and receive timely assistance.

15. Budget Management and Publication

East SILC will manage its fixed bursary allocation prudently, publish this policy on its website, and review annually in line with DfE updates.

16. Contact Details

Bursary Enquires: bursary@eastsilc.org / 0113 293 0236