



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

6TH FORM



Bursary Guidance 2023 – 2024

If you are considering applying for a Bursary for the academic Year 2023 – 2024, it is important you read this guidance, prior to completing your application form.

If you have any questions, please do come and ask Mrs Cabrera (6th Form Manager) for clarification on fcabrera@sjc.ac

What is a Bursary?

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which St Joseph's College award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules

The bursary fund **is intended** to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study programme, so to help with the cost of essential books or equipment or with the cost of travelling to school or college, for example. The bursary fund is **not intended** to support costs not related to education (living costs), extra-curricular activities or provide learning support – services that St Joseph's College give to students – such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.

How Do I Qualify for a Bursary?

Students must meet the age and residency criteria to be eligible for help from the bursary fund.

Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2022 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and St Joseph's College considers they need the support to continue their participation.

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

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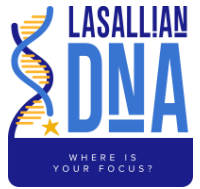
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Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria which can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>

This document also specifies the evidence St Joseph's College must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility).

Who qualifies for a Vulnerable Bursary?

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate. Students should be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have and must not be automatically awarded £1,200. St Joseph's College will ensure students are eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups in each year they require support.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- 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 (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

UC has now fully rolled out and so young people aged 16 to 18 will no longer be in receipt of the other benefits listed above. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and those with an EHCP) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits.

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks should be paid a pro-rata amount, as appropriate based on an assessment of their actual needs.

St Joseph's College will also consider the number of hours involved in student's study programme when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate. A student studying for around 16 hours a week is likely to have greater costs than a student studying for 4 hours a week, for example.

Students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate, and St Joseph's College will not automatically award students £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

St Joseph's College may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. St Joseph's College can refuse a student's application on this basis.

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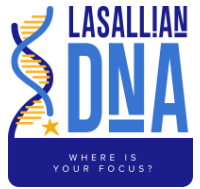


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Equally, St Joseph's College can pay a bursary to a vulnerable group student of more than £1,200 if they assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over £1,200 must be paid from their discretionary bursary allocation or from their own funds. If paid from discretionary bursary, all the eligibility criteria and usual assessment processes must be met and followed.

Defining 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

Foster care, including privately arranged foster care

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group where they need financial support to participate.

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (so, the period of weeks and age range set out above). If they do, they are eligible for help from the bursary for vulnerable groups, where they need financial support to participate.

Universal Credit

UC has replaced IS and ESA as well as other benefits. St Joseph's College will increasingly see students claiming bursaries for defined vulnerable groups based on receiving UC.

UC award notifications do not include any information on the benefits they replace. For this reason, the description of the bursaries for vulnerable group category that relates to receipt of UC or IS is that a student must be receiving UC in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.

The DfE is keeping the situation surrounding the legacy benefits (above) under review, to ensure the descriptions of the defined vulnerable groups reflect the benefits situation.

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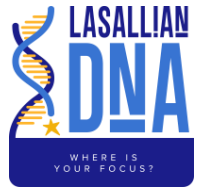


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Bursary funds awarded to a student should not form part of the UC assessment undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). How DWP treat any funding for education depends on whether the student is undertaking advanced full-time education. It is unlikely that 16 to 18 year olds will be in advanced full-time education as they are generally on study programmes at level 3 or below. Since full role out of UC, any current and future 16 to 18 year old can only claim UC, they can no longer claim IS or income related ESA.

Under UC, any educational award which is paid under a scheme to enable persons under age 21 to complete a course of non-advanced education (which will clearly include the 16 to 19 Bursary) does not fall to be treated as grant income for UC purposes – as provided under reg 68(7) of the UC Regulations 2013.

St Joseph's College will aim to provide support from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. St Joseph's College will not make bursary fund payments as regular payments for living costs. This is out of scope of the bursary fund and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

Evidence of eligibility

St Joseph's College will ensure proof is obtained that students meet the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups in full. In other words, that they are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers. St Joseph's College will ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes.

For example:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority – this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority
- for students in receipt of UC or IS, a copy of their UC or IS award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student'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 students in receipt of UC, St Joseph's College must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on
- for students receiving UC/ESA and DLA and PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided

UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account or provide a screenshot to St Joseph's College.

Students can also contact their UC Work Coach (or relevant Benefit Office if they are receiving getting IS or ESA) and ask them for help in providing evidence of receiving benefits.

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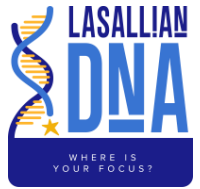


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St Joseph's College will only submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) when they have seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups, and

when they have assessed the actual amount of financial help the student needs to participate. It is this amount that St Joseph's College should request from the SBSS.

Pro-rata bursaries for vulnerable groups

Students who have a financial need who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 (with the actual amount dependant on the specific financial needs they have) if they are on a study programme which lasts for 30 weeks or more in the academic year. Students who meet the criteria and who are on study programmes lasting for less than 30 weeks should be given a bursary on a pro-rata basis, as appropriate, with the actual amount dependent on the assessment of their specific financial needs.

For example:

- a student is on a 30-week programme. If the institution assesses they have financial needs that require a full £1,200, the bursary may be $£1,200 \div 30 = £40$ per week
- if the same student was on a 10-week programme, the pro-rata bursary may be $£40 \times 10$ weeks = £400

St Joseph's College will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding if a pro-rata payment is more appropriate. A student studying for around 16 hours a week is likely to have greater costs than a student studying for 4 hours a week, for example.

Young people eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups who don't require bursary funding

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

For example a student:

- attending specialist residential provision that covers their educational costs in full
- taking a distance learning programme who has no financial barriers to participation (for example, they don't have any travel costs or meal costs)
- in the care of the local authority whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority
- who is financially supported by their partner

In these circumstances, St Joseph's College can refuse the student's application. St Joseph's College will explain to the student and/or the student's parents or support worker the aim of bursary funding and why they are not awarding any bursary.

If a student, or the student's parents or support worker, still wants to claim a bursary for vulnerable groups, St Joseph's College will consider the particular circumstances in each case. They will assess

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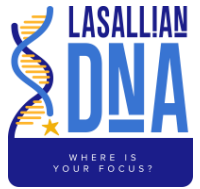


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whether no bursary should be awarded (because the student has no financial needs) or to award a reduced amount (because the financial help needed is limited).

Eligibility criteria: discretionary bursaries

St Joseph's College make discretionary bursary awards to help students with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support – services that St Joseph's College give to students, for example, counselling or mentoring – to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme or provide living costs support.

St Joseph's College will base all decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, eligibility based on household income, and their actual financial needs such as the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme. St Joseph's College will not make blanket or flat rate/fixed rate payments:

- to all students
- to students in particular income bands
- to students whose families are in receipt of particular benefits

without considering the actual needs of each student. For example, although many students who had previously benefitted from a free school meal may have financial needs, these will vary depending on personal circumstances so an individual assessment of actual need should be made.

Using household income and establishing individual student need

St Joseph's College must ensure their bursary policy ensures funding reaches those students who are most in need of financial support. This means St Joseph's College will use household income in some way to help establish which students are eligible before confirming the amount of support a student may need. St Joseph's College will use household income in conjunction with other factors, such as distance to travel from the institution and the number of dependent children in the household.

Household Income checking

In making decisions about bursary awards, St Joseph's College will exercise discretion as to whether they carry out checks annually or just once at the beginning of a student's study programme. If St Joseph's College decide not to carry out annual checks of bursary fund eligibility, a signed and dated (hard copy or electronic) self-declaration form will be obtained from the student to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

St Joseph's College aims to keep their bursary policies under review to ensure they continue to provide support to students who need it. For example, students from households being supported via lower income jobs could be in more financial need than a student in receipt of free school meals or where

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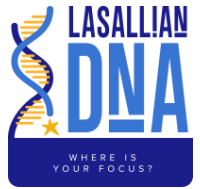


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the family receives other benefits. An assessment of individual need should help to identify whether they are struggling to afford the books and equipment they need or to cover their essential travel costs.

Payments

Where St Joseph's College make bursary fund payments to students rather than providing support in-kind, it will be paid by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. A basic bank account (which students can open at age 16) allows BACS transfers and allows the student to withdraw money.

Payments will only be made when a student's attendance is above 90%.

St Joseph's College will insist that students only spend the bursary payments they have made to them on the support that has been identified as necessary to help them participate in education. This means they must specify students can only use the funds to pay for travel costs and/or a meal during the day, to buy equipment or any other support that has been agreed. Bursary awards will be spent on course materials such as books and trip. It can also be used towards necessary IT equipment, travel to university open days, apprenticeship fairs and job interviews. Receipts will be required for all purchases made with Bursary funds. If IT equipment is purchased such as laptops, this must be returned to St Joseph's College prior to leaving.

St Joseph's College will not pay bursary payments into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. If the student cannot manage their own funds St Joseph's College will need to consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

St Joseph's College will make regular payments and the timescale for these will be set out in the confirmation letter. This will help to ensure if a student does not meet the criteria for payment, they are not without financial help for a long period of time.

St Joseph's College responsibilities in managing complaints or appeals.

Any student or parent who is unhappy with how St Joseph's College has managed their application for bursary funding, the complaints procedure of St Joseph's College must be followed.

St Joseph's College should manage the escalation of complaints about the bursary fund in the same way as any other complaint they may receive.

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