

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM

16-19 Bursary Policy September 2026

Vision Statement

We, the staff and governors, aspire to ensure that all our students, irrespective of ability and regardless of anyone's doubts, achieve their potential in full; and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School the best in the country.

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

This Fund has been allocated to individual schools and colleges offering Post 16 education for the provision of: -

Vulnerable Student Bursaries

Bursaries of up to £1,500 to all young people in nominated vulnerable groups.

Discretionary Bursaries

Bursaries that should be targeted towards young people facing financial barriers to participation in education, such as the costs of transport, books and equipment.

The fund allocated to providers is a fixed and finite sum and allocations may therefore not exceed the total sum available. It may not be possible to support every application and priority will be given to those students from the families with the lowest household income and/or highest demonstrated need.

There will be 3 priority groups, categorised as high, medium and lower priority special consideration groups.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to receive a bursary the young person must be over 16 on 1st September and be under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is the sooner. In exceptional circumstances bursaries may be awarded to younger students where they are following an accelerated programme.

Young people must satisfy the residency criteria in the document 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide for 2026 to 2027. More information can be found at [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

They must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (Ofsted) and is funded by the EFA or the European Social Fund.

High Priority Group 1

Students aged under 19 on 31/08/25 and who fall into one of the following categories:

Are currently in care (as defined by social services)

Are leaving or have recently left care

Are in receipt of Income Support in their own right.

Are disabled and in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

Proof of entitlement (original documentation) will be required and copies will be kept on file.

Eligible students can apply for a bursary of up to £1500

The payment of the bursary will be paid directly to the student in the following instalments:

(In the case of extreme hardship, consideration will be given for payment in advance of the qualifying six-week period at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form)

Financial support is dependent upon the student meeting attendance, punctuality, behaviour and academic attainment and application criteria and subject to regular review.

Medium Priority Group 2

The student is eligible for a free school meal

Proof of entitlement, Confirmation from the Local Authority of entitlement to Free School Meals (original documentation) will be required and copies will be kept on file.

A bursary of up to £999 will be awarded to young people in receipt of free school meals.

The discretionary bursary will be paid directly to the student.

Amounts paid will be subject to the number of students in the category and the availability of funds

(In the case of extreme hardship, consideration will be given for payment in advance of the qualifying six-week period at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form)

Financial support is dependent upon the student meeting attendance, punctuality, behaviour and academic attainment and application criteria and subject to regular review.

Lower Priority Group 3

In the event of funding remaining within the school's Bursary Fund allocation once all Priority 1 and 2 awards have been made, awards of up to £999 will be made to students of families with an annual household income of up to £26,500, and awards of up to £550 to students of families with an annual household income £26,501-£33,000.

Eligible students in this group may apply to the 16–19 Bursary Fund for a contribution towards items such as: -

The cost of school transport, essential course equipment, trips, and course materials, UCAS fees

This may be a one-off payment for specific items or a cash bursary for support, according to need. Amounts paid will be subject to the number of students in the category and the availability of funds. Priority will be given to those students in the lower income group in the first instance.

Bursary payments will be made directly to the student concerned.

Proof of lower income entitlement (original documentation) will be required, and copies will be kept on file.

Financial support is dependent upon the student meeting attendance, punctuality, behaviour and academic attainment and application criteria and subject to regular review.

Applications Process

All students joining or continuing within the school's Sixth Form at the start of September will be given a Bursary Award explanatory letter. Eligible students will need to complete and submit their applications to the Sixth Form Office via the Bursary16+ platform (accessed via Admissions+, the platform they used to make their application).

Verifying the eligibility of all applicants is an integral feature of the assessment process. For Priority 1 applicants this will entail obtaining original documentation from applicants setting out the benefits they receive or written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care needs. Priority 2 verification can be achieved without student involvement as the Local Authority provides the school with confirmation of all students granted Free School Meals.

The Priority 3 assessment process is likely to take slightly longer as proof of eligibility will be required, which will not be sought until after the extent of any remaining funding has been deduced once the initial Priority 1 and 2 award commitments are known. The type of evidence required in order to verify household income will include Tax Credit Award Notices, P60s / evidence of self-employed income.

In-year Bursary award applications will be accepted, but only 10% of the initial funding allocation will be held as a contingency to cover in-year awards. The Bursary Fund scheme will need to be self-financing, but the school may be able to seek further in-year funding from the EFA in the event of significant in-year applications being received.

Any change in financial circumstances that will affect student entitlement to a Bursary must be notified to the School as soon as possible.

PROCESS FOR APPLICATION

Applications for an award of a bursary should be made using the online platform Bursary16+ (accessed via Admissions+, the platform they used to make their application).

All applications must be supported by appropriate evidence of eligibility, and completed in full, and submitted to the Head of Sixth Form for consideration.

Appeals

If a young person wishes to appeal about how their application has been handled, they should follow the school's normal complaints procedure.

QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

Once eligibility has been established, the young person will be expected to comply with the following conditions in order to qualify for payment:

Qualifying Period - Satisfy a qualifying period of study, i.e. at least six weeks from the commencement of courses

Satisfy the protocols for the authorisation of bursaries.

A bursary payment may be withheld if qualifying conditions are not met.

RETAINED CONTINGENCY

The school will retain a 10% contingency to cover the cost of bursaries awarded throughout the academic year due to possible changes in the financial or domestic circumstances of individual students.