

16-19 Student Bursary Fund Policy

Date of adoption September 2025

Date to be reviewed September 2026

Introduction

The Spencer Academies Trust (SAT) is a Multi-Academy Sponsor with a clear geographical context in the East Midlands region. We combine a proven track record with the experience and capability to secure transformational change, and to deliver an outstanding quality of education.

The purpose for which the Spencer Academies Trust is constituted is to use our nationally acknowledged school improvement capacity to provide tailored and specific solutions for the local needs of each of our educational communities. This is achieved through sharing of outstanding practice between academies within the Spencer group of schools.

Mission - is to provide high quality education and deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Vision - The Spencer Academies Trust is an exceptional Trust, which provides an outstanding education for local children.

Beliefs - All children have a right to a quality education regardless of background or ability, and have an entitlement to the opportunity of a secure progression route in their learning and development; and schools are stronger when they work in collaboration; operating within a 'family' of schools and are open to a true sense of partnership.

Structure

SAT is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) established in 2011. We sign one Funding Agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) on behalf of all the Academies in the group. The Members are the subscribers to the Trust's Memorandum of Association. They have an overview of the governance arrangements of the Trust and the power to appoint and remove Directors. The Board of Directors (BoD) is the Governing Body for the organisation and remains accountable in law and to OFSTED for the exercise of its functions. SAT acts as one employer across all the academies it operates.

This policy applies to all employees of SAT. The Trust Scheme of Delegation outlines the delegated responsibility and levels of authority for managing finance matters and for decision making.

Where the word 'Trust' is used in this document it refers to the Spencer Academies Trust.

The term 'Trust Executive Leadership Team' (ELT) is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Primary Education, Director of Secondary Education, Directors of Quality and Standards, Director of Inclusion and Engagement, Director of Spencer Alliance for Leadership and Teaching, Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer, Director of Human Resources, Director of Estates and Facilities.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following DfE publications:

- Academies Trust Handbook for September 2025
- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2025 to 2026 academic year
- 16 to 19 bursary summary of key funding rules
- 16 to 19 Bursary Checklist
- Funding agreement between the DfE and SAT

And the following Spencer Academies Trust Policies

- Finance Policy

Policy Statement

The objectives of this policy are to ensure robust oversight and sound and effective financial management of the 16 to 19 Bursary Funding provided to the Trust in a compliant and equitable manner in line with the DfE requirements.

The Trust must take full responsibility for managing the 16 to 19 Bursary Funds Provided, ensuring that funds are expended for the purpose for which they are intended, and any remaining funds are held as an agency arrangement and not subsumed into general funds.

The Trust and all academies that fall within the Trust are obliged to act in a transparent, ethical and accountable manner.

The Trust must fully comply with the Academy Trust Handbook and Academies Accounts Direction, as published by the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency); the Companies act 2006; Financial Reporting Standards; and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 ('the SORP') as detailed within the academies accounts direction

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the Trust manages the funds received effectively, in line with the terms of the funding received, and for the benefit of the eligible pupils.

The Chief Executive Officer assumes the role of the Accounting Officer and has overall responsibility to the Board of Trustees for all aspects of financial management across the Trust.

The Chief Executive Officer delegates the financial management to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) while retaining ultimately accountable. The Chief Finance Officer must ensure that the Trust comply with all relevant and statutory financial requirements.

Finance colleagues across the Trust provide support to the Chief Finance Officer in the day to day operation and financial management.

Academy Principals are responsible for the 16 to 19 bursary funds within their academy and are supported by the finance team.

Academy Principals delegate the day to day management of the Bursary fund to their leaders of Post 16, supported by the Trust Director of Post 16 and careers

All colleagues are responsible for ensuring that they operate within the realms of this policy and any supporting procedures.

The Purpose of the 16 to 19 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.

The award available to each student is dependent on the funds available to the Academy, documented each year in the 16 to 19 allocation statement, and the individual personal circumstances of the eligible students.

The 16 to 19 bursary is a separate payment to any free school meals funding for which the student may be eligible, this is applied for directly through the relevant Local Authority.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups

- Discretionary Bursaries – set by the Trust in line with the funding provided by the DfE

Eligibility

Students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2025 to 2026 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 their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.

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

Students must be studying a state-funded full-time course at a Spencer Academy and meet the governments residency criteria to considered for a bursary award

Vulnerable Bursary Grant of up to £1,200 per academic year

Up to £1,200 per academic year is available to students who are in care; a care leaver; or receiving Universal Credit because they are supporting themselves, supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner or in their own right.

In order to be awarded the vulnerable groups bursary fund the Trust must submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service online portal, once eligibility and financial need have been assessed and confirmed.

Discretionary Bursary Award

An award may be available to students facing financial barriers to participation. This may form a contribution to the cost of travel, purchasing essential books, equipment or specialist clothing to enable participation.

This award is not intended to provide learning support, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the study programme.

The Spencer Academies Trust invites applications from all students who feel this applies, however students with a total household income below £25,000 will be prioritised.

The Spencer Academies Trust will assess the needs of each individual student following application and confirm the award available to that student.

Use of the Bursary

The Bursary may be used to provide financial support for:

- Transport costs
- Purchasing equipment or resources for individual learners
- Assistance with educational trips for the study programme, i.e. field trips
- One off payments of additional costs that would otherwise prevent participation.

Application

How to apply

- Check that the criteria set within this policy applies
- Complete the 16 to 19 bursary application attached to this policy
- Ensure all supporting information and documentation is included
- Submit the application to the Head of Sixth form for your academy no later than 30th September 2025

Following application

Applications will be processed by the Trust within 28 days, during which time you may be contacted for supplementary information or discussion around the needs identified.

Following assessment formal notification of the outcome including award value will be provided.

Appeals regarding bursary award can be made directly to the Trust director of Post 16, Susan Sharp

Payment of Award

Payment of Cash, or in kind, will be made as per the award letter throughout the academic year.

Where payment is made directly to the student this must be via BACS to an account in the student's name, and not a third party.

Initial payments and purchases will be made in Term 1, with subsequent payments at the beginning of Terms 2 and 3, subject to the student continuing to meet the criteria for award, and the behaviour indicators agreed:

- Has maintained a positive attitude to learning (as agreed by Head of sixth form)
- Has not been subject to any formal warning and/or exclusion
- Has achieved attendance in line with the expectations set with the head of sixth form