16 - 19 BURSARY FUND POLICY 2026 - 2027

Approved by:	Ratified by Governing Body	**Date:** September 2026
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Reviewed by:	**Karen Hayward, Executive Principal & Sharon Kane, Finance Manager**	
Website:		
Yes/No	YES	

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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds.
- Make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it.
- Make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds.

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK

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 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.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor, or the Executive Principal

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our school, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to the Executive Principal.

4.2 The Executive Principal

The Executive Principal is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies consistently.

The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Executive Principal of any concerns or queries regarding these 16 to 19 bursary fund policies.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary funds. See section 6 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

We use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

- Transport
- Books
- Equipment
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

6.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the 2026 to 2027 academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August 2026.

Students aged 19 or over are eligible only for a discretionary bursary if they:

- Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or
- Have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.

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

In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programmes at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to these younger students. However, if these students are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible for bursary funding.

6.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g., Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- Be funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
- Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund
- Be otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA's list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19; or
- Be a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

Non-employed students 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 student participating in an eligible, publicly funded course.

Students are not eligible if:

- They are on an apprenticeship programme; or
- Are on any waged training

Students who are studying via distance learning are eligible for 16 to 19 bursaries but are likely to require financial help on a more infrequent basis (e.g. travel to exams). If this is the case, we will provide support in-kind, such as a travel pass, details of which shall be decided on a case-by-case basis.

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

6.4 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
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need

When these students reach 18 years old, we will consider their immigration status. They will still be eligible for a bursary as a student 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.

6.5 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (NB: 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; or
- 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

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

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, we will look at cases individually and base the outcome on

a particular student's needs. Students 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, and provide more than £1,200 per year if such would be necessary in all the circumstances for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

If a student's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

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

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

The household income is below £27,500 a year

The household is in receipt of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Child Tax Credit (but **not** Working Tax Credit) and your annual gross income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) is not more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit Run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Support under part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- The student lives more than 10 miles distance away from the school.

Students who do not satisfy any of the criteria listed in this section, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may apply for a discretionary bursary.

In assessing any application for a discretionary bursary, we will consider:

- Level of household income
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or a location for a placement
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- The requirements of their study programme
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help

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

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

6.7 Evidence

All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:

- Previous 3 to 6 months' worth of pay slips
- P60
- Written confirmation of a student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority; and/or
- Written confirmation of a benefit award or tax credit notice, in the name of the student (for either bursary) or the parent (for the discretionary bursary)

7. Application and payment process

7.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by 30th September each year to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. This date will be clearly stated on the application form.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the whole school year.

Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or via letter) whether their application has been successful, together with the amount of funding awarded. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

If you qualify, you will receive a payment for each academic term for the academic year 2026/27 from the point at which your application is received by the school. There will not be any back payments made for previous terms in an academic year.

For the Autumn Term, applications are preferred by the end of September 2026 but must be received no later than 7th October 2026.

If you miss this deadline, you may still apply for support in the Spring Term of 2027. This form must be returned by 27th January 2027.

If you miss the Spring Term deadline, you may still apply for the Summer Term 2027. The form must be returned by 12th May 2027.

7.2 Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

- Make in-kind payments, such as travel passes, books, equipment or vouches for meals
- Make termly payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account

7.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Payments of the bursary are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

Insert details of standards/conditions, such as:

- Attendance above 95% (subject to exceptional circumstances)
- Following our Sixth Form Code of Conduct
- Remaining on track in each subject

All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions.

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld, but we will always take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities, or other exceptional circumstances.

We will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

We reserve the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

We will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so, and any decision will be confirmed to the student in writing.

8. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances which may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/guardians must notify the school without delay.

9. Record keeping

Any paperwork and documents we retain for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, household income evidence and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with our data protection policy, privacy notices, and record retention schedule. Our privacy notice can be viewed on our website.

SECTION A – APPLICATION FOR THE FULL BURSARY

Student's surname	
Student's forename(s)	
Student's place and date of birth	
Address (including post code)	
Telephone number	
Email address	

The qualifying criterion for claiming this bursary is:

Criteria	**Tick as applicable**
Young person in care	
Care leaver	
Young person receiving income support	
Disabled young person (receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance)	

Evidence to include should be:

- For Young person in care or care leaver – a letter of support from your local council
- For Young person receiving income support or disabled young person (receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance) – relevant documentation demonstrating entitlement.

Please provide original documents. These will be returned to you.

Details of evidence provided:

Student's Bank/Building Society Account Details:

Please note that this account must be one that accepts direct credits. Missing or incorrect details will delay payments.

Account Holder's Name	
Sort Code	
Account Number	
Building Society Roll No. (if applicable)	

PTO

Declaration of student:

- I confirm that I am eligible to receive the discretionary bursary according to the criteria that I have selected above.
- I have included the relevant documentary evidence.
- I will notify the school immediately if I decide to leave the school before the end of the academic year.
- In the event of overpayment, for any reason, I undertake to refund the overpayment on being called to do so.

Signature of student: _____ Date: _____

SECTION B – APPLICATION FOR THE DISCRETIONARY BURSARY

Student's surname	
Student's forename(s)	
Student's place and date of birth	
Address (including post code)	
Telephone number	
Email address	

The qualifying criterion for claiming this bursary is as a student whose parents or guardians are in receipt of:

Criteria	**Tick as applicable**
Income support	
Income based Jobseeker's Allowance	
Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	
Universal Tax Credits	
Tax Credits (Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit) 9	
Guarantee element of State Pension Credit	
Employment Support Allowance (ESA(IR))	

Or I as a student:

Criteria	**Tick as applicable**
Am in receipt of Free School Meals	
Have a long-term medical condition that can affect my studies	
Be providing care to a sick or disabled relative	

Evidence to include should be:

- For Income support, Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Tax Credits (Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit) and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, or Guarantee element of State Pension Credit or Employment Support Allowance (ESA(IR)) – relevant documentation showing proof of entitlement.
- For Free School Meals – normally no proof will be required as we will already have the necessary documentation.
- For a long-term medical condition – a letter from your GP/consultant confirming the nature of your medical condition and how it affects your studies.

Please provide original documents. These will be returned to you.

Details of evidence provided:

Student's Bank/Building Society Account Details:

Please note that this account must be one that accepts direct credits. Missing or incorrect details will delay payments.

Account Holder's Name	
Sort Code	
Account Number	
Building Society Roll No. (if applicable)	

Declaration of student:

- I confirm that I am eligible to receive the discretionary bursary according to the criteria that I have selected above.
- I have included the relevant documentary evidence.
- I will notify the school immediately if I decide to leave the school before the end of the academic year.
- In the event of overpayment, for any reason, I undertake to refund the overpayment on being called to do so.

Signature of student: _____ Date: _____

Declaration of parent (if in receipt of a qualifying benefit):

- I confirm that I am in receipt of the qualifying benefit according to the criteria that I have selected above.
- I have included the relevant documentary evidence.
- I will notify the school immediately if my circumstances change and I cease to receive the relevant qualifying benefit.

Name of parent: _____

Signature of parent: _____ Date: _____