16 to 19 BURSARY FUND POLICY

NAMED PERSON:	Mrs Jane Young School Business Manager

Last Review Date:	September 2026
Review Cycle:	1 Year
Next Review Date:	September 2027

Mr Andy Crossey **Chairman of Governing Body**
Signed: A.D. Crossey
Date: September 2026

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1. Aims & Scope

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 and this policy refers to both:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursaries

Our school aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 Bursary Funds
- Make sure that bursary funds are administered appropriately and fairly, with due regard to the Equality Act 2010
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the type of support that is available and the means of applying for it
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund for the 2026 to 2027 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 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 <u>The Governing Board</u>

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for

- Approving this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with relevant requirements

4.2 <u>The Interim Executive Headteacher</u>

The Interim Executive Headteacher is responsible for

- Making sure that staff are familiar with this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy
- Making sure the policy is being applied consistently

4.3 Head of Sixth Form

The Head of Sixth Form is responsible for

- Setting eligibility criteria for bursary funding and making sure these comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Promoting awareness of the 16 to 19 bursary fund to prospective applicants and their parents/carers

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy consistently.

4.4 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of

- Any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy
- Any change in circumstances that might affect eligibility for bursary funding

5. How we use the Bursary Fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6, 7 & 8 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 2 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 to and from Sixth Form
- Books
- Equipment
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days
- Clothing/uniform

We will provide support for students from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. It will not be provided as regular payments for living costs.

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 Bursaries

Please note: the following eligibility criteria will be assessed in addition to the individual student's actual financial needs. This means:

- No student will automatically be awarded an amount of funding without an assessment of the level of actual financial need they have.
- Funding provided to each eligible student is based on their actual participation needs (supported by evidence) and not a flat or fixed-rate payment that does not reflect the actual costs they face

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 that 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 programme 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.

Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16-19 bursary fund.

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 1 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 approved
- 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
- They are participating in any waged training

Students 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.

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the DFE funding rules 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;
- To be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- 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.

7. Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet 1 of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1 to 6.4 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

UC has now replaced IS, as well as other benefits above, for current and future young people aged 16 to 18. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (such as students with an EHC Plan) may still receive the legacy benefits listed above.

Students 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.

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). Should we refuse the application on this basis, we will discuss this with the student 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 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.

If you think you are eligible for a bursary of up to £1200, please complete the Main Application form and Appendix 1 and return them with the relevant supporting evidence to the **Head of Sixth Form**

Students who are deemed to be eligible should understand that for funding to continue they will be monitored by their teachers for:

- Unauthorised absences during the school day and full attendance of all relevant timetabled lessons
- Acceptable levels of behaviour and effort
- Timely submission of work to an acceptable level

8. Discretionary Bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1 to 6.4 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary, categorised as Level Two if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

- You have a gross annual household income of below £20,000
  OR
- You are in receipt of Free School Meals
  OR
- Your household is in receipt of other income-based means tested benefits.

If you think you are eligible for this discretionary bursary, please complete the Main Application form and Appendix 2, and return them with the relevant supporting evidence to the Head of Sixth Form

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, categorised as Level Three if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

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

- You have a gross annual household income of between £20,000 and £25,000
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or the location of a placement
- The requirements of their study programme
- You have an identifiable financial need & do not fall into high and medium priority groups

Those in the Low priority group will be considered for funding based on the School's allocation and subject to available funding after those in the Level two priority group have been awarded.

Payments will not be made until after 31 December 2026, or on an as needed basis after consideration by the Bursary Fund Committee.

If you think you are eligible for this discretionary bursary, please complete the Main Application Form and Appendix 3 and return them with the relevant supporting evidence to the Head of Sixth Form

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 through The Bursary Fund Committee.

The Bursary Fund Committee will consider any feedback from teachers indicating that a student is not complying with the criteria needed to receive the Bursary. They may make a judgement to withhold payment where appropriate.

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 as monitored by their teachers for:

- Unauthorised absences during the school day and full attendance of all relevant timetabled lessons
- Acceptable levels of behaviour and effort
- Timely submission of work to an acceptable level

9. Application and payment process

9.1 Applications

Applications should be submitted by 30 September, 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 via email, 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.

9.2 The Bursary Fund Committee

The Bursary Fund Committee will normally meet at the beginning of the academic year to consider and review applications. Further meetings may be called thereafter depending on the need for further reviews of existing applicants or to review new applications.

The Bursary Fund Committee will be made up of the Head of Sixth Form (Chair), Finance Officer and the Business Manager.

The Head of Sixth Form does not make decisions about applications, but they may offer information to the Committee about a student's circumstances, well-being, behaviour, progress and attendance.

Students and their parents/carers must understand that the available fund is limited.

9.3 Evidence

- All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:
- A copy of the UC or IS award notice from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP, in the student's name
- Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bills
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority

9.4 Payment Process

Payments are made using the following process:

- Made in-kind payments, such as travel passes, books, equipment or vouchers for meals
- Reimbursement for clothing is via a cheque payment, upon production of valid receipts confirming purchases

Cash payments will not be made in any circumstances.

9.4 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:

- Acceptable attendance
- Following your Sixth Form Code of Conduct

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.

If students have received in-kind support such as equipment or travel cards, they will be asked to return these if they fail to meet the conditions.

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.

10. Change in Circumstances

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

11. Record Keeping and Audit

The school will maintain comprehensive and accurate records relating to the 16 to 19 bursary fund. These records will be kept securely and be readily available for audit purposes. Records will include, but are not limited to:

- Copies of application forms and supporting evidence
- Proof that students meet eligibility criteria
- Records of 'zero bursary' students
- Details of assessment decisions and rationale for awards
- Records of all payments made to students, including dates, value and purpose
- Copies of documents signed by students to give formal agreement to the conditions of payment

Records will be retained for 6 academic years after the end of the academic year in which the student completed their programme.

12. Unspent funds

Funding for discretionary bursary funding cannot be carried forward for more than 1 year. Unspent funding must be reported to the DFE using the customer help centre, specifying the amount of funding and the year/s it relates to, no later than 31 March each year. The DFE will recover all unspent funds.

13. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

16-19 Bursary Fund Application

Please complete and return both the Learner and Parent/Carer Forms, deadline for submission is the ***30 September 2026***, together with the appropriate appendix form and Proof of Entitlement

Learner Details

Surname/Family Name:	
First Names:	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Post Code	
e-mail address	
Home Phone	
Mobile Phone	

I confirm that the details are true and accurate. I also accept that if I have any unauthorised absences throughout the school day, effort and/or behaviour falls below acceptable standards, or work of an acceptable level is not submitted within the required time frame, funding may be removed.

Learner Signature			

The application form and appropriate appendix needs to be handed to the Head of Sixth Form

16-19 Bursary Fund Application

Please complete and return both the Learner and Parent/Carer Forms, deadline for submission is the ***30 September 2026,*** together with the appropriate appendix form and Proof of Entitlement

Parental/Carer Details

Surname/Family Name:	
First Names:	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Post Code	
National Insurance Number	
Home Phone	
Mobile Phone	
Household Income (Please attach required evidence to this Application Form)	

This application for assistance from the 16 - 19 Bursary Fund is made under the priority group of:

Level One (Appendix 1 Form)		**Level Two** (Appendix 2 Form)		**Level Three** (Appendix 3 Form)	

(please tick one category and fill in the relevant form)

I confirm that the details on this application and the evidence provided are true and accurate.

Parent/carer Signature	

The application form and appropriate appendix needs to be handed to the Head of Sixth Form

Appendix 1

Application for Level One Priority Funding – up to £1200 per annum

This form should be completed in addition to the Main Application Form and should be submitted with appropriate evidence. The deadline for submission is the ***30 September 2026.***

Full name:
Date of birth:

I wish to apply for Level One Priority Funding under the following criteria (please delete as appropriate):

- I am living in care
- I have just left living in care
- I am in receipt of income support
- I am disabled and receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance

I attach to this form the following evidence to support my application (please specify below):

I confirm that the details on this application and the evidence provided are true and accurate.

Signed:
(Learner)
Signed:
(Parent/Carer)
Date:
Date application received: Date reviewed by Committee: Outcome:

The Application Form and appropriate Appendix needs to be handed to the Head of Sixth Form

Appendix 2

Application for Level Two Priority Funding – maximum available £800 per annum

This should be completed in addition to the Main Application Form and should be submitted with appropriate evidence. The deadline for submission is the ***30 September 2026.***

Full name:
Date of birth:
I wish to apply for Level Two Priority Funding under the following criteria (please delete as appropriate):

- My gross household income is below £20,000
- I am in receipt of Free School Meals
- My household is in receipt of other means tested benefits

I wish to apply for support towards:

Specific need	Amount applied for	Total

I attach to this form the following evidence to support my application (please specify below):

I will be able to provide receipts for the above. I confirm that the details on this application and the evidence provided are true and accurate.

Signed: (Learner)
Signed: (Parent/Carer) Date:
Date application received:
Date reviewed by Committee:
Outcome:

The Application Form and appropriate Appendix needs to be handed to the Head of Sixth Form

Appendix 3

Application for Level Three Priority Funding – maximum available £200 per annum

This should be completed in addition to the Main Application Form and should be submitted with appropriate evidence. The deadline for submission is the ***30 September 2026.***

Full name:
Date of birth:

I wish to apply for Level Three Priority Funding under the following criteria (please delete as appropriate):

- My gross household income is between £20,000 and £25,000
- I have another identifiable financial need (please explain below)

I wish to apply for support towards:

Specific need	Amount applied for	Total

I attach to this form the following evidence to support my application (please specify below):

I will be able to provide receipts for the above. I confirm that the details on this application and the evidence provided are true and accurate.

Signed: (Learner)
Signed:
(Parent/Carer)
Date:
Date application received:
Date reviewed by
Committee: Outcome:

The Application Form and appropriate Appendix needs to be handed to the Head of Sixth Form