

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Date Issued:	September 2026
Review Date:	August 2027
Committee Responsible:	Headteacher

Changes made since last review:	
Throughout document	Updated to align with 2026-27 ESFA guidance notes Dates updated Evidence Paragraph updated

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Scope of policy	3
Definitions	3
Roles & responsibilities	3
The Trust Board	3
The Headteacher	3
Staff	3
Parents	4
How we use the bursary fund	4
Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries	4
Age	4
Eligible education provision	5
Residency	5
Asylum seekers	5
Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups	6
Discretionary bursaries	6
<i>Category A</i>	7
<i>Category B</i>	7
<i>Category C</i>	7
Evidence	8
Application & payment process	8
Applications	8
Payment process	8
Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments	9
Change in circumstances	9
Record keeping	9
Monitoring arrangements	9

Introduction

Our Academy 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.

Scope of policy

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 academic year](#)

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.

Roles & responsibilities

The Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for approving this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual Trustee or the Headteacher.

In our Academy, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to the Headteacher.

In our Academy, monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Curriculum & Pastoral Committee.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff

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

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

Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy.

How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 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 towards:

- transport;
- books;
- equipment;
- field trips and other course-related costs; and
- the costs of attending university interviews and open days.

Where equipment like laptops or chromebooks are purchased, these will be used by students for their study programme in school, during the school day and must be left onsite at the end of the school day.

Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

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 programme at our Academy, 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.

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:

- funded directly by the DfE or via a local authority.
- 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 for funding

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 either 16 to 19 bursary 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.

Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision](#).

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.

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 the sections 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.
- 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.

Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections entitled Age, Eligible Education Provision, and Residency above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

Category A

Students most in need will be eligible to receive a bursary of **up to** £1,200 a year. This group includes:

- students in care under the Local Authority;
- care leavers (a care leaver is someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning his / her 16th birthday);
- students claiming income support or universal credit; or
- disable students who receive Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Category B

Those students who are most likely to need financial support will qualify for free school meals and therefore their parents or guardians would be in receipt of one or more of the following:

- Income Support / Universal Credit;
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Child Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,190 (provided you're not also receiving Working Tax Credit);
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; and / or
- Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after employment finishes or after you start to work for fewer than 16 hours per week.

Students whose parents or guardians are in receipt of any of the above benefits are urged to register for Free School Meals to qualify for the bursary.

Category C

Students with parents / guardians earning below £30,000 and not claiming Free School Meals.

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; and
- 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.

Students must apply for a bursary annually. Year 12 students in receipt of a bursary must reapply in Year 13. Please see below for evidence required.

Evidence

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

- for Universal Credit – the 3 most recent monthly award statements;
- P60 or payslip dated March of that year;
- 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).

Year 13 Students must reapply for the bursary and provide up to date evidence even if they received a bursary in Year 12.

Application & payment process

Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by **18th September 2026** to allow enough time for our Academy 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. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the Academy's complaints procedure.

Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

- In-kind payments where purchases are made directly with suppliers, such as books, equipment, contributions to school meals and trips.
- Payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account.

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:

- Attendance that meets the Academy's expectations.
- Following the Academy's Sixth Form Code of Conduct.

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 1 week 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.

Claimants of bursary will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that all information supplied is accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief.

Providing false or incomplete information could lead to future payments being stopped, incorrectly paid funds recovered and could result in referral to the police and prosecution.

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.

Change in circumstances

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

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, which can be provided on request.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Teresa Porter, Director of Sixth Form, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.