

16-19 BURSARY FUNDS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

16-19 Bursary Fund Terms & Conditions

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ELT SIGN-OFF: Marie Haworth, Vice Principal Teaching, Learning & Learner Support



16-19 Bursary Fund Terms & Conditions

Purpose

'The 16-19 Bursary Fund exists to promote equality of opportunity in education to all students irrespective of culture, gender or disability. The fund aims to promote access into and retention in education by financially supporting students to overcome personal, social and evidenced economic barriers to retention and achievement in order to encourage educational aspirations and personal development.'

Contents

1. Introduction	Page 4
2. Student Eligibility – both funds	Page 5
3. 16 – 18 Vulnerable Bursary	Page 5
4. 16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary	Page 7
5. General principles of funding	Page 9
6. Free College Meals and Lunch vouchers	Page 10
7. Appeals	Page 11

This framework and procedures document is written in accordance with the 16–19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2025/26, as published by the Department for Education, last updated in October 2025. It gives details of the arrangements for the payment of the Bursary for defined vulnerable groups and also the 16-19 Bursary Fund (Discretionary Bursary).

1. Introduction

The purpose of the 16-19 Bursary Funds is to provide financial support to young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post-16, and have a **genuine, assessed financial need**.

The Government aims to eliminate the gap in attainment between those young people from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

The College will ensure that all applications for the 16-19 Bursary Funds are considered on the same basis irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, belief or faith.

Young people should exercise their eligibility to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application to the 16–19 Bursary Fund, for example, Care to Learn (for young parents up to and including 19 years of age) and Residential Support Scheme for those students accessing education that is not available within reasonable travelling distance of their home.

There are 2 types of bursary that 16 – 19 students can apply for:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups (16-18 Vulnerable Bursary)
- discretionary bursaries (16-19 Discretionary Bursary)

PLEASE SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT FOR CARE TO LEARN GRANT FUNDING

2. Student eligibility: Both funds

2.1 Age

- Young people must be aged 16 and under 19 years on 31 August of the relevant academic year. Where a young person turns 19 during the academic year they can continue to receive support until the end of the year/programme of study.
- Students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme began aged 16–18 (19+ continuers) OR have an education, health and care plan (16 to 24 years).

2.2 Eligible education provision

- Young people must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (ie Ofsted), and funded by the DfE directly or via a local authority.
- Otherwise publicly funded and leading to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the DfE list of approved qualifications
- Non-employed students aged 16-19 who are participating in the Kings Trust Programme are eligible to receive bursary funding

2.3 Residency

- Students must meet the residency criteria in the DfE funding regulations for post 16 provision.
- Accompanied Asylum seekers aged up to and including age 18 with an adult relative or partner are entitled to education, but not to public funds. As long as they have not had their asylum claim refused they can be supported by the fund with a travel pass.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and as such are eligible for the Bursary for defined vulnerable groups if they have a financial need.

2.4 Ineligible students

- Those who do not fulfil the UK/EEA residency requirement (3 years residence for non-educational purposes)
- Those on non DfE funded courses
- Those on Higher Education courses, waged apprentices or provision with learning aims wholly funded from other sources

3. 16-18 Vulnerable Bursary

The following defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial support from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to participate in education.

3.1 The defined vulnerable groups are:

- In care on a voluntary basis or under a Care Order (including UASC) – this category includes those placed with a local authority foster carer, but not those who are privately fostered or adopted
- Care leavers, including those aged 18 or above who were previously looked after for 13 weeks or more after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16. This category also includes those who meet the care leaver criteria and have been transferred to a Special Guardianship Order.
- In receipt of 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. If a student has a dependent child they can also apply for up £180 per week to pay for childcare through the 'Care to Learn' (C2L) Grant funding (see separate document for details).
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right.

The bursary can pay up to £1,200 per year for a student on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more. This support is based on financial need, and will be pro-rated if a student is on a shorter programme, studying less than 16 hours a week, or withdraws from their study programme early. If it is deemed that a student's financial needs are being met, their application could be refused on that basis, even though they were eligible as one of the defined vulnerable groups. Funding is provided on the basis of actual need. This means that we will provide funding to eligible students based on their actual participation costs. Support will be provided in kind where possible i.e. a bus pass and meal vouchers.

In exceptional circumstances awards of more than £1,200 can be made where it is deemed that an individual needs extra help to remain in education. Any such payments will be made from the 16-18 Discretionary fund and auditable evidence kept.

3.2 Supporting Evidence Required

For those young people eligible to receive the Vulnerable Bursary for defined vulnerable groups, the required evidence of their status is as follows:

- Young people in care – Written confirmation of their current looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them
- Care Leavers – Written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them or provides their Leaving Care services
- In receipt of UC or IS – A copy of their UC or IS claim/award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm they are entitled to the benefit in their own right. Students must also provide documents such as a tenancy agreement in their name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills and so on
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right - for students receiving UC/ESA and DLA or PIP, a copy of their UC claim from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP

Students are able to make a self-declaration if their evidence has not changed and they received a bursary in the previous academic year, but must inform the College immediately if their circumstances change.

3.3 Payments

	All	To be deducted from VB
Bus pass cost (termly)	100%	Yes*
Luncheon Vouchers	£4.50 per day	No
Weekly payment	£18 per week for additional essential costs such as drinks, breakfast, paper, pens, bag, data etc	Yes*

*Over £1200 - additional costs come from 16-18 Discretionary Bursary fund

4. 16 - 19 Discretionary Bursary

4.1 Eligibility

Eligibility for the Discretionary Bursary is based on household income and actual financial need. Payment of the Discretionary fund is to help eligible students with costs such as travel which they would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

Any award from the Discretionary Fund will depend upon gross household income.

4.2 Qualifying Household income

Families where parents/guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Guaranteed Pension Credit, Paid employment, Self employed, Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 - with a household income of under £28,000 (see tables below for full details). Funding is provided on the basis of actual need. This means that we will provide funding to eligible students based on their actual participation costs. Support will be provided in kind where possible i.e. a bus pass and meal vouchers.

4.3 16-19 students – Income Thresholds

Household income	Banding
Up to £16,190	A – LV or FCM
£16,191 - £24,999	B
£25,000 - £28,000	C

4.4 16-19 Ready Reckoner – used for large families

Universal Credit income should be calculated by deducting the UC Housing if not paid to the landlord and for large families using the table below. Large families are defined as those with 3 or more children.

Based on household size	Band B	LV entitlement
1 adult + 3- 4 children	Up to £26,700	3 children - £15,600 4 children - £19,100
1 adult + 5-6 children	Up to £35,700	5 children - £22,500 6 children - £26,000
2 adults + 3-4 children	Up to £33,600	3 children - £18,300 4 children - £21,800
2 adults + 5-6 children	Up to £42,600	5 children - £25,200 6 children - £28,700

4.5 Supporting Evidence Required

In order to qualify for the Discretionary Bursary the required evidence is as follows:

Household Income	Evidence Required
Universal Credit	<i>Screenshots from your Universal Credit online account showing your name and address and a breakdown of the payment awarded including any deductions.</i> <i>If you are not in employment, the last month must be provided. If you are employed the last 3 months payments awarded must be provided.</i>
Child Tax Credit and/ or Working Tax Credit	<i>Most recent Tax Credits Award letter (last two years)</i>
Jobseekers Allowance	
Employment Support Allowance	<i>Most recent award letter (last two years)</i>
Income Support	<i>OR</i> <i>One month's bank statement less than 3 months old</i>
Guaranteed Pension Credit	
Paid Employment	<i>Latest payslips</i> <i>(2 if paid monthly and 4 if paid weekly)</i>
Self Employed	<i>Latest accounts from your accountant</i> <i>OR</i> <i>Self-Assessment Tax Return</i>
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	<i>Evidence of a valid enrolment</i>

For students aged 16–18, evidence is required from each parent/guardian residing in the same house.

Students are able to make a self-declaration if their household income has not changed and they received a bursary in the previous academic year, but must inform the College immediately where circumstances change.

4.6 Payments

Band	Band A Income Up to £16,190	Band B Income £16,191 to £24,999	Band C Income £25,000 to £28,000
Bus pass travel	Free bus pass	Free bus pass	25% by BACS
BACS travel – student's own car/motorbike	100%	100%	25% by BACS
Car travel with parents	50%	50%	25% by BACS
Free meals - FCM or LV	£4.50 per day	No	No

5. General principles of funding

If a student withdraws from their programme of study early, all future payments from either fund will cease with immediate effect.

The main priority will be to assist eligible students with the initial costs of coming to College. Any ongoing support will be subject to conditions of attendance, behaviour and available funds.

Most awards from the funds will be in the form of a bus pass or lunch entitlement loaded on to an ID cards. Any direct payments required will be made into a student's bank account where possible.

Students will be encouraged and supported to open bank accounts. In very exceptional circumstances when this is not possible authorisation may be given to have payments made into another authorised person's bank account.

5.1 Attendance

The bursary is designed to remove barriers to full participation in learning, and therefore full attendance is expected in line with College timetables. However, payments will not normally be withheld in any period where a minimum 80% attendance is achieved. Authorised absences such as reported sickness and essential appointments will be taken into consideration. Rarely, there may be other exceptional circumstances which can be considered. Where relevant, these will be documented and a recommendation made by the Welfare team for approval by the Student Services Manager and reported termly to ELT.

5.2 Travel Costs

Public Transport

- College will provide a free bus passes for Band A and Band B students studying full time courses which are at least 3 days per week.
- If a student loses their bus pass, a replacement is available at a cost of £25 for Preston Bus and £5 for Stagecoach. Only one replacement pass is allowed per academic year.

Other Transport

- Where a student does not use the bus service and therefore does not require a bus pass, the Welfare team will award a BACS travel grant to cover petrol costs.
- Where a student is eligible for support and travelling with parents, a 50% contribution will be awarded as a BACS travel grant to cover petrol costs (see table above)

6. Free College Meals and Lunch Vouchers

The current value of a Free College Meal will be £4.50 per day and a meal deal is available from the food outlets on site for this price. You may also receive an allowance if you are off site, attending a work placement or on work experience.

If you are eligible your entitlement will be loaded on to your College ID which can be used at all the food outlets on the College site. If you wish to buy a meal that exceeds the £4.50 value you can pay the extra amount by cash or card.

6.1 Free College Meals (FCM)

Students who apply for a 16-19 Bursary will automatically be assessed against the eligibility criteria to receive either FCM or lunch vouchers (LV). Separate online applications are therefore not required.

Students who already received free meals on or after 1st April 2018 will continue to be eligible for free meals up until July 2026. Evidence of entitlement may be required such as a copy of a previous entitlement letter or an email from the student's High School confirming receipt of Free School Meals.

Eligibility for FCM will be assessed based on evidence of receipt of certain state benefits specified below, or evidence of entitlement to Free School Meals in Year 11 at your previous school.

Qualifying benefits include:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of the State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax credit) and have annual gross income of no more than **£16,190**, as assessed by HMRC.
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit **Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for Free College Meals**
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

6.2 Lunch vouchers (LV)

Lunch vouchers are awarded to students whose household income is no more than £16,190, but do not receive any of the qualifying benefits for FCM.

7. Appeals

Any student who is unhappy with their award, or is experiencing a temporary change of adverse circumstances, is able to make an appeal. All appeals are discussed at a weekly meeting of the Welfare team leading to a recommendation by the Student Services Manager made to ELT who will make the final decision.

Appeals will be measured against the following criteria:

- The student needs extra funds because their attendance is affected
- Their physical, mental or emotional health is in jeopardy.
- Their achievement or retention is at risk

The amount of funds awarded will depend upon:

- The financial needs of the student (particularly where there is potential or actual hardship or homelessness).
- The amount of funds remaining to be allocated.