

16-19 Student Bursary Fund Policy 2026-27

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is to provide financial support to students whose access to education might be impacted by financial barriers. A bursary is funding that may be used for costs related to a student's education such as transport costs, help towards essential items related to a student's studies and help towards educational visits.

You may qualify for a student bursary if you are aged between 16-19, depending on your circumstances and the benefits you receive.

There are two types of bursaries available:

1. VULNERABLE STUDENT BURSARY

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate in education.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care.
- 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 (PIP) in addition to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC - all benefits must be received by the student, in their own right.

Funding for this bursary is held centrally by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Students who qualify for this bursary might experience a short delay while the school applies to draw down the funding as this is separate to the allocated funding the school receives for the academic year.

2. DISCRETIONARY STUDENT BURSARY

You could receive a discretionary bursary if you do not qualify for the vulnerable student bursary. This would be dependent on individual circumstances.

- Discretionary Bursary if you receive Free School Meals (FSM): Students who have successfully claimed free school meals for the academic year 2025-26 are entitled to apply for a discretionary bursary. We will need to see evidence of current household income regardless of FSM Eligibility.
- Discretionary Bursary (Low Income households): Students whose household income is £30,000 or less (inclusive of benefits) will be eligible to apply for a discretionary bursary.

BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING

Free School Meals – If the student is eligible for Free School Meals upon assessment by the Local Authority, funding will be added to the students dinner account on a daily basis.

Travel Payments – The Bursary Administrator will assess whether the student is eligible for the travel element of the bursary based on evidence provided and will administer this funding according to individual circumstances. If eligible then students will receive 10 equal monthly payments to be allocated towards travel related expense's getting to and from school.

Educational Equipment - The Bursary Administrator will liaise with curriculum areas to ascertain whether any educational equipment is required for each subject area – Equipment will be ordered and paid for via the Bursary Administrator.

Educational Visits - The Bursary Administrator will liaise with curriculum areas to ascertain whether any compulsory Educational Visits will be planned during the academic year 2026-27. If this is found to be the case, then educational visits funding will be organised and supported via the Bursary Administrator.

The way discretionary funding will be allocated depends on the number of applicants, and the needs of the students who apply in line with Government Guidance. The allocation of funding for 2026-27 will be confirmed after the closing date of the 11th September, after which time applicants will receive an award notice.

CONDITIONS

To receive a bursary a student must satisfy the following:

- All information within your application form must be true to the best of your knowledge. Incorrect or false information could result in future payments being withheld, any incorrect payments being recovered and further action taking place.
- The student must have no unauthorised/unexplained absences, punctuality is also looked at and consistent lateness could result in your travel payment being withheld!
- The student must be present for all internal and external examinations.
- The student must be up to date with all class work, homework and have handed in course work by published deadlines.

Student attendance will be closely monitored on a weekly basis and reviewed half-termly. If concerns arise around attendance, then meetings will be held to put support in place to improve this.

TIMING & AMOUNTS OF PAYMENTS

- Students must be legitimately enrolled and meet all the rules and regulations above.
- Applications for the 2026-27 academic year must be received by 11th September 2026. ***(Applications will be accepted after this date, funds permitting).***
- The school will contact you to confirm that your application has been successful.
- Where possible, we will pay for things such as compulsory educational visits and essential equipment directly to avoid any financial burden on the student.
- If a student is eligible for the travel element of the bursary, they could receive 10 equal payments from September to June, throughout the academic year via BACS payment, which will be paid directly into their personal bank account.
- Any bursary payments will be made by BACS transfer to a bank account held in the student's own name. Please ensure that these details are filled in clearly and correctly on the application form and should there be any changes during the academic year, please inform Miss Youdale, Bursary Administrator ASAP.

APPEALS

If Bursary payments are withheld, students have the right to appeal against the decision if they feel it is justified to do so. An appeal should be made in writing to Mr. Rose, Head of Sixth Form, stating fully the reason for the appeal and providing any additional evidence that may support the case. Evidence may be accepted from a variety of sources, from people in the community who understand your particular circumstances, for example, a GP or a Support Worker. Final decisions for appeals will be made by the sixth form bursary panel. Their decision will be final.

APPLICATION FORMS

To apply for a bursary, please collect an application form from Miss Youdale in the sixth form office at the start of the academic year. Return your completed form by the 11th September with copies of your supporting documentary evidence (please do not send original documents as we have to retain these securely for audit purposes. You can request an application form via email – syoudale@bishopschester.co.uk but all completed forms must be handed in with relevant evidence to prove eligibility, emails of these will not be accepted.

Applications will be considered in line with Government Guidance and if successful, you will receive communication from us by email detailing the amount awarded.

Kind Regards

Miss S Youdale
Pastoral & Sixth Form Administrator

Tel: 01244 313806 Ext 233

Email: syoudale@bishopschester.co.uk