

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Statement

Information for Students and Families (2025–2026)

1. What is the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund?

The **16 to 19 Bursary Fund** is a government-funded scheme designed to help young people stay in education by removing **financial barriers to participation**. It provides **financial support for essential education-related costs** so that students can continue with their studies and not be disadvantaged due to financial hardship.

[\[gov.uk\]](#)

The bursary is intended to help with **essential participation costs**, such as:

- Travel to and from school, college or training
- Books and learning materials
- Specialist equipment or clothing required for a course (for example, protective clothing or tools)

The fund **cannot** be used for general living costs, social or extracurricular activities, or learning support services such as counselling, mentoring, or additional tutoring. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

2. Types of 16 to 19 Bursary

There are **two types of bursary support**:

2.1 Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups

This bursary is for students who fall into specific vulnerable categories and who have a financial need. These students are considered less likely to receive financial support from parents or carers and may therefore require additional help to remain in education. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

Eligible vulnerable groups include students who are:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving **Universal Credit or Income Support** in their own name because they support themselves (and possibly dependants)
- Receiving **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** in their own right **and** Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right [\[gov.uk\]](#)

Students in these groups may receive **up to £1,200 per year**, depending on the **actual cost of their participation**. The amount awarded must be based on a needs assessment and **must not be awarded automatically**. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

2.2 Discretionary Bursary

The **discretionary bursary** is for students who do not meet the vulnerable group criteria but who still face financial hardship.

Institutions decide:

- Who receives a discretionary bursary
- What costs are supported

Awards are based on:

- Individual circumstances
- Household income (where assessed)
- Evidence of actual education-related costs

Support typically focuses on essential costs such as travel, meals on study days, books, or compulsory equipment. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

3. Who Is Eligible for the Bursary Fund?

To be eligible for **either type of bursary**, students must meet **all** of the following criteria.

3.1 Age Criteria

Students must be:

- **16 or over, but under 19 on 31 August 2025**

Exceptions apply for:

- Students aged 19 who are continuing a programme they started before turning 19
- Students aged 19 or over with an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** (discretionary bursary only)

Students aged 19 or over are **not eligible** for bursaries for vulnerable groups. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

3.2 Type of Study Programme

Students must be enrolled on a **publicly funded course** that:

- Is subject to inspection by a recognised quality assurance body (for example Ofsted)
- Leads to an approved qualification up to **Level 3**

The following students are **not eligible**:

- Apprentices or students in waged training
- Students enrolled on higher education courses
- Most distance-learning students (unless exceptional support in kind is required). [\[gov.uk\]](#)

3.3 Residency Requirements

Students must meet the **residency criteria for post-16 funding** in England. Institutions must check and retain evidence of residency for audit purposes. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

4. Special Circumstances

4.1 Asylum-Seeking Students

- **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** are treated as looked-after children and may qualify for a vulnerable group bursary if they have financial need.
- **Accompanied asylum-seeking students** may receive **support in kind** (such as travel passes or equipment). [\[gov.uk\]](#)

4.2 Assessment of Actual Need

All students—regardless of bursary type—must have their **actual needs assessed**. Institutions must:

- Base payments on real participation costs
- Keep evidence of the purpose and value of support
- Avoid flat-rate or automatic awards that are not linked to need. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

5. Important Points to Note

- Bursary funding is for **essential education costs only**
- Institutions may ask for receipts or evidence of expenditure
- Payments may be provided as cash, vouchers, or direct payments to suppliers
- Emergency meal support can be offered in exceptional hardship cases
- Students may be refused support if they have **no identifiable participation costs**. [\[gov.uk\]](#)

6. Summary

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund plays a vital role in ensuring **financial barriers do not prevent young people from continuing their education**. Support is targeted, evidence-based, and tailored to individual need.

Students who think they may be eligible should contact Mrs Voyse in school for an application form.