

Bishop Heber High School

16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

2026-2027



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1. Aims

Our school aims to:

Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds

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 [the Department for Education \(DfE\) 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027](#).

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 The governing body

The governing body has overall responsibility for approving this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our school, responsibility for approving this policy has been delegated to Resources, Environment and Personnel Committee

In our school, monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Chair of the REP Committee

4.2 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.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

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

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.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 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.

Bursary awards will be determined on the basis of evidenced actual participation costs and individual financial need. The school does not make standard or flat-rate bursary awards.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- 1. Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and**
- 2. Discretionary bursaries**

We use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

Transport

Books

Laptop / IT Equipment

Equipment

Field trips

Other course-related costs

The costs of attending university interviews and open days

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.

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.

6.2 Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example, Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of the following categories:

- Funded directly by the Department for Education (DfE), or by the DfE via a local authority;
- Otherwise publicly funded and leading to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or included on the DfE's list of qualifications approved for funding; or
- Participation by a non-employed student aged 16 to 19 on a King's Trust Team Programme.

Students are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund if they are:

- Participating in an apprenticeship programme; or
- Engaged in any form of waged training or employment-based learning.

Students studying through distance learning are not normally expected to require support from the bursary fund because they do not usually incur the types of costs the fund is intended to meet, such as travel, equipment or specialist clothing. However, in exceptional circumstances, where a genuine participation cost is identified, the school may provide support in kind. This may include, for example, a temporary travel pass to attend examinations or other essential activities. Each case will be considered individually.

6.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [funding regulations 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;

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.

6.5 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, 6.2 and 6.3 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 (19+ continuers and students with an EHC plan) may still receive the legacy benefits listed above.

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, 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.

Students on shorter programmes may receive a reduced award where assessment of their actual participation costs indicates a lower level of support is required. 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.

We will provide this 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.

6.6 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if they satisfy 1 or more of the following criteria:

Discretionary Bursaries

The school allocates discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries will be reviewed each year the student requires support. We will base all decisions about which students receive help from the bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student. The school will carry out a financial assessment for each student to establish their household income, whether there is an actual financial need and what kinds of costs the student has. The criteria we will consider includes the following:

- I. Students living in a lower-income household (where total annual income including benefits is less than £33,700).**
- II. Students who are from a single-parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family.**
- III. Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent.**
- IV. Students who travel greater than 3 miles to the institution.**
- V. The level of educational costs the student needs help with e.g. the cost of equipment / clothing required by their course(s)**

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 also apply for a short-term, ad-hoc discretionary bursary. The school will retain a proportion of the 16-19 bursary grant funding to cover unforeseen hardship that may arise during the academic year. In the first instance, students or parents/carers should contact **Mrs M Nesbitt, Business Manager** to discuss their circumstances.

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

- I. Level of household income**
- II. Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or a location for a placement**

III. The number of dependent children in the student's household

IV. The requirements of their study programme

V. 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.

In cases of severe hardship, the school may provide temporary emergency support for meals and/or travel before a full discretionary bursary assessment has been completed. Any such support will be recorded and monitored in accordance with DfE guidance and will only be used as a short-term measure pending a full assessment of need.

6.7 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, 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

A copy of the UC claim from Department of Work and Pensions

7. Application and payment process

7.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by 30th 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 (either via email or via letter) 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.

7.2 Payment process

Payments are made using the following process:

Make in-kind payment such as travel pass, books, equipment, field trips and / or

Make half termly payments by BACS transfer to the student's bank account

Where bursary funding is provided to reimburse costs incurred by a student, the school may require receipts or other appropriate evidence of expenditure. Students may be asked to provide this evidence before reimbursement is made, or at appropriate points during the academic year, in order to demonstrate that bursary funds have been used for the purpose for which they were awarded.

7.3 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 above 95% (unless exceptional circumstances).

Meeting all rules and expectations laid out in the Sixth Form Contract, The Behaviour and Discipline Policy, the Sixth Form Attendance and Sign Out Agreement, and all other relevant school policies.

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 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 or purchased equipment from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded, or if students have not continued to meet the conditions / expectations outlined above.

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.

8. 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.

9. Record keeping

Any paperwork and documents we retain for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, documents as evidence and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with our data protection policy, privacy notices and record retention schedule. Information held can be obtained by request to the Business Manager.

10. Unspent funds

Unspent funding must be reported via the DfE customer help portal no later than 31 March each year. Any unspent funds will be recovered by DfE.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Mr J Garnham (Director of 6th Form) and Mrs M Nesbitt (Business Manager) annually.

Approved by:	M Nesbitt / J Garnham	Date: 10 th July 2026
Last reviewed on:	July 2026	
Next review due by:	July 2027	