



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School

Sixth Form 16-19 Bursary Policy

JUNE 2026

University of Birmingham School

16-19 Bursary Policy

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Staff Responsible	C Townsend (Principal)		

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University of Birmingham School

16-19 Bursary Policy

1 **Aims & guidance**

- 1.1 Our School aims to:
- 1.2 Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- 1.3 Make clear to parents and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
- 1.4 Make clear to parents and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds
- 1.5 This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE).

2 **Definitions**

- 2.1 The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' 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). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.
- 2.2 A 'care leaver' is defined as:
 - a) 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
 - b) 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

3 **Roles and responsibilities**

3.1 **The Governing Board**

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for approving the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, but can delegate this to a Committee, an individual Governor or the Principal. The Governing Board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

3.2 **The School Principal**

The School Principal is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

3.3 **Staff**

Our staff are responsible for implementing the 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.

3.4 **Parents (and carers)**

Parents are expected to notify staff or the School Principal of any concerns or queries regarding the 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

4 **How we use the bursary fund**

4.1 Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

4.2 The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

4.3 There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Discretionary Bursaries and
- Bursaries for Defined Vulnerable Groups; and

4.4 Administration **Costs & Emergency funds**

The School will hold back 5% of the total funding to cover administration costs and 10% of the total funding will be held back for applications that are received after the initial deadline in the autumn term (i.e. due to changes of circumstances or the arrival of new students).

5 **Support Categories**

5.1 We use the fund to provide students with support towards the following study related costs

- Transport to/from School
- School Meals
- Educational Resources
- IT Software or Equipment
- Clothing for Dress Code

For more information about what items can be claimed within each category, please see **Appendix A**.

6 **Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries**

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:

- a) Are continuing on a study program or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or
- b) 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 (e.g. Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- a) Be funded directly by the DfE or by the DfE via a Local Authority;
- b) Be funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund;
- c) Be 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 14 to 19;
- d) Be a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

6.3 Residency

Students in receipt of the bursary must be a legal resident of the UK or a registered asylum seeker.

If the student has not lived in the UK for the period of 3 years prior to starting their course, the School may request additional information to confirm whether a student meets the necessary residency criteria as set out in the [DfE \(formerly ESFA\) 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.

7 Discretionary 16-19 Bursaries

Each year, the majority of our bursary awards are Discretionary 16-19 Bursaries, awarded to support students from lower income households, who may be disproportionately impacted by the costs of completing their A-Level studies.

7.1 Eligibility

In addition to the eligibility criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, all students are encouraged to apply for a Discretionary Bursary if they satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

Criteria	Evidence required	How should evidence be provided?
Student is currently in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM).	A successful application through the online FSM checking service; cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/birmingham	N/A - Confirmation of eligibility is automatically sent to the School upon completion of a successful application.
Total household income (including any received benefits / tax credits) was less than £30,000 during the previous tax year	Universal Credit Statements (Past 3 months*) Or P60 (most recent) Or Pay slips (Past 3 months) <i>*if parents/carers have been on Universal Credit less than 3 months we will require copies of the all the statements or entitlement letters they have received so far</i>	Scanned copies to be uploaded as part of the online application form

Under exceptional circumstances, students who are not automatically eligible for an award can also apply for help with one off course related expenses (proof of household income or hardship will be asked for). Applications for additional help will be considered on an individual basis by the School Business Office and would be dependent upon available funds.

We will review all students' eligibility position each academic year. Students must therefore re-apply for each year of study and will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

7.2 Support Categories

In their application for a Discretionary Bursary, students will be asked to rank our support categories in order of importance (highest to lowest) to ensure that any financial support awarded is tailored to individuals and their actual financial needs.

Maximum award amounts for annual support will be calculated after the application deadline has passed, as the amounts available will be subject to the number of eligible applications received.

As funds are limited, it may be necessary to close applications at any point during the academic year.

8 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply to the Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups.

8.1 Eligibility

The defined vulnerable groups are as follows;

Criteria	Evidence Required	How should evidence be provided?
Students who are in care or have recently left Local Authority Care	Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority	Scanned copies to be uploaded as part of the online application form
Students who are personally receiving Income Support (IS)* or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves (and/or a child or partner)	Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bills A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the student's name	
Students who are personally 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	A copy of documents confirming receipt of DLA or PIP, in the student's name UC or IS award notice, in the student's name	

*Universal Credit has now replaced Income Support, 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.

8.2 Entitlement to Bursary

Students who meet the criteria for a Defined Vulnerable Groups Bursary are not automatically entitled to a bursary award. For example, students will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (i.e. their financial needs are met from other sources and/or they have no relevant costs).

Where a bursary is provided, support will generally be available up to £1,200 per year. However, cases will be looked at individually and students will only receive the amount they actually need to support their studies (i.e. will not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount).

As part of their application, applicants for this bursary will be asked to tell us in advance about their perceived support needs and the intended use for the funding. This will enable the sixth form team to allocate funding from one or more Support Categories, as necessary.

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.

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.

9 Application and payment process

9.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by mid-November 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 and category 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.

9.2 Submission of claims

Following confirmation of bursary eligibility, applicants will be required to submit requests regarding items for which they wish to claim financial reimbursement (travel tickets, purchase of equipment etc).

All requests must be submitted via our online bursary portal for approval and must be evidenced by a digital receipt of purchase. Wherever possible, receipts should clearly state the location and date of purchase.

Items will only be reimbursed where there is a clearly identified need for the item to support their studies, therefore if any applicant is unsure as to whether an item would be approved, they should seek approval from the Sixth Form Office before making the purchase.

For further guidance on item claims for each category, please see Appendix A

9.3 Payment process

Payments for all approved claims will be made on a termly basis, typically paid by BACS transfer to the student's bank account.

For the academic year 2026/27	Term 1 Autumn	Term 2 Spring	Term 3 Summer
Review of attendance, punctuality and conduct	12 October	8 February	24 May
Evidence/Receipt of purchases to be received by	02 November	22 February	07 June
Reimbursement payments to be processed <i>(week commencing)</i>	09 November	01 March	21 June

10 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

- 10.1 Students in receipt of the Discretionary Bursary are expected to uphold the School's high expectations for attendance, general conduct and punctuality throughout their studies. Therefore, bursary payments are subject to the following expectations being met:
- a) Student maintains at least 96% authorised attendance (i.e. does not accrue more than 4% unauthorised marks)
 - b) Student has not been issued any Stage 1 or Stage 2 reports for behaviour, attendance or punctuality concerns.
- 10.2 If, at the point of each attendance check, an applicant has fallen below that which is required and expected, the School reserves the right to reduce or even fully withdraw further bursary payments.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 We may also reduce or withhold 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.
- 10.5 We reserve the right to recall money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded. 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.
- 10.6 All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions.

11 Change in circumstances

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

12 Record keeping

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 These can be viewed on the School's website <https://uobSchool.org.uk/vision-ethos/policies/>

13 Appendix A – Guidance for Support Categories

Please see the below guidance for item reimbursement claims within each Support Category.

Travel to/from School	<p>Eligible students for this award must live more than one mile away from the School* and must have applied for a 16-18 photo card.</p> <p>Any award amounts will be based on the cheapest and most reasonable method of public transport for an individual's journey between the School and their primary home address.</p> <p>Support may be provided up to a maximum limit set at 3 x the cost of the relevant termly student ticket.</p> <p>Students must submit evidence of purchase each term (Receipts required).</p> <p>*Students living within one mile of School may be eligible for travel support in exceptional circumstances (i.e. a condition supported by medical evidence.)</p>
School Meal Support	<p>Available to students who are eligible for a discretionary bursary but not already in receipt of Free School Meals.</p> <p>Students who are awarded School meal support may purchase food from the School canteen up to the cost of a standard meal deal.</p> <p>Any unused meal allowance will not 'roll on' to subsequent days and no cash value will be stored in the School gateway system.</p>
Educational Resources	<p>Reimbursed payments will be offered towards the cost of equipment, stationery and books that are associated with the student's courses or general A-Level studies.</p> <p>Receipts will be required to evidence any purchases made and must clearly label/identify the item, cost and the date of purchase.</p> <p>If a student is unsure whether an item would be approved as an Educational Resource, they should speak to a member of the Sixth Form Team in the Sixth Form Office to seek approval BEFORE purchasing the item.</p> <p>Final decisions on whether resources can be approved will sit with the School Business Office, in conjunction with recommendations from Leaders who represent at the School's Conduct, Character, and Welfare sub-Group.</p>

<p>IT Equipment or Software</p>	<p>Students without access to IT facilities at home may apply to receive a School issued device.</p> <p>The School will set up laptops as student computers and usage will be monitored in line with the Student Use of IT Policy and the Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>Students are responsible for maintaining the security of the laptop and keeping it in good condition. The School is not responsible for replacing any lost or damaged laptops.</p> <p>Students are expected to return their laptop to IT Support at the end of their studies.</p> <p>If a School issued device is not appropriate or a student is seeking to purchase software related to their A-level studies, appropriate funds may be offered upon receipt of purchase.</p>
<p>Dress Code</p>	<p>Reimbursed payments will be offered towards the cost of clothing items in line with the School's published Sixth Form Dress Code, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suit items (including Blazer/Jacket) • Smart shoes • Outdoor coat • School bag • Sports kit (A-Level PE students only) <p>Receipts will be required to evidence any purchases made and must clearly label/identify the item, cost and the date of purchase.</p> <p>Items should be purchased according to need and with value for money in mind.</p> <p>If a student is unsure whether an item would be approved as an appropriate Dress Code purchase, they should speak to the Sixth Form Office to seek approval BEFORE purchasing the item.</p> <p>Final decisions on whether resources can be approved will sit with the School Business Office. in conjunction with recommendations from Leaders who represent at the School's Conduct, Character, and Welfare sub-Group.</p>