



16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy 2026-2027

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the guidelines for the management and allocation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund and the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary Fund for the 2026-2027 academic year.

These funds are to be provided to the college by the government and are aimed at supporting learners who are over 16 and under 19 years of age at 31st August 2025 and experiencing financial difficulties with essential costs associated with their studies. This could include uniform, equipment, transport, trips and other essential course related costs.

Funds are very limited and targeted at those most in need. All requests for funding will be considered although it may not always be possible to help or to cover the full costs requested. When the funding is exhausted the college will close the fund.

2. Eligibility and Conditions

While it is recognised many learners and their families may face financial pressures, the college has a duty to adhere to the government bursary requirements as well as making sure that funds are awarded fairly and to the learners most in need. Eligibility for funding does not give the individual the right to funding.

If the learner stops attending or changes provision, they may be requested to return equipment or any cash awards they have received.

3. Application Process

Applicants must complete the relevant application form and clearly identify the financial support that they feel they or their child needs to achieve their course of study.

Applicants must demonstrate their financial need by providing the supporting evidence as detailed in the application forms. All information submitted is confidential and used purely for the purpose of assessing and administering the awards.

Each application for financial assistance will be considered by a panel from the college and decisions will be made based on the information provided and the eligibility criteria for the different types of awards. These are detailed in the sections below.

For learners who will be in the college's Post-16 provision in September 2026 applications should be received by 30th September 2026. Following that deadline the panel will meet and review all the applications against the available funding and will address any queries with applicants. They will then aim to give a response to applicants, and process payments as soon as possible.

Applications received after the 30th of September will be considered on an individual basis subject to need and availability of funds.

Please Note:

Applications for financial help are reassessed each year and a new application form must be submitted each time with up-to-date supporting evidence, where necessary.



4. 16-19 Bursary Funds

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements:

16-19 Discretionary Award

This is open to learners whose families have a low household income (c. £30,000 or below).

Awards will be targeted towards learners who face the greatest financial barriers to participation to cover course related costs (e.g. clothing, equipment, transport and trips).

Evidence of income needs to be provided with the application form.

Eg:

- Letter from Essex or relevant Local Authority demonstrating you are being charged the reduced rate for a taxi to school
- Working Tax Credit (net annual income and tax credits totalling no more than £30,000)
- Child Tax Credit (and not eligible for Working Tax Credit) net annual salary and tax credits totalling no more than £30,000)
- Jobseekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Universal Credit.

You will also need to provide evidence of the costs you are requesting support for.

16-19 Vulnerable Bursary

This is an award of up to £1,200 a year which learners can apply for if in the following defined vulnerable groups.

- 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 their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

The vulnerable bursary is awarded to help learners in paying for course related costs, such as equipment, clothing, travel and trips. In the case of this bursary once eligibility and need have been confirmed the college will apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for this funding.

Please Note:

The full £1,200 vulnerable bursary is not automatically given if there is no financial need. Awards will be based on the amount that the learner needs to participate in education. There is the possibility that the outcome of your application will be an award of less than £1,200 or no award if the learner does not have any relevant costs.



Evidence is required for the Vulnerable Bursary in order to prove the learner falls into one of the vulnerable groups.

Eg:

- Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority, or the leaving and care service
- Evidence confirming benefit entitlement
- If claiming Universal Credit, additional evidence will be required to show that the young person is living independently (e.g. Tenancy Agreement)

5. Appeals

Learners and their families can appeal against decisions taken by the School / College Bursary Fund Administrators in writing to SEAX using the usual complaints procedure.