



Application and Eligibility Criteria for the 16-19 Bursary Fund 2025-26

Dear Parents/ Carers,

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support of up to £1,200 to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

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 are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate. Students should be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have and must not be automatically awarded £1,200. Institutions must ensure students are eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups in each year they require support.

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

If you think you meet the criteria as listed above, please complete the form attached and return it to the school office. Applicants are reminded that this form is for consideration only and does not guarantee entitlement.

Inevitably, some students will not qualify or will not receive the level of discretionary funding we would like to provide because of variations in the level of funding from the Education Funding Agency.

The deadline for initial applications is Friday 24th October 2025. Applications after this date will also be considered.

Applications will be treated in the utmost confidence and we would encourage students to maintain this confidentiality with other members of the school community. Funds will be made available in line with the 16-19 Bursary Policy.

If the application is successful a letter of confirmation will be sent to the student with request for the original document/ letter proving the entitlement as defined in the

vulnerable groups criteria e.g. proof of receipt of benefits. Unfortunately, without this information and evidence the bursary will not be awarded. In the event that the application is unsuccessful or further information is required the student will be notified.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keiran Ryan-Grealish', written in a cursive style.

Keiran Ryan-Grealish

Interim Executive Head Teacher



Forest Oak & Merstone Schools

16-19 Bursary Fund Information

2025- 2026

Introduction

The Government has set aside some money for schools, colleges and training providers to apply for in order to help young people who need financial support to participate in post 16 education or training. This is called the 16-19 Bursary Fund. There are two elements to the fund: nominated vulnerable groups and a discretionary element. Both of which must be applied for.

The Bursary Fund could help with any education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to school, college or training provider. Extra help might be needed to buy additional books, clothing or equipment for a course, or pay for educational visits.

Who is eligible?

The young person must be aged 16 or above and under 19 at the start of the academic year on 1st September. Where a young person turns 19 during the academic year, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.

All students applying (whether for a vulnerable student or discretionary grant) need to make their needs and the cost clear on the application form. Guidance on a student's needs and any costs can be discussed with the school at any stage of the process.

Nominated vulnerable groups:

- Young people who are looked after (see definitions below) aged 16-19.
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers are treated as looked after children
- Disabled young people who are in full time education and are in receipt of Income Support (IS), Universal credit or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Students claiming because they get DLA or PIP must also be claiming ESA or income support as well. These benefits MUST be in combination.

It is the young person who must be in receipt of benefits and not other family members. Evidence of the benefit will be required and will be checked by the school.

Definitions of young people who are looked after:

- Eligible children ('looked after'): this is a child who is looked after, aged 16 or 17, and has been looked after for a period of 13 continuous weeks or periods amounting to 13 weeks, which began after s/he reached 14 and ended after s/he reached 16.
- Relevant children ('care leavers'): this is defined as a child who is not looked after, is aged 16 or 17, and was, before s/he ceased to be looked after, an eligible child.

- Former relevant children ('care leavers'): this is defined as a young person who is aged 18 or above, and has been either a relevant child and would be one if s/he were under 18, or immediately before s/he ceased to be looked after at 18, was an eligible child.

Type of evidence that is needed:

<u>Type of Benefit</u>	<u>Evidence Required</u>
Young People who are looked after:	Personal Education Plan (PEP) or Pathway Plan
Income Support (IS) (or Universal Credit)	Letter dated within 3 months showing name, address, benefit received and period of claim
Employment Support Allowance (ESA)	(This is not normally paid to young people in full time education unless the young person is in receipt of DLA). Letter dated within 12 months of application showing name, address, benefit received and period of claim.
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	Letter dated within 12 months of application showing name, address, benefit received and period of claim.

Receipt of a bursary for vulnerable learners will be conditional on the student meeting certain agreed standards:

- At least 95% attendance.
- Acceptable standards of behaviour including no fixed term or permanent exclusions.

Exceptional circumstances on the above can be agreed at the headteacher's discretion, for example medical appointments, illness. Evidence will be required.

How will the bursary money be distributed?

At the end of every term the attendance of eligible pupils may be verified and a review process may be triggered to ensure that the original circumstances still remain. Further up to date evidence may be required. Once the school is satisfied that all the criteria continue

to be met payments in kind or a cash payment will be made to the young person's bank account.

The school will require details of the young person's bank account.

On the whole the school will purchase items for the student rather than give cash sums.

If the bursary is for school transport the school will pay the money directly to the Local Authority providing the transport.

Discretionary Awards

Young people must be aged 16-19, years 12-14, and eligible for free school meals. Support will be considered for young people who face the greatest financial barriers to participation, for example transport, travel training, trips and visits. Discretionary awards will be allocated by subsidising or paying for the costs of activities.

Receipt of a discretionary award will be conditional on the student meeting certain agreed standards:

- At least 95% attendance
- Acceptable standards of behaviour including no fixed term or permanent exclusions.

Exceptional circumstances on the above can be agreed at the Head Teacher's discretion, for example medical appointments, illness. Evidence will be required.

Administration costs

The school will retain 5% of the total bursary allocation to administer the scheme.

Monitoring and reporting

The Headteacher/Principal reports through the Governors' finance committee and the full governing body on all matters relating to finance. Should a young person or family feel aggrieved about how their request for a bursary was handled, they should follow the school's normal complaints policy which is available on request.

Additional Information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found at:

www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary

Applicants are reminded that this form is for consideration only and does not guarantee entitlement.

We have to establish the number of students who have applied for financial support and then match this with the funding available to the school. Inevitably some students will not qualify or will not receive the level of discretionary funding we would like to provide

because of variations in the level of funding from the Education Funding Agency. Funds will be allocated in line with the 16-19 Bursary Guidance.

**The deadline for initial applications is Friday 24th October 2025.
Applications before and after this date will also be considered.**

Students are reminded that their application will be treated in the utmost confidence and we would encourage students to maintain this confidentiality with other members of the school community.

Funds will be made available in line with the 16-19 Bursary Policy, attendance and behaviour criteria.

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Forest Oak & Merstone Schools Vulnerable Learner's Bursary Fund Application



Student Details:

First Name:	Last Name:
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Are you looked after by a local authority? Yes No

Do you (the student) receive any of the following:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support Universal Credit?

If you have ticked any of these boxes you will need to provide evidence with your application.

What do you need the award for? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Will you be using the bursary to pay for transport? YES NO

Item or Service:	
Cost:	

Student Name:	
Student Signature:	
Parental Name:	
Parental Signature:	
Date:	

Have you included everything you need with your application?

You only need to include one of the following documents with your application:

Please tick the box next to the documents you are providing.

DLA award letter dated within the last 12 months

PIP award letter dated within the last 12 months

Income Support letter dated within the last 3 months

Universal Credit letter dated within the last 3 months

Bank statement showing benefit being paid in to your account

All evidence sent must show name, address and which benefit you are receiving.

Bank Statements must be dated within the last 3 months.



BURSARY PAYMENT DETAILS FORM



SEND THIS FORM BACK TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR
BURSARY APPLICATION

The student applying for the bursary must insert their own bank details in this section. Bursary payments can not be made in to any other account.

Please fill in all relevant fields below:

Applicant's Name			
Address Line 1			
Address Line 2			
Address Line 3			
Postcode			
Applicant Email:		Tel No:	
Parent Email:		Mobile No:	

Applicant's Bank Details.

Bank Name:	
Bank Account Number:	
Bank Sort Code:	

*Please note, money can **only** be paid in to the student's bank account.