

16-19 Bursary Scheme Policy 2026-27

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Current version	Previous version	Summary of key change(s) since last version:
1.2	1.1	Changed reference to DfE guide 2026 to 2027
		Changed dates to relevant academic year
		Section 4 re clarification of students for whom this policy will now apply
		Section 6 changes to eligibility criteria for discretionary bursary
		Section 12 changes to costs covered
1.1	1.0	Addition of section 14: young carers (approved December 2025)
1.0	N/A	New policy (one year pilot for Gosforth Academy only) (approved September 2025)

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1. Aims of the policy

- Provide staff, parents/carers and students with 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 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](#) ("the DfE guide").

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher / Principal

Implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Executive Headteacher and Principal of the academies with 16-19 provision. The Executive Headteacher/ Principal is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with this policy, and that it is being applied consistently. They will work with the local authority's Virtual School and care leavers' service to encourage pupils to apply who are eligible for a bursary.

The Deputy Principal: Post 16 will be responsible for:

- the day-to-day management of the policy and the systems required for its effective implementation, supported by Sixth Form leaders and tutors;
- assessing eligibility for an award from the Bursary Fund;
- processing the claim;
- monitoring and managing awards provided for defined vulnerable group bursaries to enable funding to be claimed from the DfE, as appropriate
- maintaining records in accordance with the requirements of this policy and the DfE guide;
- storing and processing confidential data in line with the Trust's Data Protection and Records Retention policies.

The Finance Team is responsible for:

- the processing of any payments of any bursaries/reimbursements approved by the Deputy Principal: Post-16;
- the processing of the purchase of any goods or services that are deemed appropriate to support the study of individual students;
- processing claims to the DfE for funding for defined vulnerable group bursaries;

- undertaking a financial reconciliation at the end of the financial year and returning unspent bursary funding to DfE in accordance with the guidance;
- storing and processing confidential data in line with the Trust's Data Protection and Records Retention policies.

Students are responsible for:

- determining whether or not they may be eligible for the 16 to 19 bursary
- completing the 16 to 19 Bursary Application form;
- where appropriate, providing evidence of income, benefits or circumstances as determined by the eligibility criteria;
- agreeing with the Deputy Principal: Post 16 in advance whether an item or service can be purchased through the Bursary Fund;
- providing receipts for goods or services purchased when requested to do so;
- setting up a personal bank account and providing the details of this when required to do so;
- using any bursary funds provided only for the purpose for which they have been provided;
- informing the Deputy Principal: Post 16 immediately of any changes in circumstances that may affect entitlement to the Bursary.

4. When is a student eligible for the 16 – 19 Bursary?

Introduction

The bursary fund is intended to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study programme, to help with the cost of essential books or equipment or with the cost of travelling to the academy or college, for example. The bursary fund is not intended to support costs not related to education (living costs), extra-curricular activities or provide learning support or other services that institutions give to students – such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.

There are two types of 16-19 Bursary; a Vulnerable Bursary, and a Discretionary Bursary. To be eligible to receive either of these bursaries a student must be aged over 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2026.

Both types of bursary funding are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation they face; therefore, funds must only go to those who genuinely need them. The individual needs of each student must be assessed in addition to their eligibility when awarding bursary funding. This means we must provide funding based on a student's actual participation needs. We cannot make flat or fixed rate payments that do not reflect the actual costs that a student faces and that we do not have the evidence to support.

This policy will apply to all new claimants of the 16 to 19 Bursary from September 2026 onwards at Gosforth Academy and Jesmond Park Academy. Legacy claimants who previously received support through the 16-19 Bursary Scheme (Legacy) will

continue to be paid according to the conditions of that policy for the academy year 2026-27.

Should a student qualify, they will need to apply by completing the Bursary Application form. This information can be found on the Academy website under the "Sixth Form" tab, within the "Student Support" section.

All applications will be treated confidentially.

5. Vulnerable Bursary (V1)

Students in the defined vulnerable group are eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per year and should be in one of the following:

- young person in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children;
- young care leaver;
- 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 a student is a parent they will also need to be living away from their own parents to qualify.)

To apply for this level of support, a student will need to provide evidence in written form, unless the school is already in possession of relevant information.

Suggested forms of evidence include:

- A letter from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) setting out the benefits to which they are entitled
- Written confirmation of their current or previous looked after status from the local authority that looks after them, or provides them with other leaving care services.

6. Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary bursaries are aimed at students who would not be able to stay in education without financial help. There are two types of Discretionary bursary, D1 & D2.

Discretionary Bursary (D1)

A student will qualify for the D1 Discretionary bursary if:

- they are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and their household income is below £35,000pa.

To qualify for free school meals a recipient first needs to apply to Newcastle City Council at:

[Apply for free school meals Newcastle City Council](#)

After this form is completed online, the City Council will notify the academy of participation. The local authority will be assessing existing FSM eligibility. Until that is done, students currently entitled to FSM will be entitled to the discretionary bursary.

Discretionary Bursary (D2)

A student will qualify for the **D2 Discretionary bursary** if:

- they are not in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) but their household income does not exceed £35,000 p.a.

or

- they are a young carer.

or

- there are exceptional circumstances

To claim for the D2 bursary students should speak to the Sixth Form Team if they think they may be eligible for this. Typically, D2 bursary will only be paid to students living in households where the annual income does not exceed £35,000.

7. Required evidence to support applications

Applications for V1 and D2 bursaries will need to be accompanied by evidence.

Vulnerable Bursary (V1)

- proof of being a Child in Care or a Care Leaver;
- young person in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name;
- young person in receipt of either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own name and Employment Support Allowance or UC in their own name.

Discretionary Bursary (D1)

There is no need to provide evidence for the D1 bursary, as this is information that is automatically shared with academy.

Discretionary Bursary (D2)

- current up to date Universal Credit Notice (showing the total household income, as evidenced by the three most recent monthly UC Award statements.)
- or

- evidence of household benefits assessed by HMRC (e.g. Tax Credit Awards, Child Tax Credits or Income Support) Please ensure that the documentation shows the household income or
- household wage slips covering the most recent three-month period.

An application for any bursary should state the expenses/items a student foresees needing financial support for. These may include: transport costs to and from academy; books, supplies or equipment for courses; trips, visits and activities as part of their course; university open days and interviews; or any other costs related to their studies.

Should other costs arise during the course of the year, these can still be claimed for providing they meet the criteria.

The maximum claim for a single item is capped at £500. A claim for any single item above £500 would require a written request to the Deputy Principal: Post 16 for consideration.

In order to receive financial support students must:

- meet academy expectations in terms of conduct, progress in the programme of study and attendance
- maintain an attendance threshold as detailed below
- attend any examinations they are entered for
- have completed the 16-19 Bursary Application form, which includes agreeing to the 16-19 Bursary Student Agreement
- adhere to all elements of the Contract and Entitlement Criteria.
- These aspects will be reviewed throughout the year, using an academic tracking system, Tutor and Teacher concerns, as well as attendance analysis.
- The bursary payment will not usually be made should attendance levels drop below 85%. Individual circumstances will be taken into account and discussed with the student in advance.

8. Making an application and by when

Application Forms are available online on the academy website. These should be completed and returned along with all supporting evidence no later than 30th September 2026.

We are aware that personal circumstances may change during the year, and an application after this date may need to be made. Please be advised however, that late applications may mean reduced funds.

Should an applicant need any further guidance, they should contact a member of the Sixth Form Team.

9. Changes in circumstances

The academy will be advised of any change in FSM eligibility; however, it is the responsibility of students to inform the Sixth Form Team of any changes in circumstances that may affect entitlement to the Bursary. Failing to do so, may result in a clawback of funding.

10. Inaccurate or fraudulent applications

By completing the application form, a student agrees that the information and evidence provided in support of the application, is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge.

False information given may mean that payments will cease, and that any overpayments will be recovered. Fraudulent applications will be investigated and referred to the Principal/Executive Headteacher and Chief Executive Officer.

11. Appeals process

If a student believes they should be entitled to a bursary but have not been awarded one, they should first approach the Deputy Principal: Post 16. If they, or their parent / carer wishes to appeal the decision of the Deputy Principal: Post 16, they should do so in writing to the Executive Headteacher / Principal.

12. When and how will I be able to access funding?

When a claim has been approved, depending on the nature of the application, a student will receive:

- A contribution towards public transport costs to the academy (receipted evidence of the costs will need to be submitted in the first instance);
- A travel pass, as appropriate
- Books, supplies and resources required for the programme of study;
- Equipment required for the programme of study, including specialist clothing or protective equipment;
- Field trips and other essential course-related costs;
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days, including a Young Person's Railcard when necessary;
- The costs of attending other events to support future pathways, e.g. attendance at employment fairs and events or interviews
- Items relating to securing progression to university, apprenticeships, employment or further study;
- Locker key deposit;
- Cover of the costs of any re-sit or re-marks of external examinations, at the discretion of the Deputy Principal: Post 16;

- Cover of the cost of the UCAS application or application to other higher education institutions, if this cost is not automatically covered by being on FSM.

Any costs not listed above, which are financial barriers to participation, will be at the discretion of the Deputy Principal: Post-16 and determined on an individual basis. Records of all decisions will be maintained for audit purposes.

A student 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). When calculating needs, cases will be looked at individually and the outcome based on the particular student's needs.

Where a bursary is provided, the funding will generally be up to a maximum value of £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more.

We will use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, and provide more than the equivalent of £1,200 per year if this is necessary for a student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid from our discretionary bursary allocation.

Where academy staff deem that a cash payment direct to the pupil might be appropriate in some circumstances, pre-authorisation must be sought from the Deputy Principal: Post-16 and a copy of the receipted evidence must be provided. Expenditure will only be reimbursed once the pupil has had confirmation of entitlement to a bursary. Any expenditure incurred without notification or approval from the Deputy Principal: Post 16 is done so at financial risk to the student.

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 a student's eligibility each academic year; they will only continue to receive a bursary if they remain eligible.

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.

Students should see the Post 16 Bursary Application form for more information. This information can be found on the Academy website under the "Sixth Form" tab, within the "Student Support" section.

13. Monitoring arrangements

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy. Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy has been delegated to the Finance and Premises Committee.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with the receipt of any revised guidance from the DfE. Any changes will be approved by the Finance and Premises

Committee during the summer term, in preparation for the new academic year and cohort of sixth form students.

General information on 2026-27 bursary schemes is available on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

14. Young carers

Young Carers might be eligible for a Discretionary Bursary.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply, a Young Carer will attend sixth form and will be registered as a Young Carer with Newcastle Carers. They will have to be able to demonstrate that their finances are impacted upon as a result of caring for someone alongside taking part in learning.

If a Young Carer is not registered with Newcastle Carers, they can get in contact with [Newcastle Carer](#) who can support them in their caring role. The academy will support them with this.

Application

A Young Carer should complete the Sixth Form Bursary Application Form as outlined in the policy. In their application they will have to describe the caring responsibilities they have for a family member or other identified individual and demonstrate how their finances are impacted upon because of their caring responsibilities.

Accessing funding

If they are accepted, they will need to provide evidence of costs, such as travel costs. They will also receive the package of support that other Discretionary Bursary students receive, as outlined in the policy.

Section	Item	Responsibility	Completed?
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Student meets the age criteria.		
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Eligible education provision.		
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Student meets the residency criteria for post-16 provision.		
Eligibility: All Bursaries	Evidence of eligibility has been retained.		
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Student falls within one of the defined vulnerable groups for example, in receipt of the specified benefits in their own right or in care/care leaver.		
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Financial needs assessment carried out to confirm financial need and actual costs they have. No student should automatically receive £1,200.		
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Appropriate evidence seen and copies retained to confirm student's eligibility, including the letter to support in care.		
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained.		
Bursary for defined vulnerable groups	Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.		
Discretionary bursary	Evidence to confirm the student meets the institution's bursary fund criteria, including household income and statement of actual participation costs.		

Discretionary bursary	Assessment of student's actual financial needs carried out. Block, blanket or flat rate payments are not permitted – the financial support from bursary funds should reflect the actual costs the student has.		
Discretionary bursary	Support awarded in kind (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained.		
Discretionary bursary	Letter issued to student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.		
Discretionary bursary	Evidence of income and overall eligibility obtained, and copies retained.		