



BUXTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Bursary Policy 2026/27

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16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

INTRODUCTION

Buxton Community School is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all students. This policy sets out arrangements for how the school will operate the 16-19 Bursary Fund for the academic year 2026-27. This policy is based on the [Department for Education's \(DfE\) 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027](#).

WHAT IS THE 16-19 BURSARY FUND?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a scheme set up by the DfE with funding allocated to the school through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The Fund provides financial support to eligible students to help overcome their specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education and training.

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' means a child who is in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions.
'Care leaver' means:
 - A young person aged 16 or 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting to 13 weeks, beginning after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16; or
 - A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after before becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting to 13 weeks, beginning after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

There are two types of bursary: a discretionary bursary and a vulnerable bursary.

1. To be eligible for the **Discretionary bursary**, a student must:
 - Be enrolled on an eligible 16 to 19 study programme at Buxton Community School during the 2026/27 academic year.
 - Have 'home' student status or have been granted full 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' status.
 - Students must meet the residency criteria in the [DfE](#) funding regulations for post-16 provision.
 - Be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August in the enrolling academic year
or
 - Be aged 19 or over with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) **or**

- Be aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme which began when aged 16-18.

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

- Living in a household where total annual income is **£30,000 or below**.
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution, or a location for a placement.
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- The requirements of their study programme 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.

2. To be eligible for the **Vulnerable bursary**, students must meet the age, enrolment and residency criteria above and fall into one of the following categories:
 - Young people who are looked after (in care)
 - Young people leaving care.
 - Young people in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own name.
 - Young people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable bursary.

Please note: Students on apprenticeship programmes or other waged training are not eligible for bursary funding.

Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [DfE](#) funding regulations for post-16 provision. The school will assess residency eligibility and may request appropriate evidence where required.

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.

The School will provide in-kind support (e.g. books, equipment, 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, the School 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.

HOW THE 16-19 BURSARY FUND IS ALLOCATED

Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary Bursaries are awards made to students by the School to help young people overcome the individual financial barriers to participating in education, for example help with:

- Transport
- Books
- Equipment
- Field trips and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending university interviews and open days
- Other circumstances that prevent participation

Funding for the Discretionary Bursary is received directly by the School from the DfE. The allocation process for these funds is as follows:

- Students that apply will be assessed individually against the criteria and will be awarded a bursary fund based on their actual financial need
- Any unspent discretionary funding from the previous academic year will be prioritised for students based on their actual financial need in the current academic year
- Some funding will be held back for a contingency for students whose personal circumstances may change
- The school may use up to the permitted maximum proportion (5%) of its allocation toward eligible administrative costs, where necessary.

Vulnerable Bursary

The Vulnerable Bursary Fund is designed to help support young people who face the greatest financial barriers to participate in education or training.

The School has to apply for the Vulnerable Bursary via a Funding Claim form to [DfE](#) once eligible young people are identified.

Applications must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request include:

- **In care/care leaver:** written confirmation from the relevant local authority.
- **IS/UC:** award notice identifying the student and confirming entitlement in the student's own right.

- **DLA/PIP plus ESA/UC:** appropriate DWP evidence confirming receipt of both qualifying benefits in the student's own right.

Eligible students can apply for a vulnerable bursary of **up to £1,200**.

Exceptional / Emergency Support

In cases of severe or unexpected financial hardship, Buxton Community School may consider short-term support from the discretionary 16 to 19 Bursary Fund where a student faces an immediate financial barrier to participating in education.

In exceptional circumstances, temporary support may be provided for essential meal or travel costs while the student's full bursary application and supporting evidence are being obtained.

Any support will be based on the student's individual circumstances and actual participation costs and will not be provided as a fixed or automatic payment. A full bursary assessment will normally be required for ongoing support.

HOW TO APPLY

The Application Form for the 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy must be completed. Applicants should complete this form and bring it to the finance office.

Evidence of eligibility is required and must be included with the completed application form.

Funding is not guaranteed by the acceptance of an application form. The School will notify students in writing of the outcome of their application.

Conditions of payment for all bursaries

Payment is conditional on the following grounds:

- **Attendance and participation:** Students receiving bursary support are expected to maintain good attendance and punctuality and engage appropriately with their study programme. Where attendance or participation falls below the school's expectations, the school may review ongoing bursary support. Before withholding or withdrawing support, the school will consider the student's individual circumstances, including authorised absence, illness and other relevant factors
- **Good approach to study:** A good approach means that a student works consistently hard in class and endeavours to meet all independent study expectations and deadline
- **Behaviour and engagement:** Students are expected to meet the school's normal standards of behaviour and engagement. Where there are significant or persistent concerns, the school may review ongoing bursary support. Any decision to withhold or withdraw future support will take account of the student's individual circumstances and the purpose for which the bursary was awarded.

A positive approach to attendance and study are expected by all students in our sixth form regardless of their eligibility for a bursary award. If the student falls short on the

expectations of the school and grant, in terms of behaviour and/or attitude to learning, then future Bursary payments may be stopped/withdrawn.

If the student leaves the roll of the school, they will no longer be eligible for bursary support. No further payments will be made, and any resources or equipment must be returned to school.

Assessment and approval of applications

Each application with supporting documentation will be assessed in strictest confidence using the checklist at Appendix A and approval form at Appendix B.

Discretionary fund payments in kind will be subject to review and approval by the Head of Sixth Form/Learning Mentor and the School Business Manager.

Where a student is eligible for free meals, the school will take that provision into account when assessing any additional bursary support for meals, to avoid double funding.

High value equipment

We may be able to help with the cost of high value equipment such as laptops, cameras and tablets where students require them to successfully complete their course. This will be dependent on the budget available. The equipment will remain the property of Buxton Community School and should be returned once the course has been completed so it can be used by another student. To ensure this happens, all equipment will be kept at the School unless specifically agreed otherwise.

See Appendix C: School Equipment for Student Use.

Where equipment can or should be reused, it must be returned at the end of the study programme. Exceptionally, the Headteacher may approve the transfer of an item to a student where it is no longer suitable or economical for reuse, the decision is properly documented, and this is permitted under the Trust's financial and asset-disposal arrangements.

PAYMENT

The level of support which the School can offer under the Discretionary Bursary is dependent on the funding received from the DfE and the number of applications received. The school will complete the purchases, so the request is normally made prior to purchase. This follows the national guidance and our Trust's Financial Regulations. However, reimbursements can be made in exceptional circumstances. Please be aware that **purchases made prior to approval may not be paid.**

APPLICATIONS

Applications should ideally be submitted at the start of the academic year to allow enough time for our school to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis.

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 of the decision, the amount or value of support awarded, the purpose of the award, whether support will be provided in kind or by payment, and any conditions or evidence requirements applying to the award.

Decisions made about Bursaries

Students or parents/carers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an application may request a review by the School Business Manager. Where the matter remains unresolved, it will be considered in accordance with the school's published complaints procedure.

AUDIT AND RECORD RETENTION

Bursary application forms, eligibility and household-income evidence, evidence of actual financial need, assessment and decision records, receipts and other documentation supporting payments will be retained for six years. Records may be held electronically and will be managed in accordance with the school's data-protection and records-retention arrangements.

APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST 2026/27

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Eligibility: all bursaries

	Student meets the age criteria
	Eligible education provision
	Student meets the residency criteria for post-16 provision
	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.
	Financial needs assessment carried out to confirm actual financial need and amount of support required. No student should automatically receive £1,200.
	Appropriate evidence seen and copies retained to confirm student's eligibility.
	Support awarded in kind (for example, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf) or BACs payment made. Receipts should be retained.
	Award letter issued to student confirming the amount of financial support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.

Discretionary bursary

	Evidence to confirm the student meets the bursary fund criteria, including household income and statement of actual participation costs.
	Evidence of income and overall eligibility obtained, and copies retained.
	Assessment of student's actual financial needs carried out. Block, blanket or flat rate payments are not permitted – the bursary award should reflect the actual costs the student has.
	Support awarded in kind (for example, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf). Receipts should be retained.
	Award letter issued to student confirming the amount of financial support, what support will be made in-kind and payment conditions.

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL FORM 2026/2027

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Eligibility – please tick appropriate box (✓)

Vulnerable Bursary	☐	Young people who receive income support/universal credit. Care leavers or young people who are looked after children. Disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance/PIP.
Discretionary Bursary	☐	Young people facing financial barriers to participation in education.

16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund Assistance Requested	Assistance Granted ✓
Transport	☐
Books	☐
Equipment	☐
Field trips and other course-related costs	☐
The costs of attending university interviews and open days	☐
Any other assistance or exceptional circumstance	☐

SIGNED:

DATE:

NAME:

POSITION:

To be signed by a member of the School Senior Leadership Team

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL EQUIPMENT FOR STUDENT USE

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

Student Name:

Equipment Provided:

Make:

Serial number:

Asset Tag Number:

Conditions of school equipment being provided for student use

All equipment supplied to the pupil/student remains the property of the school. Equipment must be returned to the school on request.

The equipment supplied is for the purpose of supporting the named student with their school work only. The equipment must not be passed onto a third party.

If there is any damage to the equipment the school must be notified immediately.

By signing this form

- I agree I have received the equipment listed above
- I agree to the above conditions of the school equipment being provided
- I agree to abide by the school's acceptable use of IT policy

Signed:

Print name:

Date equipment issued:

Signed by school representative:

Date equipment returned to school: