

John Masefield Sixth Form

16-19 Bursary Policy 2025-26



The 16–19 Bursary Fund is financial support provided by the government to help eligible students overcome financial barriers to participation in education. The fund is intended to support students with the essential costs of attending their study programme.

Types of bursary

There are two types of 16–19 bursary funding:

1 Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups

This bursary is available to students who are identified as being in one of the following vulnerable groups:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Students receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right

Students in these groups may receive up to £1,200 per year, although awards are based on individual need and may be lower or higher depending on actual costs.

2 Discretionary Bursary

This bursary is awarded by the school or college to students who require financial support but do not fall into the defined vulnerable groups.

- Awards are based on household income and individual need
- There is no fixed amount; support is tailored to each student
- Funding decisions are made in line with this policy and government guidance

Institutions must assess each student's actual financial needs and cannot make flat-rate payments.

Use of bursary funds

The bursary fund is intended to support essential costs required for participation in education, including:

- Travel to and from school or college
- Essential books and study materials
- Specialist equipment or clothing required for the course

Funding should only be awarded where these costs would otherwise prevent the student from participating in their education.

In most cases, bursary funds will be provided in kind (e.g. travel passes, equipment, or vouchers) or paid directly to the school to cover costs, rather than given as cash to students.

The bursary fund must not be used for:

- General living costs or financial support unrelated to education
- Learning support services (e.g. counselling, mentoring, tutoring)
- Extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the course
- Non-essential trips or overseas visits
- Items or activities not directly linked to the study programme

The fund is strictly for supporting participation in education and not for wider financial support.

Application Process

- Students must complete a bursary application form to be considered
- Applications must include evidence of eligibility and financial need
- Each application will be assessed individually based on circumstances and actual costs
- In most cases, funds will be used to pay for essential items directly through the school
- Payments may be made in kind (e.g. travel passes, equipment, meal vouchers)

Conditions of Payment

Students receiving bursary support must meet agreed conditions, which include:

- Good attendance
- Appropriate behaviour
- Continued participation in their course

Failure to meet these conditions may result in bursary payments being reduced or withdrawn.

The school will regularly review bursary allocations to ensure that funds are used appropriately and that the support reflects financial need.

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with updated government guidance.

Application

To ensure fair distribution of monies, students are categorised in priority order based on their household income as follows:

Vulnerable Bursary		
High Priority Group (Level 1)	<p>A £1,200 bursary will be made available to students who the Government has classed as 'vulnerable'. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people in care • care leavers • young people claiming income support or universal credit in their own name • receiving Income Support or Universal Credit 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 a partner; • receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right. <p>If you think you are eligible for this please contact Mrs Anna Hunt, Sixth Form Administrator on 01531 683451 and request Application Form A. Please return with supporting evidence by no later than Friday 29 September.</p>	
Discretionary Bursary		
<i>Students classed in priority groups 2, 3 & 4 below will be able to apply for a Discretionary Bursary.</i>		<i>If you are eligible you may receive help with the following:</i>
High Priority Group (Level 2)	For students whose parents/carers have a gross annual household income below £22,275	Transport Costs Essential course equipment and books Meals during the school day
High Priority Group (Level 3)	For students whose parents/carers have a gross annual household income of between £22,275- £32,966	Course related trips Course related sporting activities
Please complete Application Form B 'Discretionary Bursary for Students in Financial Hardship'.		

Priority Group 4	For all other students who do not meet criteria for other priority groups above but who may have exceptional circumstances which will need to be reviewed case by case.		
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Application forms are reviewed by the Sixth Form Administrator and Head of Sixth Form in line with other providers and ESFA Guidance.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All records are held securely and confidentially.

The Sixth Form Administrator will annotate each application form to confirm evidence of household income has been seen and confirm priority group; original documents will then be returned in a sealed envelope to applicant's parent/carer.

To protect student confidentiality, only the Head of Sixth Form, Sixth Form Administrator, Finance Manager and Finance Officer are involved in the decision and payment process.

Payment

The Sixth Form Administrator compiles a list Course Costs with subject leaders and reviews each year.

When a student is awarded a bursary there is a clear breakdown of how their award is made up and how it will be paid.

Wherever possible monies awarded are ring-fenced and payment (or journal entry) is only actioned once evidence has been received i.e trip letter or receipts. Purchases are made for equipment/stationery through the school's suppliers to obtain the best prices. Students who receive Transport bursaries either have a monthly direct debit arranged, or in the case of Herefordshire Council, bus passes are invoiced directly to John Masefield for reimbursement.

Appeal

If an application is unsuccessful, students will be told in writing. All students have a right to appeal against any decision made and appeals must be made in writing to Head of Sixth Form within 10 working days of receiving their letter of notification. If required, a meeting will be arranged where the claim will be reassessed and the student informed of the decision in writing within 10 days of the Panel meeting.

ESFA Annual Return (by 31 October)

In line with ESFA requirements a return is completed for previous year's expenditure, which is agreed by the Headteacher and Finance Manager.

To enable this, there is a clear audit trail kept to account for all monies spent.