

The Shrubberies School and Apperley Centre

16-19 Bursary Policy 2025-26

Information contained is based upon the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide: 2025 to 2026 Academic Year

16 to 19 Bursary Fund summary

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

The Shrubberies School is responsible for managing both types of bursary for its students. Students who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact the school directly to make an application.

To be eligible for the bursary students must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2025 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2025 **and** have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2025 **and** continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- meet the residency criteria in ESFA 2025 to 2026 academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
- be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be either
 - o funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
 - o otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 or the Learning and Skills Act 2000
 - o a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- they are in or recently left local authority care
- they get Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- they get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- they get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name and either ESA or Universal Credit

For vulnerable bursaries, The Shrubberies School, as it is a maintained special school will draw down funding (by submitting a funding claim) from the Local Authority when they have identified students who meet the criteria.

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education.

Maintained special schools such as The Shrubberies School receive discretionary bursary funding allocations from the Local Authority that they manage directly, deciding which students are eligible for help and how much they receive, in line with this guide and their own policies.

Eligibility criteria: all bursaries

This section covers the basic eligibility requirements of the scheme (which mirrors eligibility for publicly funded 16 to 19 education and training). These criteria apply to both types of bursary – discretionary and vulnerable – unless otherwise noted.

Age

To be eligible to receive a bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year the student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2025.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they:

- are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

These 2 groups of students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the additional support to continue their participation. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable student bursary.

Students aged 19 and over at 31 August 2025 in the 2025 to 2026 academic year

Students who are aged 19 and over on 31 August 2025 are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19

Bursary Fund unless they:

- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are attending eligible education provision; or
- are a 19+ continuer, in other words, a student who is continuing on an eligible study programme they began aged 16 to 18

No students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary.

Vulnerable bursaries

Students who are in one or more of the groups below can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - institutions should pay a prorata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks). This reflects that students in these groups may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who:

- are in or recently left local authority care
- get Income Support or Universal Credit (not their parents) because they are financially supporting themselves
- get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name (not their parents) and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit

- get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name (not their parents) and either ESA or Universal Credit

Students do not need to live independently of their parents to be eligible for a vulnerable student payment - they can claim ESA or UC in their own right while living in the parental home. However, parents will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit if the student successfully applies for ESA.

The Shrubberies School is responsible for assessing if students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary payment and will retain evidence to support the decision.

The vulnerable bursary will be paid for each academic year the student is in education or training, as long as they continue to meet the scheme eligibility criteria.

The school can pay a vulnerable student more than £1,200 if it is assessed that they need extra help to remain in education. However, any payments over the £1,200 will be paid from their discretionary bursary allocation or from the school funds.

Equally, the school may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need and so are not eligible on that basis. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs. Applications for funding will therefore need to stipulate why the monies are required.

Evidence of eligibility

The Shrubberies School will request proof that students are eligible for a vulnerable bursary and retain copies for audit purposes. For example:

- for students in receipt of qualifying benefits, a letter from DWP that states the benefit the student is entitled to (they must be entitled to the benefits in their own right). The evidence must confirm that the young person can be in further education or training (some young people in receipt of benefits are not allowed to participate)
- for students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority. Institutions should only submit a vulnerable bursaries funding claim to the SBSS when they have seen and verified appropriate evidence that the student is eligible.

Young people in the defined vulnerable groups who don't require bursary funding

In some cases, a young person might be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, but their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

For example:

- a student in local authority care whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority

If a student, or the student's parents, still wants to claim a vulnerable student bursary, the school will consider the particular circumstances in each case and assess whether no bursary should be awarded (because the student has no financial needs) or to award a reduced amount of bursary (because the financial help needed is limited). In these instances, the school will clearly explain to all parties the aim of bursary funding and why no bursary is being awarded or why a reduced bursary is being paid.

It is important to note that meeting the vulnerable bursary criteria does not automatically mean funding will be given.

Discretionary bursaries

The school may make discretionary bursary awards to students to help them overcome the individual barriers to participation they face, for example help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment. The decision regarding which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive, depending on each student's circumstances will be made by the school. There will not be a blanket or flat rate payment to all students. Applications for funding will therefore need to stipulate why the monies are required.

Discretionary bursary maximum awards will be calculated by the school each year based on funding received from the local authority

Additional information to support the implementation of this policy includes

- Letter to Parents, carers and students
- 16-19 Bursary Fund - financial support for students in 2025-2026
- Bursary Fund Application form

Please note, the complete guidance can be found through the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students#to-19-bursary-fund-1>