

[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [Further and higher education, skills and vocational training](#)
▾ [Further education funding](#) ▾ [Administering student funding](#) ▾ [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance](#)



[Department
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Guidance

16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027

Updated 11 May 2026

Applies to England

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Important points
3. Eligibility: all bursaries
4. Eligibility: bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups
5. Permitted use of funding: assessing eligibility and awarding support
6. Publishing bursary fund policies
7. Managing bursary fund applications
8. Receipt of DWP benefits and the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
9. Payments and funding claims: bursary for defined vulnerable groups
10. Payments and allocations: discretionary bursaries
11. Calculating unspent funds for return
12. In-year growth
13. Data returns, including the ILR and school census
14. Audit, assurance, and fraud

[15. Free meals in further education](#)

[16. Other useful information](#)

[17. Good practice](#)

[18. Further information](#)

1. Introduction

Any references to:

- 'we' or 'us' are to the Department for Education (DfE)
- 'you' are the education institutions (for example, colleges, schools or academies).

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries

Both bursaries help eligible students with the essential costs of participating such as:

- travel to and from school or college
- the purchase of essential books
- specialist equipment or clothing (for example, protective overalls) required for their study programme

These are items a student would otherwise need to buy to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support or pastoral services that you give to students, for example, counselling or mentoring. Nor should it be used to support non-essential extra-curricular activities or living costs.

This guide applies to both types of bursaries unless we specify that a rule or condition only applies to either the defined vulnerable group bursary or the discretionary bursary.

These funding rules cover academic year 2026 to 2027.

2. Important points

2.1 Funding claims for the defined vulnerable group bursary

To claim funding for the defined vulnerable group bursary, you must submit a funding claim directly to DfE at defined points in the year. The claim must be based on your assessment of individual students' actual needs. You must not automatically submit claims for £1,200. The [payments and allocations](#) section provides more information about the process. You must ensure students meet one of the defined vulnerable group categories in full before you submit a claim. You can pay students after you complete your assessment of need and eligibility checks. There is no need to wait for DfE payments before providing students with support.

2.2 Assess actual needs

Both types of bursary funding (discretionary and defined vulnerable groups) are designed to help students overcome their individual financial barriers to participation and you must ensure funds go to those who genuinely need them. You must ensure you assess the actual needs of each student (in addition to eligibility) when agreeing the amount of bursary. This means that funding will reflect actual participation needs and is evidenced. You must not make flat or fixed rate payments to students that do not reflect the actual costs they face and that you do not have evidence to support. The requirement to assess actual needs each year still applies, even if you exercise discretion not to carry out household income assessments annually for the discretionary bursary.

2.3 Checklist to support application assessment

This guide includes a [checklist](#) for assessing bursary applications from students, and a [summary](#) that lists the most important things you need to consider when

administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. These reflect common errors and issues identified during audits.

2.4 Essential participation costs

The bursary fund is to help students with the essential costs of participating in their study programme, for example:

- essential books
- equipment
- travel to school or college

The bursary fund may be used to provide exceptional further help with childcare costs if the costs exceed the Care to Learn scheme's weekly maximum rates. Childcare provision must meet [Care to Learn scheme](#) eligibility rules, and you need evidence that the maximum amount is already paid through that scheme and a top up is required. Any top up must be made in line with Care to Learn funding rules and paid directly to the childcare provider, not to the student.

The bursary fund is not for non-education related costs, such as:

- general living costs
- extra-curricular activities
- non-essential activities
- learning support and pastoral services that you provide, such as counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring

2.5 Rules for returning unspent bursary funds

You cannot carry forward bursary funding for more than one year. You must inform us of the total amount of any unspent funds (not previously reported) from any year up to and including academic year 2024 to 2025.

You must report unspent funding using our [customer help portal](#) specifying the amount of funding and the years it relates to. You should do this as soon as you are aware but no later than 31 March each year. We will recover all unspent funds.

2.6 Household Income checking

You asked us to reduce your administrative burden when:

- processing large numbers of bursary applications in limited time
- maximising retention of students facing financial disadvantage

You can decide either to check household income for discretionary bursary:

- annually
- once at the beginning of a student's study programme

This assumes the student is enrolled on a typical 2-year study programme. If a student changes course or level, you can decide which approach you take but you must ensure the student and the study programme are eligible.

If you do not conduct annual household income checks, you must obtain a signed and dated (hard copy or electronic) self-declaration form from the student to confirm that their household circumstances have not changed.

2.7 Emergency meal and travel support

In cases of severe hardship, you may decide to use discretionary bursary to fund meal and travel support on the days the student attends their study programme without completing the usual household income and evidence checks. We expect this will only apply to a very small number of the 16 to 19 student cohort. This should be a temporary arrangement with a full discretionary bursary assessment ultimately still needed.

For audit purposes, you must retain a copy of:

- a record of the number of students with emergency meal or travel support
- a record of the number of days emergency meal or travel support is given
- the value in £'s given to each student and the reason
- the signed confirmation by the student that they have received the funding to be spent on food or travel

This arrangement is for food or travel support only.

2.8 Receipts for expenditure and purchases

Receipts for expenditure and purchases made with bursary funding form part of the evidence for audit and assurance of the scheme, to ensure funding is used for the reasons it was awarded.

For audit and assurance, you must retain receipts for actual costs incurred. For standard weekly costs like travel and food, it may not be practical to collect receipts for every transaction, so costs can be evidenced initially by receipts then paid after that linked to attendance patterns. For example, for travel, you could retain one receipt for one journey and a record of the student's expected attendance per week and month. You can then use a calculation to estimate the full cost over time for example, one journey costs £4 (with one receipt as evidence) x 3 days attendance a week = £12 expected spend per week. Actual reimbursement should be linked to attendance.

Some study programme costs are 'fixed' in nature, for example, course equipment costs.

3. Eligibility: all bursaries

Students must meet the age and residency criteria which follow to be eligible for help from the bursary fund.

3.1 Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 to be eligible for help from the bursary funds (discretionary and defined vulnerable groups) in academic year 2026 to 2027.

A student aged 19 and over is only eligible for the discretionary bursary if they:

- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

- continue on the same study programme they started between 16 to 18 years (19+ continuers)

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

Bursaries are intended for students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances if younger students are participating in eligible 16 to 19 study programmes at your institution, you may use your discretion to pay bursaries.

Bursary funds must not be awarded to students enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for the student. For example, students aged 14 to 16 who attend college as part of their key stage 4 programme at a local school or academy. [DfE funding rules](#) for post-16 provision provide more detail about funded 14- to 16-year-olds.

Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

3.2 Eligible education provision

The student's provision must be subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example Ofsted). The provision must also fall into one of these groups:

- funded directly by us, or by us via a local authority
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on our list of [qualifications approved for funding](#)
- non-employed students aged 16 to 19 who are participating in a King's Trust Team Programme

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are employed, rather than in education and are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

We do not expect students on distance learning provision to need help from the bursary fund because they do not have the kinds of costs the bursary is intended to cover (for example travel, equipment, and uniforms). In the rare instances where you identify that financial help is needed, you should provide support in-kind. An example could be providing a temporary travel pass for the student to attend exams.

3.3 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the [DfE funding rules](#) for post-16 provision. The funding rules also specify the evidence you must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding (and therefore meet the residency criteria for bursary fund eligibility).

3.4 Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute, they can apply to the Home Office (HO) for suitable housing and cash for essentials.

As long as an asylum-seeking young person has not had their application for asylum refused, you can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment, or a travel pass. Under no circumstances can you give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

3.5 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

UASC do not receive cash support from the HO and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary categorised as 'in care' if in financial need.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, you must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority will treat them as care leavers.

As care leavers, they continue to be eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary until they reach the [upper age limit](#).

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard and the appeals process exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human

rights).

4. Eligibility: bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students in defined vulnerable groups are unlikely to receive financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to participate.

Top-up bursary funding of up to £1,200 is available to you to meet the needs of these young people, but you must not automatically claim £1,200. You must assess students individually to determine the amount of support they need to participate and only claim and provide funds to meet those needs.

You must be able to evidence the amount and purpose of the funding provided. For example, the cost of:

- travel
- essential books or equipment

You 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 addition to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC - all benefits must be received by the student, in their own right

Students must be in receipt of DLA or PIP and ESA or UC to be eligible – receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the criteria.

You must consider the length of the study programme and the number of hours

involved. The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they have costs to that amount.

On occasion a young person in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups may be eligible for bursary but not have a financial need (see section 4.6) and therefore bursary funding is not required.

Equally, you can provide support to a vulnerable group student of more than £1,200 if you assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments above £1,200 must be paid from your discretionary bursary allocation or from your own funds. If paid from discretionary bursary, all the eligibility criteria and usual assessment and application processes must be met and followed. You must ensure your auditable records evidence the type, purpose, and amount of all funding awards.

[Free meals in further education](#) has its own eligibility criteria. A student who meets the criteria for a defined vulnerable group bursary is not automatically eligible for a free meal.

4.1 Defining in care and care leavers

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines a care leaver as either a young person aged:

- 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16 - they do not need to have entered care after their 14th birthday to be eligible, they can have entered care at any age, but they must have spent at least 13 weeks in care after their 14th birthday before leaving after the age of 16
- 18 or above who was looked after before turning 18 for a period of at least 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to at least 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

A financial need assessment must be completed and evidence of in care or care leaver status must be obtained.

4.2 Foster care, including privately arranged foster care

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including through independent fostering agencies, is classed as looked after. They meet the criteria for the 'in care' vulnerable group if they have a financial need.

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

In some instances, a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and then left care via achieving permanence through an order such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances, the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They must meet the definition of a 'care leaver' in full (set out at 4.1) to be eligible for the defined vulnerable group bursary.

You decide based on your own policies:

- which students receive discretionary bursary support
- how much they receive

You do not need to consider a foster carer's income when awarding support.

Eligibility for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups is based on the student meeting the criteria for one of the defined vulnerable groups, not a household income assessment. However, you should take into account any costs that are already covered by the local authority, (see section 4.6), to avoid double-funding. All students must have their need for support assessed individually, to determine the type and amount of support they need.

4.3 Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) is replacing some benefits for example, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance for new claimants. This means young people aged 16 to 18 from now on, are not in receipt of these legacy benefits. However, students aged 19 to 25 but funded from the 16 to 19 budget

(such as those with an EHC plan) may still be in receipt of those legacy benefits. UC award notifications do not include information on the benefits they replace.

You must ensure a student is receiving UC in their own right to support themselves and dependents living with them, such as a child or partner.

Bursary funds awarded to a student should not form part of the UC assessment undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). How DWP treat any funding for education depends on whether the student is undertaking advanced full-time education. It is unlikely that 16 to 18-year-olds will be in advanced full-time education as they are generally on study programmes at level 3 or below.

Under UC, any educational award which is paid under a scheme to enable persons under age 21 to complete a course of non-advanced education (which will include the 16 to 19 Bursary) does not need to be treated as grant income for UC purposes – as provided under reg 68(7) of The Universal Credit Regulations 2013.

4.4 Evidence of eligibility

You must obtain proof that students meet the eligibility criteria for the defined vulnerable groups for the associated bursary. You must ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes. Evidence includes:

- in care or a care leaver: you need written confirmation (email or letter) 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
- in receipt of UC or IS: you need a copy of their UC or IS award notice that clearly states the student's name and that they are entitled to the benefits in their own right - the evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education or training
- in receipt of UC or ESA and DLA or PIP: you need a copy of their UC or ESA award notice from DWP and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP

UC claimants can print off details of their award from their online account or provide a screenshot to the institution. Students can also contact their UC work coach (or relevant benefit office if they are receiving IS or ESA) and ask for help providing evidence.

You must only submit a funding claim to DfE when you have:

- seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is fully eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups
- assessed the actual amount of help the student needs, based on the actual participation costs they have - it is the actual amount that you must request on the funding claim, not automatically a request of £1,200 (we may require evidence, as part of our pre-payment checks, to support the amount and purpose of the funding being requested)

4.5 Students on part time study programmes

Students on a study programme that lasts less than 30 weeks are likely to need less support than a student on a longer programme. The actual amount is dependent on:

- your assessment of the level of support they require
- evidence of their specific financial needs

You should also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme. A student studying for around 16 hours a week is likely to have greater costs than a student studying for 4 hours a week, for example.

Some study programme costs may be 'fixed' in nature, for example, course equipment costs.

4.6 Young people eligible for defined vulnerable group bursary but without financial need

In some cases, a young person meets the eligibility criteria for the defined vulnerable groups bursary, but their participation costs are already met, or they have no relevant costs.

For example, a student:

- attending specialist residential provision that covers their educational costs in full
- taking a distance learning programme who has no financial barriers to participation (for example, they do not have any travel costs or meal costs)
- in the care of the local authority who has covered their educational costs in full

- who is financially supported by their partner

In these circumstances, you should refuse the student's application. You should explain to the student and their support worker or parent where applicable, that the aim of bursary funding is to provide financial support to those who need it and, as their costs are paid for by other means, financial support is not required. You should include these '[zero bursary](#)' students in your funding claim form.

We recommend you are clear in your bursary fund application form that there is a possibility of no financial support. This ensures all parties understand that meeting the criteria for one of the defined groups within the defined vulnerable bursary does not automatically entitle them to funding. Financial need must also be assessed and proven. You must ensure your forms avoid any terminology such as 'guaranteed bursary' or wording such as 'you will automatically get a bursary of £1,200 if you are in one of the defined groups'.

5. Permitted use of funding: assessing eligibility and awarding support

You provide bursary funding to help students with, for example:

- the cost of travel
- to buy essential books, equipment, or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls)

These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support or pastoral care services that you give to students, for example:

- counselling or mentoring
- to support extra-curricular activities that are not essential to the student's study programme
- to provide living costs support

We do recognise that some students may need items of clothing or footwear to be able to access further education and continue to participate. Such items may be eligible for exceptional support from the bursary fund, but you must ensure any such

expenditure is genuinely and directly about the student accessing their education provision. You must retain evidence of expenditure (along with receipts) for audit purposes, including:

- the rationale
- amount, and purpose

For the discretionary bursary, you set your own eligibility criteria but must comply with the overarching eligibility conditions and funding rules in this guide. You must repeat eligibility checks each year.

You must base all decisions about which students receive a bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and actual need. These will vary from student to student, and their actual costs, based on factors such as the:

- distance they need to travel to the institution
- requirements of their study programme

You must not make blanket, flat or fixed rate payments. All payments must reflect student's actual costs and needs, for example to:

- all students who meet your discretionary bursary policy
- students in particular income bands, if you chose to include them in your discretionary bursary policy
- students whose families are in receipt of particular benefits
- all students who are in the defined vulnerable groups

If a student previously had free school meals, this may indicate eligibility, but the actual financial need will vary depending on personal circumstances. An individual assessment of actual financial needs must be made to determine this.

You must manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within budget.

You may decide to retain a small emergency fund from your allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation that impacts on their ability to participate in education. For audit purposes you must retain evidence of the student's:

- eligibility

- individual assessment
- actual participation costs

All bursary expenditure must be in line with the funding rules in this guide. You may also choose to top up the bursary with your own funds.

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary you can award to students. You can award discretionary bursaries equal to or higher than the maximum for the defined vulnerable groups if you have clearly identified the student has actual costs requiring this level of funding to participate. You must hold evidence or receipts to support the costs paid from the discretionary bursary fund along with the rationale as part of your auditable record.

5.1 Costs that are not eligible for bursary funds

The bursary fund cannot be used to:

- provide learning support services that institutions give to students such as:
 - counselling
 - mentoring
 - extra tutoring
- support such as servicing laptops and tablets
- support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the student's study programme goals and course objectives
- support the costs of foreign or overseas field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost, or field trips that are not an essential part of a student's study programme goals or course objectives - learning activities and experiences must be clearly mapped to show the link between the activity and the student's study programme goals or course objectives
- support general household incomes or general living costs (for example, rent, bills, wi-fi and so on). This is out of scope, and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000
- replace the local authority's statutory transport duty to students aged 16 to 19. Each local authority publishes an annual transport statement to set out their

arrangements to facilitate participation in education or training for students aged 16 to 19

You should consider the relevant local authority's transport statement and local offers when setting your bursary policy so your support for transport and that from the local authorities work together and do not duplicate one another.

You are not permitted to use the bursary fund to gain competitive advantage over other institutions by incentivising students to join or by covering costs that should be met from other budgets. Examples include:

- fees for access to facilities in the institution
- block subsidy of the canteen
- support for travel for all students regardless of family incomes or using the bursary fund to subsidise travel, for example, charging bursary supported students:
 - more than other students
 - when other students are not charged
- block provision of equipment, material, or books
- making bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement
- payments to support students' general living costs

You must not use the bursary as a way of incentivising attendance, for example:

- to make additional payments if students achieve attendance targets
- as a marketing tool to encourage students to choose one institution over another

If you use non-bursary funds to provide free travel for all your students, you must state clearly that this is an offer from the institution and not bursary funded.

5.2 Using household income for the discretionary bursary and establishing individual student need

You must focus your discretionary bursary policy funding toward students who are most in need of financial support. This means you must use household income, in some way, to help establish eligibility before other steps are taken. You can decide to use household income in conjunction with other factors, such as:

- travel distance from home to provider
- the number of dependent children per household
- the actual participation needs the student has

You should decide how household income will be assessed, for example, which levels of income will be included and what evidence you will request.

UC award notices can be used as evidence of household income. Note:

- the take-home pay figure in addition to the amount of UC, after deductions, provides a total monthly income
- the section on the notice called 'what we take off (deductions)' shows earnings reported by an employer, self-employed income and the expenses reported by the claimant, as appropriate
- the format of the claim in a mobile view and desktop view will look slightly different, but both will contain the same information
- we suggest you ask for the 3 most recent monthly award statements, to act as a guide to the household income for a quarter of a year. You could then estimate assumed income for a full year

You should keep your bursary policies under review to ensure you continue to include students who need support. For example, students from households being supported via lower income jobs could be in more financial need than a student in receipt of free meals or where the family receives other benefits.

The defined vulnerable group bursary is not subject to household income assessment, in the same way as the discretionary bursary, because eligibility is based on the student being in one of the defined groups. However, you must assess the actual participation needs of each student individually, for both types of bursaries, to determine the type and amount of support they need.

6. Publishing bursary fund policies

You must publish a policy or statement setting out how you will use your bursary fund. The document should be available early enough for students making decisions about their post-16 options. Your eligibility criteria must be clear. The policy document must state that the support available is from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

and you must be mindful of this if you:

- develop your own financial support branding
- use your own funding to enhance your bursary offer to students

You must comply with the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#) when setting your criteria and must not discriminate against your students, either directly or indirectly, because of their protected characteristics.

Bursary fund policies must clearly set out what type of help you offer, for example:

- help with transport, books and equipment costs
- contributions to the costs of attending industry placements, university interviews or open days
- UCAS application fees
- top-up to Care to Learn funding for childcare, where necessary and appropriate
- essential field trips to achieve or support study programme goals or course objectives

7. Managing bursary fund applications

You should develop and use your own application forms for students to apply for support from the bursary fund. Application forms must capture all the relevant information for you to assess the application in line with the funding rules and conditions of funding, including assessment of:

- eligibility for defined vulnerable groups
- household income for the discretionary bursary
- the actual financial needs of the student to participate (such as help with travel or to buy essential books or equipment for example)

The student must sign the application form.

If you deliver standard academic year provision, you may wish to specify a date by which all applications are submitted so you can assess the overall level of demand holistically and make discretionary awards on a fair basis. You must state any specific deadline date in your application form and include it in your bursary policy.

However, student circumstances and needs change and you can retain a small emergency fund for this purpose and make later awards if needed.

Students should be able to apply for bursary at any point if you deliver:

- short programmes
- roll-on roll-off provision
- industry placements

Your application process must maintain confidentiality and your application form and promotional materials should emphasise this, so students feel comfortable applying.

Your application forms, bursary policies and supporting information should make clear to students that there is no guarantee of funding (even for students in defined vulnerable groups) because bursary awards relate to financial need. Students with no participation costs would not receive any funding.

It is best practice to require students (or their families where applicable) to sign a declaration for their bursary application form to confirm the evidence they provide is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. Students and their families need to be made aware that giving false or incomplete information that leads to incorrect or overpayment may result in:

- future payments being stopped
- any incorrectly paid funds being recovered

They should also be informed that this might result in a referral to the police with the possibility of facing prosecution.

You must communicate application outcomes to students, for example:

- the amount they will receive
- the purpose, for example, travel
- how funds will be claimed for example, in-kind payments or payments into a bank account

You must clearly state the terms and conditions that apply, for example:

- attendance
- how and when receipts should be provided

- the return of equipment at the end of the study programme

You must hold a record of the planned amount of funding required for each participation need, based on the actual needs of the student.

7.1 Paying bursary funding and providing support to eligible students

We encourage you to pay both defined vulnerable group and discretionary bursary funding to students in-kind rather than cash to ensure bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded. In-kind payments can include:

- travel passes
- vouchers or credits for meals
- required books and equipment

When you make in-kind payments, you must explain to the student:

- the value of the payments
- how these have been deducted from the total value of their bursary support (if appropriate)

When you make direct cash payments to students (instead of support in-kind), it is good practice to pay the funding by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. A basic bank account (which students can open at age 16) allows BACS transfers and allows the student to withdraw money.

You must insist that students only spend the bursary payments you make to them on the support identified as necessary for their participation in education. This means explaining the specific agreed uses that you intended, for example:

- travel costs from home to education
- a meal during the day
- to buy equipment for the study programme

For audit and assurance, you must retain receipts for actual costs incurred. For standard weekly costs like travel and food, it may not be practical to collect receipts for every transaction, so costs can be evidenced initially by receipts then paid after

that linked to attendance patterns. For example, for travel, you could retain one receipt for one journey and a record of the student's expected attendance per week and month. You can then use a calculation to estimate the full cost over time for example, one journey costs £4 (with one receipt as evidence) x 3 days attendance a week = £12 expected spend per week. Actual reimbursement should be linked to attendance.

You could then ask students to provide additional receipts to you at various points in the year (for example) which could form part of the terms and conditions set out in your confirmation letter to students.

You must remember that the purpose of the bursary is to remove barriers to participating in education for those who cannot afford to participate. Asking students to incur expenditure and provide a receipt first before providing any funding does not reflect the policy intent which is why payment in-kind rather than in cash is recommended.

We do not expect bursary payments to be paid into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. If the student cannot manage their own funds, you will need to consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

It is good practice to make payments on a regular basis (weekly, for example) as this:

- helps students manage their finances
- means students whose payment is withheld, due to failing to meet the conditions you have set, will not be left without financial support for a long period

However, you should take decisions based on:

- the reasons the bursary was awarded
- the student's circumstances
- local arrangements

You must not make large or lump sum bursary payments to students.

7.2 Conditions for receiving bursary funding

You can make payments for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups and the discretionary bursary conditional on the student meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour. You must ensure that standards you set are clear and that students understand them. Examples might be:

- attending all required classes
- demonstrating agreed standards of behaviour

You must ensure you obtain and retain evidence that a student has seen and agreed to the conditions. This might be:

- an agreement signed by the student
- a signed declaration as part of your bursary fund application form

You can withhold payments if a student does not meet agreed standards, but you should always consider the individual circumstances of the student. You must retain copies of documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment. This might include:

- attendance
- returning equipment at the end of their study programme
- providing receipts at certain points

If you need to purchase books or equipment, such as a laptop or internet dongle that is necessary for the student to complete their study programme, you can use bursary funds. If equipment can or should be reused, you must specify that the student must return it once they have completed their study programme. If keeping equipment on campus is the best way of ensuring this happens, you have the right to set this as a condition.

7.3 Institutions' responsibility for complaints and appeals

Any student or parent who is unhappy with how you have managed their application or the support provided, must follow your own complaints procedure. You should manage the escalation of complaints about the bursary fund in the same way as any other complaint you may receive.

We do not have a role in the administration of bursary funding to students because this is the responsibility of individual institutions. As such:

- we do not usually get involved with complaints
- you should not routinely advise students or parents to contact us

We may get involved if there is an allegation that the bursary fund eligibility criteria or guidance has been disregarded.

8. Receipt of DWP benefits and the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

You may wish to highlight to students and parents the impact of receipt of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund on other benefits.

Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit - the [Universal Credit section](#) of this document contains more detail about this benefit

Living costs are out of scope of the bursary fund. You must not make bursary fund payments as payments for living costs. Those payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

9. Payments and funding claims: bursary for defined vulnerable groups

9.1 The funding claim process

Funding claims are submitted through your [DfE Sign-in account](#). We will publish guidance to support you in completing the form.

Maintained special schools, including community special and foundation special schools, must contact their local authority who will submit a claim on their behalf. Local authorities remain responsible for submitting funding claims for students they have placed in independent provision if they are eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups and have a financial need.

It is important to emphasise that the dates for each claim window are indicative and may be subject to change. We will issue additional communications ahead of each claim window.

We expect the first funding claim window to open on 8 September 2026 and close on 12 November 2026. This is the window in which we expect most institutions will submit their funding claims.

Payments will be made in February 2027 (March for academies) after all checks, validations and quality assurance processes have been completed. This will include a validation against the [individualised learner record \(ILR\)](#) or school census as appropriate. We may request additional evidence from you as part of these checks. Payments will be via the usual payment mechanism for the relevant institution type. The amount you receive will be the total required for the academic year.

We will not accept funding claims that miss the specified closing date for the first window. You must submit them in the second claims window.

We expect the second funding claim window to open on 5 January 2027 and close on 11 February 2027. This window will enable institutions to submit new funding claims.

Payments will be made in April 2027 (May for academies) after all checks and quality assurance processes have been completed. As in the first window, we may request additional evidence from you before making payment.

We will not accept funding claims that miss the specified closing date for the second window. You must submit them in the final claims window.

We expect the third and final window to open on 18 May 2027 and close on 1 July 2027. This window is for any late funding claims you have.

Any resulting recovery action and any final additional payments will be made in September 2027 (October for academies). Recoveries will be made by off-setting against other DfE payments.

We will not accept any claims that miss the closing date.

Before submitting a claim, you must have seen and verified evidence that a student:

- meets the defined vulnerable group criteria
- has an actual financial need

You must have assessed, and be able to evidence, the actual amount of funding each student needs, based on their specific participation costs. This is the amount of funding you claim. You must not automatically request £1,200 if the student does not need that amount of funding.

All our funded institutions in receipt of a discretionary bursary allocation in the academic year can submit a funding claim for bursaries for vulnerable groups if you have eligible students that you assess need financial help. Payment will be dependent on whether you have signed and returned your DfE funding contract.

9.2 Payment summary

Purpose	Dates	Payment
First window	8 September 2026 to 12 November 2026	February 2027 (March for academies)
Second window	5 January 2027 to 11 February 2027	April 2027 (May for academies)
Third window	18 May 2027 to 1 July 2027	September 2027 (October for academies)

9.3 Bank account details

It is important you keep your bank account and contact details up to date with us as any discrepancies will impact on payments. You should:

- request a change to your bank account details, by completing the [online form](#)
- send any queries about amending your bank account to dfestandingdata@education.gov.uk

9.4 Funding claims for students placed in independent provision

Local authorities remain responsible for submitting defined vulnerable group bursary funding claims for students they have placed in independent provision.

The independent education institution is responsible for:

- assessing and verifying students' eligibility for the defined vulnerable group bursary
- obtaining evidence and assessing their actual need for help

Once the institution is satisfied the student is eligible for support and needs an agreed amount of support, they should contact the relevant local authority. The local authority cannot submit a funding claim to DfE without formal confirmation of eligibility from the institution. Confirmation must be given by sending the local authority a copy of the evidence and setting out in writing or by email that an appropriate assessment of need has been conducted to determine the amount of support required.

We will pay the funding to the local authority. Education institutions making funding claims through local authorities must ensure they liaise with the local authority's finance contacts to ensure the correct bursary funds are redirected to them.

9.5 Recycling bursaries for vulnerable groups

funding

You may accrue some unused funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups during the academic year. For example, if:

- a student leaves their study programme early after only receiving part of their bursary
- you do not pay the full amount to a student because they did not meet the agreed conditions

You are expected to recycle this funding and use it to support other eligible students.

From 1 May 2027, any unused defined vulnerable group bursary funding claimed, can be added to your discretionary bursary. Alternatively, you can return unused funds to the DfE via our [customer help centre](#).

If you incorrectly claim defined vulnerable group bursary funding, for example, without properly verifying a student's eligibility, you should try to recycle the funding for other eligible students, maintaining the evidence to support this. If there are no other eligible vulnerable group bursary students, the incorrectly claimed funds cannot be added to your discretionary bursary allocation. Instead, you must report the funding to us via our [customer help centre](#) so that we can recover it.

For further guidance on unspent funds see Section 11.

9.6 Zero bursary students (vulnerable group bursary)

A student is defined as 'zero bursary' if:

- your existing funds cover the costs of a student or
- you decide that the student does not have actual financial need

You must include 'zero' bursary students in the number of students in your funding claim. This provides us with information on the number of 16 to 19 students in defined vulnerable groups which can affect funding and helps with policy development.

10. Payments and allocations: discretionary bursaries

10.1 Allocations

We make discretionary bursary allocations to institutions that have a 16 to 19 contract or funding agreement each year.

If you operate from more than one location across England, or through subcontracts, we will make allocations to the lead office for distribution to each site. You should ensure that students attending provision delivered by subcontractors or at different sites can apply for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The lead institution is responsible for ensuring the bursary fund is administered appropriately at each site and at any subcontractor to ensure students can access support.

The methodology for calculating discretionary bursary allocations has 2 elements.

10.2 Element 1: financial disadvantage

Element 1, disadvantage, is calculated based on students' home postcodes, matched against the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) 2019](#). The IMD is a government index that uses statistics on education, crime, health, employment, and income to determine how disadvantaged an area is. Financial disadvantage instance values are assigned to students living in the 27% most deprived areas of the country.

10.3 Element 2: a) student costs to support travel and b) industry placements

Element 2, student costs, is intended to provide a general indicator of the main costs faced by students.

Element 2a calculates an amount of funding for travel to support non-residential

students whose home postcode is in the top 60% most deprived areas (based on IMD 2019). The calculation factors in the:

- rurality of the student's home postcode
- distance between the student's home postcode and the delivery location of their learning

Element 2b considers whether the student's industry placement through their participation on a T Level programme qualifies an institution for bursary funding. The calculation factors in the proportion of each institution's students whose home postcode is in the top 60% most deprived areas (based on IMD 2019). Only institutions approved to deliver T Levels in academic year 2026 to 2027 are in scope for this funding.

Both elements are based on analysis of data from academic year 2024 to 2025, to gauge the underlying student factors that inform an institution's academic year 2026 to 2027 discretionary bursary allocation.

These elements form part of the allocation methodology only. Your local bursary policies do not need to be split into these 2 elements or refer to them. There is no restriction between the different elements. You can use your allocation flexibly, to support the needs of your students.

The [16 to 19 funding allocation statement guides](#) explain how we calculate your 16 to 19 funding allocation.

In a small number of instances, we will use a 'by exception' process. For example, we may apply averages where there is no end of year data available. This will be made clear to any institutions affected.

10.4 Payment schedule

Discretionary bursary allocations are paid in 2 parts:

- two-thirds in August 2026
- one-third in April 2027

The first payment for academies is in September, in line with general academy payment schedules.

10.5 Converter academies

Any school sixth forms that convert to academies in September will have already received their first bursary payment in August (via the local authority as school sixth forms). We will make subsequent bursary payments directly to the academy.

10.6 Maintained schools

We make discretionary bursary allocations to maintained schools with a DfE-funded sixth form through local authorities. Local authorities must pass this bursary funding to the school.

10.7 Maintained special schools

Local authorities will receive discretionary bursary funding to support students at maintained special schools (MSS). The discretionary bursary allocation methodology is:

- applied to the number of students recorded in the 2024 to 2025 full-year census return
- requires the use of calculations based on averages

This bursary funding is aggregated and paid as a single allocation to each local authority. Local authorities should distribute the funding across all their MSSs, according to need, using their own local knowledge and judgement.

10.8 New institutions

We will make discretionary bursary funding available to institutions that start delivering eligible education and training for the first time in academic year 2026 to 2027. This could be during or after the 2026 to 2027 allocations round. These allocations will require the use of calculations based on averages.

To be eligible for an allocation, the institution must meet the eligible provision criteria set out in this guide (see section 3.2). We may undertake a financial health assessment on the institution before deciding to allocate funding.

10.9 Administration contribution

You are permitted to use up to 5% of your academic year 2026 to 2027 discretionary bursary allocation for administrative costs relating to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. Institutions that receive both a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and free meals in FE allocation are permitted to use up to 5% of the combined allocation for that year for administration. You must ensure you do not take a sum that is greater than 5% of the single allocation total you receive for the academic year.

11. Calculating unspent funds for return

We permit you to carry unspent bursary funds over to the next academic year. You must continue to use any funds carried forward to support students in line with the funding rules in this guide. You cannot add the funds to general institution funds.

When you are given a single overall allocation that includes funding for [Free meals in further education](#) and the bursary fund, you can carry forward funds from both schemes. You can use this funding for either free meals or bursary fund payments in the new academic year.

You cannot carry forward funding for the bursary fund and free meals funding for more than one year. This means you must return unspent funds from any year up to and including academic year 2024 to 2025.

11.1 Example: Calculating unspent funds to be returned

This example explains how to calculate the amount of bursary funding that must be returned at the end of the year:

- Bursary funding allocation for year 2025 to 2026 - £400,000
- Bursary funding remaining at end of year 2025 to 2026 - *£500,000

(*remaining allocation plus carry over from previous year)

Of the £500,000 remaining at the end of the 2025 to 2026 academic year, the maximum amount that can be from that year and carried over is the £400,000 allocated in that year. Therefore, the minimum that should be returned is: £100,000.

You must either:

- fully use any unspent funds for either discretionary bursary or free meals
- return them, in line with the one-year rule

You must:

- inform us of the total amount of any unspent funds that you have not previously reported from any year up to and including academic year 2024 to 2025
- report the unspent funding via our [customer help centre](#), specifying the amount of funding and the year or years it relates to

You must report this as soon as you are aware but no later than 31 March each year. We will recover all unspent funds.

16 to 19 Bursary Funds are subject to normal assurance arrangements for 16 to 19 education and training. Local authorities are also required, via the local authority section 151 grant return process, to confirm that they have used the funding we have paid them for the purpose it was intended. The bursary fund forms parts of this process. Any funding declared by local authorities as not being used for the purpose it was intended, or which cannot be properly accounted for, is also recovered.

12. In-year growth

16 to 19 Bursary Fund and free meals in FE allocations are linked to allocated student numbers in the ILR or census. This means an increased student number allocation from the exceptional in-year growth for student numbers process may also result in increased bursary or free meals allocations.

Subject to budget availability, we can also release additional bursary funding outside

the main growth process, if data analysis suggests increased student numbers could put your bursary allocation under considerable pressure.

As with all other strands of in-year growth, we make growth awards on the assumption that the in-year data used is accurate. If later data returns (usually the R14) show that the in-year data returns were inaccurate, we will recover some or all the bursary or free meals in FE growth award.

13. Data returns, including the ILR and school census

You must complete the ILR or school census, to indicate the numbers of students receiving support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

This must include students eligible for the defined vulnerable groups bursary who do not require support ([‘zero bursary’ students](#)). We will validate your claim for the defined vulnerable groups bursary against the ILR or school census data as part of our pre-payment checks. You must also record industry placement students in the ILR or census fields.

We may also use the ILR data field or school census data to review your use of the bursary against the amount of allocated funding. More information about the student support codes (LSR 55 and LSR 56 both relate to the bursary fund) in the ILR can be found in the [ILR specification: 2026 to 2027](#) guidance.

14. Audit, assurance, and fraud

16 to 19 Bursary Funds are subject to normal assurance arrangements for 16 to 19 education and training. You need robust and appropriate processes to record and retain bursary documents (such as evidence of eligibility, receipts) and expenditure at student level. This must include a:

- breakdown of the value, purpose, type of cost, whether paid or not
- brief justification for the decision

All expenditure must be supported by receipts. For standard weekly costs like travel

and food, it may not be practical to collect receipts for every transaction, so costs may be evidenced initially by receipts then paid after that linked to actual attendance as explained in section 7.1.

During audits you need to confirm the amount of unspent funds carried forward to the current academic year.

You must evidence your application process, for example:

- eligibility assessments
- how you made decisions on the amount of bursary based on actual financial need
- the funds used or issued to the student

Auditors will look for evidence that you have:

- a clear bursary policy
- applied your bursary fund eligibility criteria correctly
- used a consistent application and assessment process for all students

You must retain copies of documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment. This might include, for example:

- attendance
- returning equipment at the end of their study programme
- certain points in the year when they need to provide receipts for expenditure

You must retain hard or scanned copies of documentation to support eligibility, and the funding claimed for 6 years (records can be kept electronically). This includes the:

- application form
- household income evidence for the discretionary bursary
- evidence of actual financial need
- documentation to support payment

14.1 Audit documentation for the defined vulnerable groups bursary

Examples of documentation auditors expect to see include:

- a copy of the funding claim sent to DfE
- evidence showing that the student is eligible, for example DWP or local authority letters or a copy of the student's online UC statement
- evidence of payments received from DfE, for example bank statements and remittance advices
- a copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need, along with a breakdown of the calculation that has determined the amount required by the student
- receipts for purchases by students or for in-kind support you have provided to the student, for example, bus pass, lunch receipts or book receipts
- evidence to support the value of any cash payments made to the student such as travel pass, bus tickets or meal deals
- any necessary attendance evidence to support payments

14.2 Audit documentation for the discretionary bursary:

Examples of documentation auditors expect to see include:

- evidence used to assess eligibility and determine household income, such as P60s, self-employment accounts, wage slips, a letter from DWP, copies of online statements for UC
- a copy of the student's individual assessment of actual financial need, including a breakdown of the calculation that has determined the amount awarded
- receipts for purchases by students or for in-kind support you have provided to the student, for example, bus or travel pass, travel tickets, lunch receipts or book receipts
- evidence to support the value of any cash payments made to the student such as travel pass, bus tickets or meal deals
- any necessary attendance evidence to support payments

14.3 Common audit errors

Common errors identified at audit, which can lead to the recovery of funds, include:

- blanket and flat or fixed rate payments (whether £1,200 or any other amount) to students, payments not based on actual need or the types of costs they have. For example, awarding a student £10 a week when their travel costs are £3.50 and they have no other defined costs
- no clear bursary fund policy that explains, for example, the criteria the institution will use to assess students and how they will make decisions about the amount of support they award
- bursary fund application forms which are not fit for purpose because they do not capture all the necessary evidence to confirm the student's household income and the actual participation costs they have
- application forms not completed and signed by students each year to ensure annual assessment of their current financial needs
- for the discretionary bursary, not undertaking financial assessments for each student, every year or using partial/incomplete evidence
- for the defined vulnerable groups bursary, incomplete evidence to verify students meet the criteria, for example, evidence of receipt of PIP only but not the other required benefits (ESA or UC)
- using bursary funding to pay for foreign and overseas field trips if content can be found in England at a cheaper cost, or using bursary funding to pay for field trips that are not an essential part of achieving a student's study programme goals. The bursary fund can only be used to support learning activities and experiences that are clearly mapped to the student's study programme goals or course objectives
- evidence of household income used to assess eligibility for the discretionary bursary not being retained

It is good practice to use an eligibility checklist to ensure a clear and complete bursary fund process is followed, in line with the funding rules set out in this guide. This guide includes:

- an [example checklist](#) which you may wish to use
- a [summary document](#) which lists the most important things you need to consider when administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, based on common errors and

issues DfE auditors have identified

We will recover funds if auditors identify:

- funding errors in any circumstances
- that you are not able to demonstrate how your students meet the eligibility criteria and conditions of funding
- that you have insufficient evidence to support payments
- any circumstances where you have duplicated defined vulnerable group bursary claims for the same student

We take concerns relating to financial irregularity or impropriety seriously. We will investigate concerns that have been raised in good faith with sufficient evidence to warrant them. Further guidance and contact details are available in DfE's [complaints procedure](#).

You are responsible for investigating instances of fraud relating to bursary fund applications. If you find evidence that a student or parent has knowingly submitted misleading or fraudulent information, resulting in the student receiving a bursary they were not entitled to, you must attempt to recover the overpayment from the student.

Institutions that identify significant fraud must report it to us. Significant fraud may involve one or more of the following:

- the amount of money is over £1,200
- the particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systemic, or complex
- there is likely to be great public interest because of the nature of the fraud or the people involved

15. Free meals in further education

Institutions that receive allocations for both free meals in further education (including those newly in scope for that funding) and the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund discretionary bursary have flexibility to use the funding as a single allocation. You must manage the single allocation appropriately to ensure all students eligible for a free meal receive one (including when they are attending a work placement) in line with the [free meals guide](#).

Before the introduction of additional funding for free meals in further education, institutions supported the cost of meals for students who needed them from the bursary fund. We will continue to adjust discretionary bursary allocations to take account of this and avoid double funding for institutions in receipt of free meals allocations.

To prevent double funding, if a bursary student (discretionary or defined vulnerable groups) is eligible for free meals you must consider the provision of a free meal, or the funding provided to the student for the free meal, when you assess their overall need for support.

16. Other useful information

This section provides information on eligibility for specific groups of students.

16.1 Industry placements

A few students may face financial difficulties from extra participation costs, for example, additional travel costs to their placement and may need short-term support.

16.2 Young offenders

Young offenders can apply for a bursary if they:

- are serving a non-custodial sentence
- have been released early from a custodial sentence (except on temporary license)
- have been remanded to a non-secure institution

Young offenders cannot apply for a bursary if they:

- are serving a custodial sentence
- have been released from a custodial sentence on temporary license

- have been remanded to a secure institution

You should provide in-kind support to young offenders rather than cash wherever possible.

16.3 Travel from and to Scotland

If a student lives in Scotland and travels to study at an English institution, they must approach their home local authority in Scotland to make an application for [Scottish Education Maintenance Allowance](#) (EMA). These students are not eligible to apply for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

If a student lives in England and travels to study at a Scottish institution, they must approach their home local authority in England to make an application for a discretionary or vulnerable group bursary. These students are not eligible for Scottish EMA.

16.4 Travel from and to Wales

If a student lives in Wales and travels to study at an English institution, they must approach their home local authority to make an application for [Welsh Education Maintenance Allowance](#).

These students may also apply to their English institution for help from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund discretionary bursary but are not eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups. You should consider any support the student is receiving from Wales before making any bursary award.

All students living in England and travelling to Wales to study who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are eligible to apply for one if they have a financial need. They must approach their home local authority in England to make an application.

17. Good practice

The following section highlights some areas of good practice in administering both types of bursary fund.

17.1 Raising awareness of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Examples of policies and procedures designed to raise early awareness of the bursary include:

- information about the bursary fund shared through the college website or prospectus, posters displayed around the college, distribution at open evenings for year 11 pupils from local schools or talks at local schools
- at or following enrolment, further information including an application form, and all new entrants receiving a text message and email at the start of the academic year
- work with local support services to target potential students who are homeless and provide them with information
- social workers working with disadvantaged young people, helping the college identify who may be eligible for the defined vulnerable groups bursary

17.2 Identifying students eligible for the defined vulnerable groups bursary

You can take the initiative to identify students eligible for the defined vulnerable groups bursary and encourage them to apply by working with the local authority, looked after children's education services and care leaver services. Institutions and local authorities can also set up local data sharing agreements to share information about which students might be in need.

Examples of working with local stakeholders to identify eligible young people include:

- information on the bursary fund being included in a bulletin to social worker contacts, published 3 times a year
- an inclusion manager, who has developed links with local agencies (YMCA, Social Services, and Youth Offending Teams), identifies young people who might need support before enrolment and assistance to complete the application process

- working with partner organisations to promote the bursary, identify and engage young people considering FE. Partner organisations include social services, foster parent networks, schools, asylum support teams, youth offending and health service

17.3 Identifying discretionary bursary students

We recognise it can be difficult for you to identify which students may need help from the discretionary bursary if they do not proactively ask for support. Further education colleges, sixth-form colleges, school sixth forms, 16 to 19 academies and special post-16 institutions can access Get Information about Pupils (GIAP) through your DfE sign-in account to help identify students you could proactively approach to see if they require support.

For example, GIAP can tell you if a young person previously received free school meals.

17.4 Young people with caring responsibilities

Young people with caring responsibilities, for example, caring for a parent or other relative, may be reluctant to say so because of fear of being stigmatised. You must:

- ensure confidentiality to reduce these concerns
- publicise the availability of help from the bursary fund
- encourage young carers to apply where they have a financial need

When assessing young carers' eligibility for support from the bursary, you could consider whether:

- they have had a young carers assessment (which includes questions about the support they need for education)
- they access a young carers service
- their GP could confirm their caring role
- they receive Carers Allowance

17.5 Working with other organisations

You are encouraged to work with other local institutions and the local authority to agree a common approach to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This could include you working together to:

- identify and support eligible students
- pool funds
- centrally manage and administer the bursary

For example, one group of colleges has created a Learning Executive with representatives from each local college. This meets regularly and sets a consistent approach to financial support across all colleges in the area.

17.6 Paying bursary funding to students

You must ensure students and their families know who they should contact if they have any queries about payments.

Some examples of different payment approaches used by institutions are:

- involving carers and social workers in establishing the most appropriate way of getting the funding to the young person. At the beginning of term, if the student needs specialist equipment and/or a travel pass, the college purchases this and deducts the cost from the student's overall award. In cases where a carer has responsibility for the young person's finances, the college sets up meetings with them to decide how payments should be made.
- a financial support advisor interviews students to decide together on the best way to deliver their support. They address priority areas first: travel to college, equipment costs and support with studies. They also discuss additional expenditure, such as university visits.

18. Further information

These funding rules provide the information that you need to administer the bursary

fund and must be consulted before contacting us. However, if you have a question that is not answered by this guide, you can contact us via our [customer help portal](#).

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