
BURSARY FUND POLICY

Policy Control Page

Responsible Person	Assistant Principal College
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Policy Applicable to	The Deaf Academy

Date	Version	Person	Change / Action
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July 2021	1.1	Salena Hutton	Approval at Governing Body
June 2022	1.2	Vanessa Lamb-Bethell	Minor amendments and update
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May 2024	1.4	Ruth Kennedy	Amendments and update
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1. Purpose

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is to help young people facing financial hardship to stay on in full-time education after Year 11. It is not to be used to cover costs on the residential side of the Academy. It is administered every academic year.

The scheme comprises two parts:

- A **Vulnerable Bursary** which can be awarded to those in defined groups, who may need a greater level of support. Funding is claimed by the Academy from the Department for Education (DfE) for every eligible student and is paid to all who meet the conditions of payment.
- A **Discretionary Bursary** which is available for students in need of financial help to meet specific costs to help them stay in education. Funding, as a limited grant, is allocated annually to the Academy from the DfE based on previous student numbers and is passed onto eligible students who meet the conditions of payment.

The following information is taken from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2026 to 2027 academic year.

[16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

Residents of Scotland

Students who live in Scotland should approach their home local authority in Scotland to make an application for a Scottish Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). These students are not eligible to apply for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

[Scottish Education Maintenance Allowances](#)

Residents of Wales

Students who live in Wales should approach their home local authority to make an application for a Welsh Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

<https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe/ema.aspx>

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. We will consider any support received from the Welsh EMA before making any bursary award.

Residents of Northern Ireland

Students who live in Northern Ireland should approach their home local authority to make an application for a Northern Ireland Education Maintenance Allowance EMA.

[Bursaries, scholarships and awards | nidirect](#)

2. Eligibility (All Bursaries)

Age

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 years old on 31 August 2026 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began at age 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Both groups of aged 19+ 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 the Academy considers they need the support to continue their participation.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

We generally only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to younger students - for example, where a student is following an accelerated study programme. We do not award bursary funds to students enrolled at another institution, where that institution also receives public funding for the student, for example, students aged 14 to 16 who are attending college as part of their key stage 4 programme.

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

Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example Ofsted). The provision must also be either:

- funded directly by DFE or via a local authority
- otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the DFE list of qualifications approved for funding <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk>

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

The DFE does 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 (travel, equipment and uniforms, for example). In the rare instances where the academy may identify that such a student requires financial help, we would provide support in kind, for example providing a temporary travel pass for the student to attend exams.

Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>

In summary, this means the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom.

Asylum seeking children

Please refer to the guidance on www.gov.uk.

3. The Vulnerable Bursary (16-19 year olds only)

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups- of up to £1,200. We will award students the amount of support they need to participate based on an assessment of the types of costs they have and ask for evidence each year support is required.

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 their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

UC has now fully rolled out and so young people aged 16 to 18 will no longer be in receipt of the other benefits listed above. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and those with an EHC plan) may still be in receipt of those other legacy benefits.

* Care Leavers are defined as:

- a young person aged 16 or 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 consecutive weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16;
- or a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

Students would only receive the amount they actually need and would not be automatically awarded £1,200.

In exceptional circumstances, recipients of a vulnerable bursary can also apply to the discretionary bursary fund.

Pro-rata bursaries for vulnerable groups

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating in a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks would be paid a pro-rata amount, as appropriate, based on an assessment of their actual needs.

Conditions of payment

Payments will depend on attendance, good behaviour, completion of work and adherence of any student contracts in place.

Payment will be made by BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing System) into the student's bank account. The payment frequency will be agreed at approval stage.

Evidence of eligibility

We have to obtain proof that students meet the criteria for the bursary for vulnerable groups in full. In other words, that they are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers. We would ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes.

For example:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, we require written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority- this is the authority that looks after them or provides their care leaving services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the Local Authority.
- for students in receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC), we require a copy of their IS or UC award notice. This must clearly state that the claim is in the student's name/confirm 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. For students in receipt of UC, institutions must also see a document such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, a birth certificate, utility bill or the like.

Students receiving UC/ESA and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) must provide a copy of their UC claim from DWP. Evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP must also be provided.

UC claimants should be able to print off details of their award from their online account or provide an acceptable screenshot verifying such.

We would only submit a claim to the DfE

- When we have seen and verified appropriate evidence to confirm that the student is eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups, and
- When we have assessed the actual amount of financial help the student needs to participate. It is this amount that we would request from the DfE

Young people eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups who don't require bursary funding

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award.

In these circumstances, we can refuse the students application and if the student, their parents or support worker still wants to claim bursary for vulnerable groups we would consider the particular circumstances in each case and would then decide whether to award no bursary or a reduced amount.

4. The Discretionary Bursary (16-19 year olds and over 19s in Special Post-16 Institutions)

Students who do not fulfil the criteria for the Vulnerable Bursary can apply for the Discretionary Bursary to fund particular needs. They can apply each term where circumstances and needs change. Once granted, they will be entitled to the cost of one or more of the following:

- transport to and from school (up to **£600** per annum);
- books/equipment/materials/specialist clothing;
- field trips and visits if essential to the course;
- DBS checks if required for placement
- exam retakes/UCAS fees;
- travel expenses for visits to up to three Higher Education establishments.

Students can apply for this Bursary if their parents are claiming one of these benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credit
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- or students whose parents have an annual income of less than band 1 below (including benefits) in the last tax year, or in band 2 (including benefits)

The Academy uses income bands to establish the amount of financial support they give to an individual:

Band 1	Annual household income of £26,500 or less
	Students can apply for: • a contribution towards travel costs to and from the Academy; • course related costs including books/materials/equipment*/specialist clothing/meals;

	• payment for educational field trips and visits related to courses during the year; • a contribution towards exam re-sits; • reimbursement of the cost of visiting university open days or interviews.
Band 2	Annual household income between £26,501 - £35,000
	Students can apply for: • the same allowances and contributions as Band 1, but smaller contributions towards bus travel and educational visits. • a contribution towards travel costs if they live over two miles from college.

Evidence

Parents/Carers must supply copies of benefit claims and a copy of the previous year's P60 in order to show the student is entitled to receive the Bursary grant. These documents will be kept on file for 6 years for the purposes of Audit and then destroyed.

Conditions of payment

Payments will depend on attendance, good behaviour, completion of work and keeping to any student contract in place.

Payment will be made by BACS into the student's bank account, with the frequency as agreed at approval stage.

5. What the bursary fund cannot be used for

The bursary fund is not intended to:

- provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring.
- support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme, or
- support general household incomes

We are not permitted to use the bursary fund in any way that would give us a competitive advantage over other colleges. Examples include:

- fees for access to facilities at the Deaf Academy
- block subsidy of the canteen
- block subsidy of transport, or support for travel for all students regardless of family incomes
- block provision of equipment, material or books

- making bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement
- payments to support student's general living costs

The Deaf Academy will not use the bursary as a way of incentivising attendance or as a marketing tool to encourage students to choose us over another college.

6. Purchasing of books or equipment

Where the Deaf Academy uses the bursary to purchase books or equipment for a student, we can specify the student must return these at the end of their study programme so they can be used again by another student where appropriate. We may also specify that books and other equipment provided by the bursary scheme must be kept on site.

7. 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and receipt of DWP benefits

Students and parents/carers should be aware of 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 or, generally, Universal Credit (the Universal Credit section of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2026 to 2027 academic year document contains more details about this benefit).

If a student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) and Employment Support Allowance, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

We are not allowed to make bursary fund payments as payments for living costs. This is out of scope of the Bursary Fund and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

8. Application

The Bursary application is for one academic year and students need to apply each year. A student should complete a 16-19 Bursary Fund application form at the start of the academic year and provide evidence, where appropriate, to support their application. For example, a letter from the benefits agency, the notice showing their entitlement, or a letter from the Local Authority stating the student is in care.

Application forms are available on the Academy's website and in the reception/admin office, they will be sent to students for the start of the academic year, and to any new students who join during the academic year.

9. Recycled Vulnerable Bursary Payments, Incorrectly claimed Vulnerable Bursary Funding and Unspent Bursary Funds

Recycled Vulnerable Bursary

If a student leaves early, or if the full amount is not paid because a student did not meet the agreed conditions, the Academy may accrue unused Vulnerable Bursary funds. Up to 30th April 2027 the Academy is expected to recycle this funding and use it to offset against claims for other Vulnerable students. After 1st May 2027 this funding can be recycled into the Discretionary Bursary funds.

Incorrectly claimed Vulnerable Bursary Funds

If the Academy has incorrectly claimed funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups (for example if we submit a funding claim without verifying a student has met the criteria) we would try to recycle the funding on subsequent funding claims. However if we have no other students who are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, the incorrectly claimed funds cannot be added to our discretionary bursary allocation because the claim was in error. Instead the Academy must contact DfE to return the funds through the customer help centre - <https://customerhelp.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb>

Unspent Bursary Funds

The Academy is permitted to carry unspent bursary funds over to the next academic year but must not add them to general funds.

10. Pro-rata Payments

Where a student attends the Academy on a part-time basis, a pro-rata amount will be paid, in this case students will be asked to sign a declaration to confirm they understand that they are not entitled to the full amount.

11. Decisions and Appeals

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for deciding which students will receive the Bursary. The Bursary Fund is a limited amount and the Academy cannot guarantee that every application will be granted. There may be occasions when a student fulfils all the criteria and their application is unsuccessful due to lack of available funding.

Decisions will be made based on those students most in need, considering household income and the type of assistance required (transport costs associated with travel to and from the Academy (up to **£600** per year)/books, materials and equipment/educational field trips and visits related to courses).

Appeals relating to the decision should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

12. Fraud

Fraudulent claims for Bursary allocations will be referred to the Police. Students found making fraudulent claims will be required to refund all payments received and will receive either a fixed term or permanent exclusion from the Academy.

If the Academy identifies significant fraud we would need to report it to the DFE. 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 or complex
- There is likely to be a great public interest because of the nature of the fraud or the people involved.

13. Monitoring of the Process

Monitoring of the scheme will be conducted by the DFE and records will be held for six years.

14. Sharing Information

Information about the 16-19 Bursary will be:

- sent to all students of the correct age at the start of the academic year;
- published on the website;
- included in the student induction process;
- kept up to date.

Full details about the Bursary can be found on the Gov.uk website.

Appendix 1 – Administration Check List



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

16 to 19 Bursary Fund checklist

You should use this checklist when assessing student applications for support from the 16 to 19 bursary Fund.

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 (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf) wherever possible. Receipts should be retained.
- ☐ Support awarded in cash (via BACs) for travel, meals, books or equipment. Receipts should be obtained/retained.
- ☐ Award letter/written agreement issued to student.

Discretionary bursary

- ☐ Evidence to confirm the student meets the institution's 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 (bus pass, meal vouchers, books or equipment purchased on student's behalf) wherever possible. Receipts should be retained.
- ☐ Support awarded in cash (via BACs) for travel, meals, books or equipment. Receipts should be obtained/retained.
- ☐ Award letter/written agreement issued to student.

Appendix 2 – DfE Summary for institutions



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Summary

This is a list of the most important things that institutions should and shouldn't do when administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

This does not replace the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#) which institutions must read in full.

Institutions should:

- ☐ Publish a policy or statement setting out how they will use their bursary fund and what eligibility criteria they use.
- ☐ Consider the relevant local authority's transport statement when setting their bursary fund policy.
- ☐ Ensure application forms, bursary policies and any supporting information are clear that the bursary fund is intended to help students with their actual costs of participating. Institutions should ensure their 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'.
- ☐ Base all decisions about which students receive help from the bursary and how much bursary they receive on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student. Institutions must carry out a financial assessment for each student to establish their household income, whether there is an actual financial need and what kinds of costs the student has.
- ☐ Fully verify each student's eligibility and need for a bursary for vulnerable groups before submitting any funding claim to the DfE
- ☐ Consider whether they can provide support to students in-kind – by buying a bus pass or books, providing a credit or voucher for a meal, for example.
- ☐ Retain evidence to show how they have awarded the amount of bursary they have to each student.
- ☐ Ensure students are eligible for the bursary fund each year – their circumstances and needs can change.
- ☐ Retain copies of any documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their bursary fund conditions, including the impact on payments if they don't attend and the institution's rules about returning equipment paid for from the bursary funds.
- ☐ Consider having more than one person who can process bursaries, with segregation of duties or a contingency plan if that person was absent.

Appendix 3 – Glossary

EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
DfE	Department for Education
UC	Universal Credit
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
