

16-19 bursary fund statement 2025-2026



At The Blandford School, we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they have access to their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from lower income households and those from more affluent backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by our school. In **both** cases, the school is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We are dedicated to:

- Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all.
- Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- Ensuring all students who are eligible for funding have access to it.

Eligibility

Students who are enrolled to join The Blandford School Sixth Form and are aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August 2025 will be eligible to apply for the 16-19 bursary for the academic year 2025-2026.

Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once. In this case, the student will be reassessed, including a one-to-one interview if necessary to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our 16-19 Bursary Application Form.

Vulnerable bursaries

To be eligible for a vulnerable bursary, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- The student is in care (a Looked After Child, LAC)
- The student is a care leaver a Previously Looked After Child, PLAC)
- The student receives Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner
- The student receives Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Any student who meets these criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,080 per year if their study programme lasts for 30 weeks or more and is a full-time programme of study: this may be reduced where the school deems it appropriate to do so. Alternatively, we may decide to allocate more than £1,080 if a student needs extra help to remain in education and we have enough funding to do so.

We will only pay students the amount they need to access education, based on individual assessment. Students will not automatically receive £1,080 or a set amount of funding unless this is in line with their actual financial need. There will be no blanket or flat-rate payments without consideration of the student's specific financial needs.

We may decide to allocate more than £1,080 if we believe a student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be paid from the setting's discretionary bursary allocation. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the setting's auditable records.

We are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student attends specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full.
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation, e.g. no travel or food costs.
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA.
- A student is financially supported by their partner.

Where such a bursary is refused, we will explain to the student and/or the student's parents/carers or support worker the aim of bursary funding and why it is appropriate not to award any in this instance.

Discretionary bursaries

We allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries may be awarded up to value of £1,080 per academic year for students on full-time courses. It will be reviewed each academic year the student needs support. Our eligibility criteria for a discretionary bursary includes the following:

- Students living in a low-income household (household income below £30,000)
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent
- Students who are unable to meet the cost of equipment/resources/educational visits as suggested by their courses

Where possible, we will retain a small emergency fund from its 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. Evidence of the student's eligibility, the individual assessment and their actual participation costs must be held for audit purposes as for any other bursary award.

Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the application form via Applica (links will be emailed to all students eligible by age) and provide the necessary supporting documentation. We understand that needs may arise throughout the academic year. As such, we do not implement a cut-off date for applications, but wherever possible, all should be submitted by the end of September to ensure that students have as much opportunity as possible to benefit from the bursary. We are unable to refund any payments made before the bursary has been approved unless this has been previously agreed.

Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds – these are explained to all students in the letter informing them that they are eligible to receive the 16-19 bursary. Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold payments where students breach these conditions.

The conditions are as follows:

- Students must have 96% attendance at timetabled lessons, including Sixth Form Sport, supervised study sessions and tutor/personal development sessions.
- Homework and independent study tasks should be completed on time – if teachers raise concerns you will get an initial warning and then payments will stop if the problem persists.
- Students must show high levels of effort determined by having effort grades of 2 or 1 in the reports or progress checks.
- Students must abide by the School Behavioural Policy and Sixth Form Code of Conduct.

Failure to meet any of the criteria above will mean that payments will stop.

Paying the bursary

Funds will be allocated in-kind rather than in cash, e.g. travel passes, vouchers/credits for meals, required books or equipment. All payments will be given to students or parents/carers as required. If students wish to buy resources themselves they should seek clearance that this is acceptable prior to making the purchase. Money will only be refunded if previously approved and when receipts for the purchases are provided.

Bursary funds will not be given to students in large lump sums. A percentage of funding will be kept back as hardship funding to respond to any emergencies throughout the year.

Claims for travel reimbursement should be made on a weekly basis. Tickets and receipts must be handed in as evidence of the claim. If possible we will purchase a bus pass providing students live in our catchment area.

We will only back pay claims a maximum of four weeks after the date of the receipt.

Using the bursary

Upon receiving a bursary, students will receive help based on their areas of need. An interview will be offered to determine the best way to allocate their support.

The following priority areas will be addressed first:

Travel to school, e.g. bus passes and travel cards;
Meals, e.g. free school meals;
Equipment costs, e.g. books, stationery or clothing meeting the sixth form dress code;
Any other educational support, e.g. compulsory educational visits, attendance at university open days and interviews.
Peripatetic music lessons.
Costs relating to work experience

Students eligible to receive the bursary will automatically see a member of the Sixth Form staff team on a regular basis. In these 1:1 meetings students will discuss ways we can support the student financially and any academic support to help the student achieve the highest grades possible.

Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow our complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints Procedures Policy – this is available on the school website.

Further information

More information on the use and allocation of 16-19 bursaries can be found in our 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy, available on the school website.