

Bishop Challoner Catholic College



Next Review

September 2027

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Annual

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September 2026

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Current Status

Complete

Staff Owner

M Moon

Government/DfE Requirement

Statutory

16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

Contents

1. Aims

Bishop Challoner Sixth-Form College aims to:

- Have clear and transparent processes for the use and allocation of 16 to 19 bursary funds
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the type of support which is available and the means of applying for it
- Make clear to parents/carers and students the attendance and behaviour conditions for receiving the funds

2. Guidance

This policy is based on guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), including the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2026 to 2027.

3. Definitions

- 'In care' is defined as: children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- 'Looked after child' is defined as: a child in the care of a local authority or who is provided with accommodation by the authority in the exercise of any functions for more than 24 hours (section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- Care to Learn – a young person who is eligible for childcare provision
- 'Care leaver' is defined as:
 - A young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 week consecutively (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

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has overall responsibility for approving this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy. The Finance Committee also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for implementing this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy consistently.

The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the Principal of any concerns or queries regarding this 16 to 19 bursary fund policy.

5. How we use the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students from the 16 to 19 bursary fund. See section 6 below for details of our eligibility criteria.

The fund is intended to support students aged 16 to 19 in overcoming specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- Bursaries for defined vulnerable groups; and
- Discretionary bursaries

Bishop Challoner Sixth Form College can use the fund to provide students with support to fund:

- Bus passes
- School meals
- Books
- Equipment
- UCAS applications
- Field trips (that are an essential part of achieving a student's study programme goals) and other course-related costs
- The costs of attending apprenticeship/university interviews and open days
- Top up Care to Learn funding

6. Eligibility criteria for the 16 to 19 bursaries

6.1 Age

To be eligible for either bursary in the current academic year, students must be at least 16 years old but under 19 years old on 31 August at the end of the academic year.

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

- Are continuing on a study programme or course which they began when they were aged 16 to 18 years old, or
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

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

In exceptional circumstances, where students under 16 years old are on a funded 16 to 19 study programme at our school, we may use our discretion to pay bursaries to these younger students. However, if these students are enrolled at another institution that receives public funding for them, they will not be eligible for bursary funding.

6.2 Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the DfE funding regulations for post-16 provision.

6.3 Asylum seekers

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

We will provide in-kind support such as books, equipment and a travel pass to asylum seekers who have not had asylum refused.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:

- Are the responsibility of the local authority;
- Are to be treated as 'looked after' children; and
- Are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, where they have a financial need

When these students reach 18 years old, we will consider their immigration status. They will still be eligible for a bursary as a student from a defined vulnerable group if the asylum claim is in their favour and will be treated as a 'care leaver' until they reach the upper age limit.

6.4 Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students with a financial need, who meet one of the following 4 criteria below, in addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 above, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (NB: those who are privately fostered are not classed as looked after);
- 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; or
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right

UC has now replaced IS, as well as other benefits above, for current and future young people aged 16 to 18. However, students aged 19 to 25 and funded from the 16 to 19 budget (19+ continuers and students with an EHC plan) may still receive the legacy benefits listed above.

Students who meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary. Students will not receive the bursary if they do not have any actual financial need (for example, because their financial needs are met from other sources and/or because they have no relevant costs).

Where a bursary is provided, the funds will generally be up to £1,200 per year for study programmes lasting 30 weeks or more. When calculating the amount, cases will be looked at individually and base the outcome based on a particular student's needs. Students will only receive support for evidenced participation costs and will not automatically receive £1,200. Awards will be determined following an assessment of actual financial need

We can use our discretion, on a case-by-case basis, and provide more than £1,200 per year if such would be necessary in all the circumstances for the student to remain in education. Any such additional payment will be paid either from our discretionary bursary allocation or our own funds.

If a student's study programme lasts for less than 30 weeks, they will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also consider the number of hours involved in a student's study programme when deciding whether a pro-rata payment is more appropriate.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

We will provide this support for students from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. It will not be provided as regular payments for living costs.

6.5 Discretionary bursaries

In addition to the criteria outlined in sections 6.1 and 6.3 above, students can apply for a discretionary bursary if their take-home household income is £32,000 or below. Meeting this income threshold does not automatically entitle a student to support. Awards will be based on an assessment of individual financial need and participation costs. The level of award received will be depend on the criteria below. (Students who do not satisfy any of the criteria listed in this section, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising from other reasons, may apply for a discretionary bursary.)

- Household income
- Distance to travel between the student's home and the institution
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- The requirements of their study programme
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

We will review the student's eligibility position each academic year (up to date evidence will be required) Students will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

6.6 Evidence

All applications for 16 to 19 bursaries must be supported by appropriate evidence. Examples of acceptable evidence we may request are:

- A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the student's name (vulnerable group bursary)
- Written confirmation of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority (vulnerable group bursary)
- Documents such as a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, birth certificate or utility bills (vulnerable group bursary)
- A copy of the UC or IS award notice, in the parent's name (discretionary bursary)
- P60's, self-assessment via tax form (SA302), child tax credit or any other type of benefit (discretionary bursary)

7. Application and payment process

7.1 Applications

Applications should ideally be submitted by the first week of September to allow enough time for the sixth form to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary awards on a fair basis.

However, we acknowledge that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open for the sixth form academic year.

Applicants will be notified in writing (either via email or via letter) whether their application has been successful. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of their application for a bursary, they must follow the school's complaints procedure.

7.2 Payment process

The support available is from the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund and payments are made using the following process:

- Where appropriate, support may be provided in-kind rather than through cash payments, particularly where this best meets the student's identified participation needs
- Make in-kind payments, such as, books, equipment, contributions towards trips and meals.
- Cheque/cash payments (in exceptional circumstances) will be provided for eligible students

7.3 Conditions for the receipt of bursary payments

Payments of the bursary are conditional on students meeting the following conditions in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour:

- Students are expected to maintain good attendance and engagement with their study programme. Attendance will normally be monitored against a target of 95%, although individual circumstances such as illness, disability, caring responsibilities and other exceptional circumstances will always be considered before support is withdrawn or reduced.
- Following the sixth form code of conduct
- Providing all relevant receipts

All students are required to sign a declaration confirming that they agree to these conditions.

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld, but we will always take students' individual circumstances into consideration. This includes considering the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

The sixth form will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme.

The sixth form reserve the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

The sixth form will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so, and any decision will be confirmed to the student in writing.

8. Change in circumstances

If there are changes in circumstances which may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/carers must notify the school without delay.

9. Record keeping

Any paperwork and documents will be retained for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, documents as evidence and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with the data protection policy, privacy notices and record retention schedule. These policies are available on the website.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The Assistant Principal owns this policy, with responsibility for strategic leadership of the 6th form. It will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required due to changes in DfE guidance or funding regulations.