Post 16 Bursary Policy 2026-2027

Budmouth Academy, Weymouth

Version Control	
2026-2027	Policy reworded, reformatted and contents page added. Updated in line with DfE 16–19 Bursary Fund guidance for 26-27. Key changes include strengthened individual needs assessment, clearer vulnerable and discretionary bursary criteria, removal of attendance-based awards, updated payment arrangements, clarification of eligible costs, and revised application/evidence requirements.
2025-2026	New guidance jointly agreed with SLT Team September 2025

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1. Purpose of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so that they can remain in education and achieve their learning aims.

Budmouth Academy is committed to ensuring that the Bursary Fund is used fairly and appropriately to support students who genuinely need financial assistance to participate in their study programme.

There are two types of bursary:

- Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups
- Discretionary Bursary

Both bursaries are intended to meet **essential participation costs** that a student would otherwise need to pay in order to access their education.

Further information is available from the DfE 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2026–27.

2. Principles for Awarding Bursary Support

Budmouth Academy will assess each application individually.

Eligibility for the Bursary Fund does not automatically result in a bursary payment or a fixed level of funding. The amount and type of support awarded will be based on:

- the student's individual circumstances;
- evidenced household income, where applicable;
- the student's actual financial need;
- the actual and essential costs of participating in their study programme;
- any financial support already available from other sources; and
- the level of Bursary Fund available to the Academy.

The Academy will not make blanket or fixed-rate payments simply because a student falls within a particular income band or eligibility category. All awards must reflect evidenced individual need and actual participation costs.

3. General Eligibility

To receive support, students must meet the age and residency requirements set by the DfE.

A student must normally be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026.

Students aged 19 or over may receive a Discretionary Bursary only where they:

- have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan; or
- are continuing on the same study programme they began between the ages of 16 and 18.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups.

Students must also meet the residency requirements contained within the DfE funding regulations for post-16 provision.

Students undertaking apprenticeships or other waged training are not eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. Students under 19 undertaking higher education qualifications are also not eligible.

4. Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups

Students may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year if they are:

- in care;
- a care leaver;
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves, or financially supporting themselves and someone dependent upon them who lives with them; or
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) **and** Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right.

Receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Students must provide appropriate evidence confirming that they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

4.1 Assessment of Need

Being a member of one of the defined vulnerable groups does not automatically entitle a student to £1,200.

The Academy must assess the student's actual financial need and participation costs before determining the level of support.

A student may therefore receive less than £1,200 or, where their participation costs are already met from another source or they have no relevant financial need, no bursary funding.

The length and hours of the student's study programme will also be considered. Students on programmes of fewer than 30 weeks or with fewer hours of study may require less support.

Where a student has evidenced participation costs exceeding £1,200, additional support may be considered from the Academy's Discretionary Bursary allocation, subject to eligibility and available funding.

5. Discretionary Bursary

The Discretionary Bursary is available to eligible Budmouth Academy Sixth Form students who face financial barriers to participation but do not qualify for the Bursary for Defined Vulnerable Groups.

Budmouth Academy will use household income as part of determining eligibility.

The following income bands will be used to help prioritise applications:

- household income below £21,000;
- household income between £21,000 and £25,000; and
- household income between £25,000 and £30,000.

These are Budmouth Academy eligibility thresholds and are not national DfE thresholds.

Students from households with the lowest incomes will normally receive the highest priority.

Free School Meal eligibility may also be used as an indicator of financial disadvantage. However, neither household income nor Free School Meal eligibility creates an automatic entitlement to bursary funding.

The Academy will assess each student's actual financial need and participation costs before deciding whether support should be provided and the appropriate amount.

The level of support available will depend upon the Academy's overall Bursary Fund allocation and the number and level of applications received.

6. Evidence of Household Income

Students applying for the Discretionary Bursary will normally be required to provide appropriate evidence of household income.

Evidence may include, as appropriate:

- P60;
- recent payslips;
- Universal Credit award statements;
- evidence of relevant benefits;
- certified accounts or appropriate evidence of self-employed income; or
- other evidence reasonably requested by the Academy.

Where Universal Credit is used as evidence of household income, the Academy may request the three most recent monthly award statements to help estimate annual household income.

Household income eligibility will be checked in accordance with DfE requirements. Where an annual income reassessment is not undertaken, the Academy will obtain an appropriate signed declaration confirming whether household circumstances have changed.

Students must inform the Academy if their financial circumstances change during the academic year.

7. What the Bursary Can Support

Bursary funding can be used towards essential costs directly associated with participation in a student's study programme.

Depending upon individual need, this may include:

- travel to and from the Academy;
- essential books and learning resources;

- essential equipment;
- specialist clothing or protective equipment required for a course;
- meals on study days where appropriate;
- essential field trips directly related to study programme goals;
- costs associated with industry placements;
- reasonable travel costs associated with university interviews or open days;
- UCAS application fees; and
- other essential participation costs agreed by the Academy.

In exceptional circumstances, clothing or footwear may be supported where the Academy determines that it is genuinely necessary to enable the student to access and continue in education.

All expenditure must relate directly to removing an identified financial barrier to participation.

8. What the Bursary Cannot Support

The Bursary Fund cannot normally be used for:

- general household or living costs such as rent, household bills or Wi-Fi;
- counselling, mentoring or additional tutoring provided by the Academy;
- servicing or repairing laptops or tablets;
- non-essential extracurricular activities;
- overseas trips where these are not essential to the student's study programme;
- costs that should be met from another Academy budget;
- costs that are already being met by another organisation or funding source; or
- rewards or bonus payments for attendance or achievement.

The Bursary Fund must not be used as an incentive for students to attend Budmouth Academy or to achieve particular attendance levels.

9. Travel Support

Students who meet the Discretionary Bursary criteria and have significant costs associated with travelling to and from Sixth Form may apply for support with travel.

The Academy will consider:

- actual travel costs;
- distance travelled;
- frequency of travel;
- the student's timetable;
- the most cost-effective means of travel; and
- transport support available from the local authority or other sources.

Bursary funding will not replace or duplicate the local authority's statutory transport responsibilities.

10. Emergency Support

The Academy will retain a proportion of its Discretionary Bursary allocation to respond to students whose financial circumstances change during the academic year.

Students experiencing unexpected financial hardship may therefore apply at any point during the year.

Applications will be considered individually and will depend upon demonstrated need and available funds.

In cases of **severe hardship**, the Academy may provide temporary emergency support with meals or travel before the usual household income assessment has been completed. This will only be used in exceptional circumstances and a full bursary assessment will subsequently be undertaken.

The Academy will retain appropriate records of emergency support for audit purposes.

11. Applications

Applications should be made using the Budmouth Academy 16 to 19 Bursary Application Form.

The student must complete and sign the application and provide all evidence requested by the Academy.

Applications will consider:

- general eligibility;
- eligibility for a defined vulnerable group, where applicable;
- household income for Discretionary Bursary applications; and
- the student's actual financial needs and participation costs.

Applications cannot be fully assessed until the required supporting evidence has been received.

Applications and financial information will be treated confidentially and will only be accessed by appropriate staff involved in administering, assessing and auditing the Bursary Fund.

Students are encouraged to apply as early as possible in the academic year. However, applications may also be made later where circumstances change.

The Academy may retain a proportion of its allocation to support applications arising from unexpected changes in circumstances during the year.

12. Assessment and Notification

Each application will be assessed individually by the Academy.

Students will be informed of the outcome of their application.

Where support is approved, the Academy will confirm:

- the type of support awarded;
- the value of the support;
- what the funding is intended to pay for;
- how the support will be provided;
- any evidence or receipts subsequently required; and
- any conditions attached to the award.

There is no guarantee that an application will result in an award, including where a student meets the eligibility criteria for a defined vulnerable group. Funding is dependent upon demonstrated financial need and actual participation costs.

13. Payment and Provision of Support

Where practicable, Budmouth Academy will provide bursary support in kind rather than requiring students to purchase items themselves.

This could include:

- purchasing books or equipment for the student;
- providing travel passes;
- providing meal credits or vouchers; or
- paying approved costs directly.

This helps ensure that students are not required to find money themselves before receiving financial support.

Where a direct payment is appropriate, payment will normally be made by BACS into the student's own bank account.

Students will be expected to use any direct payments only for the purposes for which the bursary was awarded.

The Academy will not normally make large lump-sum payments. Payments may instead be made at appropriate intervals according to the student's identified costs.

Receipts and other evidence of expenditure will be retained where required for audit purposes.

Where reusable equipment is purchased through bursary funding, the Academy may retain ownership and require the equipment to be returned when the student completes or leaves their study programme. This will be made clear when the support is awarded.

14. Attendance, Punctuality and Behaviour

Bursary funding exists to enable students to participate in education and will not be used as a reward or incentive for attendance.

However, the Academy may make continued bursary support conditional upon students meeting reasonable agreed expectations, including:

- attending required lessons and activities;
- maintaining appropriate punctuality;

- following Academy expectations for behaviour; and
- complying with the agreed conditions of their bursary award.

Students will be made aware of these conditions when their bursary is approved.

Where expectations are not met, the Academy may review or temporarily withhold support. However, individual circumstances will always be considered before a decision is made.

This may include consideration of authorised absence, illness, disability, SEND, caring responsibilities, bereavement, medical appointments or other exceptional circumstances.

Support should not be withdrawn in a way that unnecessarily creates a further barrier to the student's participation in education.

15. Changes in Circumstances

Students must notify the Sixth Form team if their financial or personal circumstances change significantly during the academic year.

The Academy may review an existing award where:

- household income changes;
- participation costs change;
- the student's study programme changes;
- another source begins meeting the student's costs; or
- the student's circumstances otherwise significantly change.

Students whose circumstances deteriorate during the year may also request an assessment or reassessment of their need.

16. Evidence, Audit and Fraud

The Academy is required to retain appropriate evidence demonstrating that Bursary Fund expenditure complies with DfE requirements.

This may include:

- application forms;
- evidence of eligibility;
- household income evidence;
- individual assessments of financial need;
- evidence of actual participation costs;
- receipts;
- records of payments or support provided; and
- records of decisions made.

The current Budmouth application already requires students to declare that the information provided is true and to report changes in circumstances.

Students and families must provide complete and accurate information.

Providing false, deliberately misleading or incomplete information may result in future payments being stopped and incorrectly paid funding being recovered. Serious cases may be referred for further investigation.

17. Appeals and Complaints

Students have the right to request a review of a decision relating to their bursary application or award.

Students, or their parent/carer where appropriate, should submit an appeal in writing to the Head of Sixth Form within 21 days of receiving the decision.

The appeal should explain the reasons for requesting a review and include any additional evidence that the student wishes the Academy to consider.

The appeal will be considered by appropriate Academy staff who were not solely responsible for the original decision.

The outcome and reasons for the decision will be communicated to the student in writing.

The Academy will retain a record of appeals and their outcomes.

If a student or parent/carer remains dissatisfied, they should use the Budmouth Academy Complaints Procedure.

The administration of individual bursary applications is the responsibility of the Academy; therefore, students and parents should normally use the Academy's own complaints and appeals procedures rather than contacting the DfE directly.

18. Equality and Confidentiality

Budmouth Academy will administer the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund fairly, consistently and transparently.

The Academy will comply with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that bursary criteria do not directly or indirectly discriminate against students because of a protected characteristic.

All applications and supporting financial information will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with the Academy's data protection arrangements.

BUDMOUTH ACADEMY WEYMOUTH
AN ASPIRATIONS ACADEMY

6-19 Bursary Application Form 2026-2027

If you need some help with this form, please speak to Ms Andow or Mrs Cockings in the Sixth Form office.

N.B: This form must be completed by the student applying for the bursary funding. Please bring this form and all your supporting documents to Mrs Cockings in the Sixth Form office.

Please ensure you attach copies of the required evidence to support your application. Please note that all applications are subject to external audit and therefore we are unable to process applications that do not contain the requested evidence.

Please ensure the completed the signed application form and evidence is returned to Mrs Cockings as soon as possible. However, If your circumstances change and you wish to apply later in the year, you may do so, as a small allocation will be held back to cover any changes in circumstances.

For completion by student below:
SECTION 1 – Student Details (Please PRINT details and complete in black ink)

First names:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	Home telephone No:
Email:	Mobile No:

SECTION 2 – Vulnerable Bursary (£1,200 per annum). Please tick the box that applies to you:

	Part a - I am living in care
	Part b - I am a care leaver
	Part c - I am in receipt of income support *or the new Universal Credit, in place of income support.*
	Part d - I am in receipt of Employment Support Allowance *or the new Universal credit* **AND** also in receipt of Disability Allowance or Personal Independence payment.

(If you are applying for a Vulnerable Bursary and have completed Section 2 please now go to Section 4)

SECTION 3 – Discretionary Attendance Bursary

I am currently entitled to Free School Meals ☐ **(also complete boxes below).**

I am a student who permanently lives in a household whose income per year falls into the following categories. Please enter annual amount in the appropriate box:

Below £16,190 *(Also complete the FSM application form if you haven't already)*	**Between £16,190 and £21,000**	**Between £21,000 and £25,000**	**Between £25,000 and £30,000**

SECTION 4 – Proof of Benefit Submitted - for Sections 2 and 3.

Whatever you have declared in Sections 2 or 3 must be supported with evidence in order for an assessment to be made. The tables below show the evidence you will need to bring with this application form. ***Please tick the evidence you are providing.*** *(If evidence is not attached the form will be returned to you and your application will not be processed).*

Type of Income	**Evidence Required**	**Tick if Supplying**
Vulnerable Student Bursary		
Looked after or Care Leaver	Relevant paperwork detailing entitlement i.e. Letter showing Looked after status from local authority.	
Income Support/Universal Credit	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last 3 months	
Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last 3 months	
Discretionary Attendance Bursary		
Job seekers Allowance/Income Support	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last 3 months	
Working Tax Credit	Working Tax Credit Award Notice marked "2016-17". Must be for full year and not partial awards (FULL AWARD NOTICE)	
P60 – Week 52	Pay slip	
Certified accounts of self employed	Relevant certified paperwork	

Other comments

SECTION 5 – Student Bank Account Details – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL STUDENTS

Bank Name (e.g NatWest)								
Branch Location (e.g. Feltham)								
Name of Account Holder								
Sort Code								
Account Number (8 numeric digits)								

SECTION 6 – Declaration
Please read the declaration below carefully before signing:

1. I declare that the statements made on this form are true and to the best of my knowledge and belief are correct in every respect. I undertake to supply any additional information that may be required to support this application. I understand that if I refuse to provide information relevant to my claim the application will not be accepted. I also undertake to tell the school of any change in my circumstances in writing. I agree to repay the school in full and immediately any sums advanced to me if the information I have given is shown to be false or deliberately misleading.

Signed (Student):…… Date:……

Signed (Parent or Guardian named above): ……
Date:……

Please ensure the completed and signed application form and evidence is returned to Mrs Cockings as soon as possible.

For academy use only (circle as appropriate): Date Received: .....

Bursary Approved:

Yes / No

Bursary Type Approved:

Vulnerable Bursary
Discretionary Bursary
Discretionary Bursary – one off payment for something specific

Date of first payment:
Or Date for one off specific payment:

Authorised By: **Date:**