Pathway Trust

Sixth Form Bursary Fund 2026/27

Policy effective from	1 September 2026
Policy owner	Director of Finance
Policy applies to	Downend School The Castle School The King Alfred School
Policy changes since last version	New policy

1. Policy Overview

1.1 A key priority for the Department for Education is to close the gap in attainment between those from less fortunate and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16 to 19 education or training.

1.2 The 16-19 Bursary Fund targets support towards the most financially disadvantaged students with help towards the essential costs of continuing their education.

1.3 The current application form for bursary funds is available from the Sixth Form Administrator who can also answer any questions.

2. Use of Bursary Fund

2.1 5% of total bursary fund allocation will be retained by the school to cover administration (as per Department for Education guidelines).

2.2 The bursary fund will be used to support students from low-income families with essential costs of participating in their study program according to their individual circumstances. Example of essential costs:

- Books and materials
- Transport to and from school by public transport
- School meals - where a student would have been entitled to free school meals
- Uniform
- Travel to university interviews / open days
- IT equipment

3. Bursary Eligibility

3.1 **The deadline for Bursary applications for 2026/27 is Friday 20th September 2026**. Applications made after this date but will be considered on a case-by-case basis and payment may be delayed.

3.2 Each application will be assessed alongside supporting documentation in the strictest confidence.

3.3 A student in receipt of any bursary must inform the Sixth Form Administrator of any changes to family circumstances that may affect the support during the academic year. Students who become eligible during the academic year should contact the Sixth Form Administrator and make an application.

3.4 Eligibility for bursary funding is detailed in the table below.

Bursary Funding Eligibility	
Students must be aged over 16 and under 19 on 31st August 2026 to be eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary in the 2026/27 academic year. Students must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in the Department for Education funding guidance. Students should be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality and is funded within the relevant guidelines. Our Sixth Form courses are applicable. It may be decided that although a student may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need, in this case no bursary will be paid. Equally if a student in a vulnerable group has financial needs in excess of £1200 additional payments can be made from the Discretionary Bursary Fund	
Bursary for Vulnerable Groups Up to £1,200 per annum	**Discretionary Bursary Fund** Value based on criteria and applicants to the fund
Young people in care (e.g. in foster care)	Young people who are carers
re leavers (have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks after the age of 14)	Young people with a total household income of less than £32,000 per annum
Young people in receipt of Income Support/Universal Credit	
Young people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments AND Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit in their own right	

4. Attendance Requirements

4.1 In order to receive bursary funding (if they are eligible) students must also:

- Maintain a minimum of 90% attendance, apart from absences covered by authorised absence reasons below. Absence will be assessed on a week by week basis.
- Not take unauthorised absences during the school day.
- Attend on time.
- Maintain acceptable levels of behaviour, as outlined in the Sixth Form Agreement.

4.2 Students will only receive their bursary payment if they attended all lessons and required core activities.

4.3 Absences should be requested and authorised at least 48 hours in advance (except in the case of sickness). The following are acceptable reasons for authorised absence:

- Medical procedure or illness supported by a Doctor's certificate, hospital letter or letter from parents/carer
- Hospital appointment (supported by hospital documentation)
- University interview
- University open day
- Funerals
- Driving test – practical/ theory exam
- School trips/ rehearsal for school events
- Official school closure
- Official school study leave
- Job interview

4.4 The following absence reasons will not be authorised (list is not exhaustive):

- Sickness not certified by a medical note
- Hair appointments
- Dentist appointments
- Family holidays
- Lateness to school affecting lesson attendance

4.5 There may be occasions when cases of absence will be reviewed on an individual basis, examples of these could include:

- Sports trials/training/county selections
- Religious events
- Attendance at a family wedding

5. Bursary Payments

5.1 Where possible items will be purchased on behalf of the student, for example:

- Book / equipment lists from course tutors
- Bus tickets

5.2 Students have the right of appeal if it is felt the application has been withheld without justification.

5.3 Where the trust is asked to refund the student/family for items purchased themselves this is only possible where the trust is unable to purchase the goods.

5.4 Where the family seek refunding, they are required to provide:

- The receipt/invoice for the item purchased - as public funding is being used to support Bursary students it is not possible to make a refund to the student/family without a copy of the receipt/invoice being provided.
- In the case of travel via car, the number of miles travelled e.g. number of miles from home to university where the interview is taking place.

6. Appeals against a Decision of Non-Payment - Discretionary Bursary

6.1 As payments are made directly to students, it is therefore the student who must contact the school in case of an appeal against a non-payment and not the parent. Students have the right of appeal in all cases of non-payment.

6.2 To appeal the student should explain (with supporting evidence if appropriate) within one school week of payment being withheld to the Sixth Form Administrator why the payment should have been made. If the decision to withhold payment is upheld, then the student may appeal further to the Head of Sixth Form. This is the final appeal and must be made within one further school week.

7. Data Protection – How we process your information

7.1 Bursary applicants are required to submit a completed bursary application form with supporting evidence of income. This information is used to evaluate bursary applications and is not used for any other purposes.

7.2 We only keep this data for as long as we need it and currently the government department that provides the bursary funding requires us to retain this information for a period of 6 years. Data is recorded in our student records system to indicate where individual students are in receipt of a bursary, no other information relating to bursary is recorded in the student records system.

16–19 Bursary Fund Application 2026/27

Please read the 16-19 Bursary Fund Application and Payment Procedure 2026/27 before completing this form.

The deadline for Bursary Fund applications for 2026/27 is **Friday 20th September 2026.**

Part 1: Student Details			
Forename			
Surname/Family Name			
Date of Birth			
Age on 31 August 2026			
Home Address			
Postcode			
Telephone Home		Mobile	
Email Address			

Part 2: Parental Contact Details			
Title			
Forename			
Surname/Family Name			
Relationship to student			
Home Address (if different from above)			
Postcode			
Telephone Home		Mobile	
Email Address			

Part 3: Other Details	
How many dependent children (young people aged 18 or below) are in your household, including students?	
Distance to be travelled daily between your home address and school	
How do you travel to school?	
Do you have your own laptop or computer to use at home?	

Part 4: Circumstances
Please tick any that apply to you:
☐ I am aged between 16-19, live independently and claim Income Support ☐ I am looked after by the Local Authority ☐ I am a Care Leaver ☐ I am aged between 16-19 receive Income Support / Universal Credits ☐ I am in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments AND Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit in my own right ☐ I live in a household with a total annual income of less than £27,500 Annual household income £…… For details of the supporting evidence required please part 7 of this form
Please indicate the help you require by ticking the appropriate boxes (the funding provided will be dependent on the number of applications to the fund):
☐ Travel costs by public transport ☐ Essential course costs (books, trips, equipment, uniform materials etc.) ☐ ICT costs ☐ Uniform / PE Kit costs ☐ Meal costs (if eligible for free school meals) ☐ Other (please specify)
For any request relating to the purchase of equipment or books, you will be required to sign an agreement confirming that the items will be returned to the Sixth Form at the end of your studies

Part 5: Declaration of Residency	
I declare that I have been a resident of the UK for at least 3 years	
Signature of student	
Confirmed by Sixth Form	

Part 6: Payment Details (BACS) Account must be in the sole name of the recipient (student)	
Name of Bank	
Account Holder's Name	
Account Number	
Sort Code	

Part 7: Income Details (For Household)		
Please indicate which of the following benefits/income you/household are currently in receipt of and supply documentary evidence to support the claim. In all cases documents supplied must be originals – photocopies will be taken for our records.		
Type of Income	**Please tick**	**Evidence required**
Earned income with no additional benefits		Last 3 monthly wage slips or last 6 weekly wage slips or 4 fortnightly wage slips Plus P60 for tax year ending April 2026
Income Support / Universal Credits		An award letter which is less than 3 months old on the date of application
Working Tax Credit / Child Tax Credit/ Tax Credit Award		All pages of your most recent Tax Credit Award (for period to April 2027)
Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)		An award letter which is less than 3 months old on the date of application
Other Benefits/Pensions		An award letter which is less than 3 months old on the date of application
Self-employed earnings with no additional benefits		Most recent audited accounts or official tax return

Part 8: Declaration of Accuracy			
We confirm that the details provided to support this application for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are true and accurate and that any over-payments made as a result of false or incomplete information may be recovered by the school, and future payments stopped. We understand that in order to remain eligible for the 16-19 Bursary Fund and to receive payments the above-named student will comply with the terms of set out in The Bursary Application and Payment Procedure document. We understand that we must notify the Sixth Form Administrator immediately if there are any changes in financial circumstances to ensure that funding is paid at the correct level.			
Signature of student		Date	
Signature of parent		Date	

Part 9: Office use only	
Date application received	
Original documents photocopied & returned (sign & date)	
Date of Bursary Award Panel meeting	
Amount awarded	
Comments	
Date student notified of award	
Signed for Sixth Form	