



WHICKHAM SCHOOL

**16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy
2026-2027**

Policy Review

Last reviewed	By whom	Next review
July 2022	S Tumelty	by September 2023
May 2023	S Tumelty	by September 2024
July 2024	L Gainford	July 2025
July 2025	L Gainford	July 2026
July 2026	L Gainford	July 2027

1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines how Whickham School will administer and distribute support available through the 16–19 Bursary Fund during the 2026–2027 academic year.

The purpose of the 16–19 Bursary Fund is to provide financial support to students who face barriers to participation in education due to financial hardship. The fund is intended to help students remain in education and complete their study programmes.

Where the school or college supplements the bursary fund using its own resources, all communications and awards will make clear which support is funded through the 16–19 Bursary Fund and which support is provided from other sources.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's *16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide: 2026 to 2027*. The full document can be found here: [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

2. Scope

This policy applies to all eligible students aged 16 to 19 attending Whickham School and enrolled on a funded study programme.

Students aged 19 or over may be eligible where they are continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or where they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), subject to current funding regulations.

3. Equality and Fair Access

Whickham School is committed to ensuring fair and equitable access to financial support. The school will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate directly or indirectly against any student because of a protected characteristic.

Applications will be assessed against our published eligibility criteria and evidence of financial need. Currently, our criteria is outlined below:

- Currently meet the criteria for Free School Meals - School can evidence this.

- Household income of £25,000 or lower - Provide evidence from a P60, tax credits statement for each parent/carer living in your household, self-employment accounts, a letter from DWP or wage slips.
- Additional evidence, as requested.

4. Purpose of the Fund

The 16–19 Bursary Fund is intended to support participation in education and may be used to assist with costs that are essential to a student's study programme.

Support may include, but is not limited to:

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- Transport
- Public transport costs to and from school or college
- Contributions towards travel passes
- Assistance with travel costs associated with work placements or industry placements
- Books, Equipment and Learning Resources
- Essential textbooks
- Specialist equipment required for study programmes
- Stationery and learning materials
- Protective clothing or uniforms required for vocational courses
- Educational Visits and Enrichment Activities
- Essential field trips that support course objectives
- Visits required to achieve qualification outcomes
- Contributions towards educational enrichment activities linked to the curriculum
- Progression and Higher Education Activities
- Attendance at university interviews
- University open days
- Careers events and progression activities
- Other approved activities supporting future education or employment opportunities
- Childcare Support
- Top-up funding to support childcare costs where a student receives Care to Learn funding and additional support is considered necessary and appropriate
- Other Exceptional Costs

The school may consider applications for assistance with other costs where these are essential to enable participation in education and are consistent with the aims of the bursary fund.

5. Types of Bursary Available

a) Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students may be eligible for a bursary of up to the maximum amount set annually by the DfE if they fall into one of the following groups:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Young people receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right

- Young people receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit

Evidence of eligibility must be provided before support can be awarded.

b) Discretionary Bursary

Students who face financial hardship but do not meet the criteria for the vulnerable student bursary may apply for discretionary support.

The school will assess applications based on:

- Household income
- Exceptional financial circumstances
- Number of dependent children in the household
- Travel costs
- Course-related costs
- Other relevant factors affecting participation in education

Priority may be given to students with the greatest financial need.

6. Application Process

Students must complete the school's bursary application form and provide supporting evidence as requested. Evidence may include:

- Benefit award notices
- Universal Credit statements
- Tax credit documentation
- Proof of household income
- Evidence of exceptional financial circumstances

Applications may be submitted throughout the academic year, although students are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

7. Assessment and Awards

Applications will be assessed by designated staff members responsible for bursary administration. Awards will be based on:

- Available funding
- Individual financial circumstances
- Demonstrated educational need
- The costs associated with participation in the student's study programme

The school reserves the right to prioritise funding where demand exceeds available resources. Staff involved in assessing applications will declare any conflict of interest and withdraw from decision-making where appropriate.

8. Conditions of Payment

Bursary support is intended to assist students who are actively participating in education. Continued support may be dependent upon:

- Satisfactory attendance
- Appropriate behaviour
- Engagement with studies
- Compliance with school policies

Where these expectations are not met, the school may review, reduce, suspend or withdraw bursary support following appropriate consideration of individual circumstances.

9. Method of Support

Support may be provided through:

- Reimbursement of approved expenditure
- Purchase of goods or services on behalf of students
- Payment to third-party providers where appropriate
- Direct payment to students (in exceptional circumstances for vulnerable bursary students only)

The school will seek to ensure that funds are used for their intended educational purpose.

10. Monitoring and Record Keeping

The school will maintain accurate records of:

- Applications received
- Evidence provided
- Decisions made
- Awards issued
- Expenditure from the 16–19 Bursary Fund

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, the Trust's Records Retention Schedule and DfE audit requirements.

This policy is published on the school website and made available to students and parents.

11. Fraudulent Claims

Any application found to contain false or misleading information may result in:

- Withdrawal of support
- Recovery of funds already awarded
- Further action under the school's disciplinary procedures where appropriate

12. Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with a bursary decision may submit a written appeal within 10 working days of notification. Appeals should be addressed to the Head of Sixth Form. A review will be undertaken and the outcome communicated in writing. The decision of the appeal panel will be final within the school's internal procedures.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current DfE guidance and to reflect the needs of students attending Wickham School.

