



The Blue Coat
Sixth Form

16-19 BURSARY POLICY

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1. Purpose and Principles

This policy sets out how The Blue Coat Sixth Form will allocate and manage the 16-19 Bursary Fund for the academic year 2025-2026. The bursary aims to remove financial barriers to participation for students enrolled on eligible full-time study programmes.

The bursary will be managed in line with current ESFA guidance and is governed by the following principles:

- Support is based on individual need, not eligibility alone. No student will receive a guaranteed or blanket payment.
- In-kind support will be prioritised over cash payments. Where appropriate, awards will be made via travel passes, catering credit, books, and loaned equipment.
- Cash payments will only be made where justified by need, evidenced in advance, and accompanied by clear expectations for use.
- Awards may be withdrawn or amended if attendance, behaviour, or engagement falls below expected standards, in line with the Sixth Form Learning Agreement.
- The funding allocation for this academic year has been confirmed on the basis of projections submitted to the EFA during the previous academic year.
- A maximum of 5% of the discretionary bursary allocation may be used for administration, as permitted by the ESFA.
- All decisions will be documented and stored securely for audit purposes for up to six years. The Sixth Form is committed to fairness, transparency, and ensuring that support reaches those with the greatest need.

2. Eligibility

To qualify for bursary support, students must meet national ESFA criteria and show genuine financial need linked to their participation in education.

2.1 Age and Residency

Students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025. Those aged 19+ may be eligible if they are continuing a study programme begun aged 16–18, or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). ESFA residency requirements also apply.

2.2 Vulnerable Bursary (up to £1,200)

Students may be eligible if they fall into one of the following groups:

- In care or a care leaver
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name
- Receiving both DLA or PIP and ESA or Universal Credit

Students must demonstrate course-related participation costs (e.g. travel, books, equipment). The amount awarded is not automatic and depends on actual need, based on the specific costs required to take part in their course.

Required evidence includes:

- A letter from the Local Authority confirming care status
- DWP benefit confirmation for income or disability claims

2.3 Discretionary Bursary

This is available for students facing financial barriers, including those:

- Receiving Free School Meals (FSM)
- Living in a household with total earned income under £25,000
- Identified as young carers or unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Experiencing sudden changes in financial situation

Students must either:

- Have FSM confirmed by the Local Authority, or
- Provide income evidence (P60, tax credits, UC notice, etc.)

Awards are assessed on a case-by-case basis and are subject to available funds.

2.4 Hardship Bursary

Students who do not meet the main bursary thresholds may still apply for support if exceptional circumstances arise (e.g. loss of transport, family income drop). These applications are reviewed individually and accepted at any time during the academic year.

3. Bursary Support – What’s Included and What’s Not

3.1 What the Bursary Can Support

The bursary is intended to directly support education and reduce financial barriers to learning. Awards are based on actual need and prioritised as services or resources provided directly by the school, rather than cash payments.

Examples of support include:

Travel

Students aged 16–18 living in Greater Manchester may be eligible for an Our Pass, which provides free bus travel across GM and access to exclusive offers and events. A £10 administration fee applies, which can be reimbursed upon submission of a valid receipt to the finance office.

Alternatively, the Scholar’s Permit (also known as the Manchester Scholars Pass) allows eligible 16–19-year-olds to pay child fares on buses, trams, and trains when travelling to and from school or college. This permit costs £5, which can also be reimbursed in the same way as the Our Pass—by submitting a valid receipt to the finance office.

Students living outside Greater Manchester or using other forms of transport (e.g. trains) may be able to receive additional support based on financial need.

Laptop Loan

Successful applicants may apply for a school-issued laptop to support their studies. Devices will be loaned from October half term onward, subject to availability. A loan agreement must be signed, and students agree to return the laptop or repay its cost if they leave the Sixth Form or misuse the device.

Educational Equipment and Stationery

This includes subject-specific items (e.g. textbooks, folders, art supplies, lab gear). Items will usually be purchased and provided directly by the Sixth Form.

Essential Educational Visits

Covers trips required for course completion or post-18 progression (e.g. fieldwork, university open days). Requests must be made in advance using the correct bursary form.

Enrichment Trips

Support may be available for optional enrichment activities linked to curriculum areas. Funding is not guaranteed and depends on overall demand and remaining bursary resources.

Emergency Support

Where appropriate, short-term support may be provided for meals, hygiene items, or clothing (e.g. for interviews or placements).

3.2 What the Bursary Cannot Support

The bursary fund is strictly intended to support educational participation. It cannot be used to subsidise general living expenses or items that are not directly related to a student's learning and progression. All spending must comply with ESFA guidance and audit requirements.

Examples of ineligible expenses include:

- Rent, utility bills, Wi-Fi or other household costs
- Private tuition, counselling, or IT repairs
- Leisure, holiday, or recreational trips not linked to the curriculum
- Cash rewards, incentives, or gifts for attendance or achievement
- Blanket payments to groups of students
- Costs related to marketing or recruitment activity

4. Application Process

4.1 How to Apply

Students must complete a bursary application online via the Sixth Form website. All applications must include the appropriate supporting documents.

For Discretionary Bursary applications, students must either:

- Have Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility already approved by the Local Authority, or
- Provide evidence of household income (e.g. P60, tax credit award, or benefit letters)

4.2 Making a Claim

Once a student has been approved for 16–19 Bursary support, they will receive a personalised link by email giving them access to the online claim forms.

The claim process is as follows:

- **Access the form:**
Students should use their personalised link to complete the claim form for each individual request.
- **Select the type of support requested:**
Students must indicate the type of funding they are applying for (e.g. IT provision, travel support, specialist equipment, fieldwork, university visit).
- **Provide evidence where required:**
 - If the student has already paid for an item and is seeking reimbursement, they must upload a valid receipt and explain the reason for the purchase.
 - If the claim relates to a university open day or other registered event, confirmation of registration may be required.

- **Explain the purpose:**

The student must clearly state what the funding is for and why it is needed to support their education.

- **Claim review and outcome:**

Each claim will be reviewed individually. A decision will be communicated directly to the student once the claim has been assessed.

- **Timing:**

- Claim forms must be submitted in advance of the activity or purchase wherever possible.
- Claims can be submitted at any point during the academic year.
- Backdated claims will not be accepted.

5. Conditions of Award

5.1 Attendance, Punctuality, and Engagement Checks

All bursary support is subject to ongoing attendance, punctuality, and engagement checks. If a student's attendance falls below the required standard or they fail to engage appropriately, funding may be paused or withdrawn at the discretion of the Director of Sixth Form.

To continue receiving bursary support, students must meet the following expectations:

- Attend all timetabled lessons and activities with at least **95% attendance** and a strong punctuality record
- Avoid unauthorised absences
- Maintain a strong **Attitude to Learning**, demonstrating ambition, active participation, and consistent engagement with Sixth Form expectations (as reflected in the Sixth Form Report / Learning Agreement)
- Conduct themselves professionally and respectfully in the Sixth Form community
- Submit receipts if requested for cash reimbursements
- Notify the Sixth Form of any changes in financial or home circumstances

If a student fails to meet these expectations, bursary payments may be paused, adjusted, or withdrawn. In cases of misuse, the school may request that items are returned, or funding repaid.

5.2 Duration of Support

Bursary applications and support last for the duration of the academic year. Students will need to reapply each year in order to continue receiving support.

5.3 Change in Circumstance

Students must inform the school of any change in financial or home circumstances. By signing the application, students and parents confirm that the information provided is accurate. **False or misleading claims may result in legal action**, recovery of funds, and referral to the police.

6. Appeals and Complaints

6.1 Appeals

If a student wishes to appeal a bursary decision, they must submit a written appeal to the **Head of Sixth Form** within **14 days** of receiving the outcome. The appeal will be reviewed by a designated panel.

6.2 Complaints

Formal complaints should follow the school's published **Complaints Procedure**, available on the **school website**.

7. Data and Information Handling

7.1 Student Data

The school must record and store data for all bursary applicants for audit by the **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)**. Discretionary bursary applicants must state the reason for their request (e.g. travel, equipment, meals). All records will be stored securely and disposed of after **seven years**.

7.2 Use of Bursary Funds and Audit Requirements

The ESFA requires the school to report on how **16–19 Bursary funding** is used. This includes:

- The number of vulnerable students awarded bursaries and the amounts received
- Breakdown of vulnerable students by category:
 - In care
 - Care leavers
 - Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit
 - Receiving other qualifying benefits
- The number of students who:
 - Applied for a Discretionary Bursary
 - Were awarded one, and the amounts allocated and paid
 - Total amount spent on Discretionary Bursaries
- Reasons bursaries were awarded, including:
 - Books and equipment
 - Additional costs
 - Transport
 - Meals
 - Course-related clothing or materials
 - Field trips and visits
 - Exam resit fees
 - UCAS or university open day costs
 - Course-related sports activities
 - Professional membership fees
 - Other specified educational needs

All bursary spending must directly support students' participation in education. The ESFA may audit these records. If a student transfers to another provider, Blue Coat Sixth Form will pass on relevant bursary information to ensure continuity.

8. Cross References

- Complaints Procedure
- Attendance and Punctuality