

Upton-by-Chester High School

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Award Policy 2026/27



Policy Link	
SLT	L Rowlands

To	Date
Committee Finance and Buildings	7 May 2026
Full Governing Body	9 July 2026
Next Review	7 May 2027
Make available on:	Yes/ No
School website	Yes
Staff shared area	Yes

'Learning to shape the future'

The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), provides our school with an annual funding allocation for discretionary bursary awards, which we distribute to qualifying 6th Form learners in accordance with our locally set policy and the ESFA's funding guidelines. Our funding allocation for the 2026/27 school year is £13,506. In addition to this funding, some learners may qualify for a vulnerable learner bursary award, for whom we can claim additional funding from the ESFA.

Bursary awards are used to provide learners with specific financial support to enable them to remain in education. They are intended to help learners with the essential costs of participating in their study programme, which could include financial assistance for:-

- Essential books;
- Essential equipment;
- Unavoidable home to school transport;
- Field trips;
- Other course-related costs etc; and
- Reasonable transport costs in relation to attending university open days / interviews.

Bursary awards cannot be made to:-

- Support general household income;
- Support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the learner's study programme; or
- Fund learning support services such as counselling, mentoring or extra tuition.

If learners have a need for financial assistance to remain in education for the 2026/27 school year, and consider that they meet all of the qualifying criteria, then they should complete, and submit, a Bursary Application Form to the school by no later than **Friday 18th September 2026**.

An electronic version of the Bursary Application form can be accessed, and submitted, via the following link:-

<https://forms.gle/sxcvfm1c8F9au52D7>

Alternatively, application forms can be printed, for manual completion, from the school website or are available from the 6th Form Office or from Student Reception. Completed forms, together with supporting documentation, should be returned to Student Reception.

Whilst learners may submit applications at any time during the school year, our Bursary Fund allocation is relatively small and so learners are encouraged to apply at the earliest opportunity whilst funding lasts.

The ESFA requires us to assess the financial needs of individual learners when making bursary awards. Therefore, learners will need to specify clearly, within their applications, how much funding they consider they require and how it would be spent. We are only able to offer awards to those learners who genuinely need them in order to remain in education. We are no longer permitted to provide certain groups of learners, such as those in receipt of FSMs, with a standard, fixed-rate bursary award, as each award must be assessed on its own merits.

Learners must meet the age and residency criteria, as set out below, to be eligible for help from the bursary fund for the 2026/27 academic year.

Age

For 2026/27 bursaries learners must be aged 16 or over, but under 19, at 31st August 2026. Learners aged 19 (or over), are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 or have an Education Care Plan (EHCP).

Learners aged 19, or over, are unable to qualify for bursary awards targeted at vulnerable groups.

Residency

Learners must meet the residency criteria as set out within the ESFA's funding regulations <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

For the vast majority of learners within our school this will mean that you have been resident in the UK for the 3 years preceding 1st September 2026, and you have either indefinite leave to enter, or remain, or have the right to live in the UK.

If any learners are uncertain as to whether they meet the residency criteria then they should speak, in the first instance, with Mr Lewis (Director of 6th Form).

Financial Information for Discretionary Bursary Award Assessments

We recognise that those learners either in receipt of Free School Meals, or whose families are in receipt of tax credits (or Universal Credit) and have a household income of under £35,000 per annum (inclusive of benefits), are more likely to have a greater need for a discretionary bursary award than other learners, although all learners who have a genuine need for financial assistance to remain in education are encouraged to apply.

Details of all annual household income, and entitlement to benefits, will need to be declared as part of the application process, together with supporting documentation to confirm your figures.

Bursaries for Learners in Defined Vulnerable Groups

Learners who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply (as part of the main application), for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups (listed below), reflect that these learners are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to remain in education. Awards of up to £1,200 per annum are available, but the level of award provided will be based upon an assessment of the financial support each learner needs.

The defined vulnerable groups are learners who are:-

- In care;
- Care leavers;
- Personally in receipt of 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 (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

The ESFA requires us to obtain proof that learners meet the criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups in full i.e. that they are in receipt of the specific benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care / care leavers. We must ask for evidence from each learner and retain copies for audit purposes.

Payment of Bursary Awards & Associated Conditions

All bursary awards will be subject to the learner's satisfactory attendance, behaviour and attainment. 100% attendance will be expected unless acceptable reason(s) are provided for it falling lower. Bursary award payments will be weighted 50% on attendance and 50% on behaviour/attainment. Learners will be notified of any deductions, and the reason(s) behind them and have the right of appeal against them through the usual appeal channels if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Award payments will be made in instalments, usually every half-term (i.e. typically 6 instalments throughout the school year). Payments will be made via BACS direct into the learner's personal bank account in accordance with the following payment schedule:

Instalment No.	Payable By
1	Fri 09/10/26
2	Fri 13/11/26
3	Fri 15/01/27
4	Fri 05/03/27
5	Fri 30/04/27
6	Fri 11/06/27