

Sixth Form Bursary Policy

2025-26



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Ponteland High School

Callerton Lane, Ponteland, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE20 9EG



16-19 Bursary Policy 2026



1. Introduction

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules.

Bursary funds are used to help pay for the costs related to participation in full-time education, such as the costs of transport, meals, books, equipment and trips.

The allocation of bursary funds will be managed and administered by the School. The allocation of funds may be withheld or withdrawn if the student does not comply with the school's expectations.

2. General Eligibility - All Bursaries

2.1. Age of applicants

Applicants must be over 16 and under 19 on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study.

Students 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 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

2.2. Eligible education provision

Students must be participating in sixth form provision at Ponteland High School.

2.3. General eligibility criteria

Students must meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group), where they have a financial need.



3. Vulnerable Persons Bursary

Students who meet the vulnerability criteria, and have a financial need, can apply for a vulnerable person bursary for the amount of support they need to participate in sixth form, up to a maximum of £1,200 per academic year.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care (including in foster care)
- Care leavers (a young person previously looked after for 13 consecutive weeks beginning after the age of 14)
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right
- Receiving Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit **and** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments in their own right.

Students will need to provide appropriate evidence to support their application and copies of this will be retained by the school. School will use the information provided by the student to submit a funding claim form to the Student Bursary Support Service to draw down funding for vulnerable bursaries.

The vulnerable bursary is payable for each academic year the student is in education or training, as long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme.

Where the financial needs of an eligible student exceed the maximum £1200 annual vulnerable bursary, the school may offer additional support in the form of a discretionary bursary.

The school may reject an application for a vulnerable persons bursary if the eligibility criteria cannot be evidenced or if there is no financial need.

The school will revert to current, published ESFA guidance in the event of a dispute.

3. Discretionary Bursary

If a student needs financial help to stay in education they can apply for a discretionary bursary. Bursaries are intended to assist with items such as travel, essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support such as counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

The level of support which the school can offer is dependent on the total funding received and the number of applications received. The level of support offered may vary during the academic year and is dependent on the amount of funds available. Any amounts payable by the school are entirely discretionary and how much bursary is given is dependent upon each student's individual circumstance and their actual financial need.



The school must not make blanket or flat rate payments to all students in particular income bands without considering the actual needs of the student. The target students for this bursary are those who cannot stay in education without financial help for things such as:

- transport
- meals
- books
- equipment

Bursary funds can also be used for field trips and other essential course related costs as well as costs associated with university interviews and open days.

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

The following groups of students are eligible to apply for a discretionary bursary:

- Students from families with low household income. For the purposes of this policy, low household income is a combined family income (excluding any earning of the pupil or any other family dependents) of £35,000 p.a or less.
- Students whose parents are in the Armed Forces.
- Students whose families are experiencing financial hardship
- Students whose parents receive benefits such as disability living allowance, jobseekers allowance, child tax credits, income support or any other form of benefit will also be considered.
- Students from lower income families who incur higher than usual travel costs to get to and from school, and which may otherwise present a barrier to remaining in sixth form.
- Students from lower income families who have numerous school age siblings.

3.2 Evidence Required

The school will require evidence to support the discretionary bursary application. Bursary will not be awarded where no supporting documentation is provided. Students from low income families who are applying for bursary will need to provide suitable evidence of household income. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Evidence used to assess eligibility and determine household income. This could include P60's, self employment accounts, wage slips, a letter from DWP, copies of online statements for UC. A minimum of 3 months, most recent and consecutive documentation will be required

Earnings from students' own part time employment will **not** be taken into account.

The school reserves the right to award, or not award, based on individual circumstances.



4. Bursary Applications

The application process will open in July of the preceding academic year however applications for bursary may be made at any time during the academic year.

There is no guarantee of funding renewing in year 13 and students will be required to submit a new application in order for bursary to continue.

Applications must be completed as far as possible with the relevant evidence provided. Payments will not be made if acceptable supporting evidence is not provided.

Students will be advised of the outcome of their application and the assistance they can expect to receive during the year whilst funds remain. Requests for items must be made through the Applicaa System and approved before purchases are made. School will notify students if items are to be purchased on their behalf or reimbursed upon production of a receipt. Please note that, as stated above, payments or purchases will not be made until after the October census.

The school appreciates that there may be unexpected or unknown expenses that arise during the year (such as a trip or additional materials). A supplementary application for additional support may be made at any time. If evidence of household income has already been received and validated this will not always need to be resubmitted. Students should speak to the school finance office or sixth form team in the first instance.

Should parent/carer circumstances change at any time during the academic year, a new application may be made at any time however awards will be fully dependent on the funds available at the time.

5. Bursary Payments

The school will aim to buy bursaries items as far as possible. Items purchased by school on a student's behalf can include travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, required books and required equipment.

In circumstances where the school needs to reimburse students for items purchased with supporting receipts this will be done by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. Bursary payments will not be paid into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. If the student cannot manage their own funds, the school will need to consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf.

The frequency of any payments will be at the discretion of the school and may range from weekly to monthly or termly depending on the nature of the payment.



6. Bursary Payments and Benefit Entitlement

Receipt of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund does not affect entitlement to any DWP income-related benefits. Bursaries are paid directly to students in addition to other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and does not affect them.

However, if the student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) and Employment Support Allowance or in receipt of Universal Credit, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

Bursaries are not made as regular payments for living costs, as they would then be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

7. Contingency Fund

A contingency may be available for unforeseen late applications, changes in financial circumstances and individual circumstances. Each application will be assessed on its own merits and any award will be dependent on available funds.

8. Appeals

Appeals against unsuccessful applications must be made to the School Business Manager within 14 days of the letter of notification.

Complaints about the administration of the bursary will be handled in accordance with the Pele Trust complaints policy.

9. Application form

<https://ponthighbursary.applicaa.com/>

10. Financial Limits

Items purchased above the limits below are to be funded by students or their families at their discretion.

Uniform - Suits must be in line with the sixth form dress policy and are limited to £120.

A maximum of two suits can be purchased within a school year.

Shirts are limited to £30 and a maximum of 4 per school year.

Shoes are limited to £80 and a maximum of 1 pair per year.

Suit jackets are limited to £70 and a maximum of 1 per year.

Trousers and skirts are limited to £40 and a maximum of 4 per year.



Travel is limited to private bus providers where a public bus service is not available. Taxis can be reimbursed at the discretion of the sixth form team and School Business Manager.

A travel pass for the public transport system is covered by school as part of the bursary.

Equipment is to be authorised in advance and must be required as part of the curriculum for subjects studied. Stationery can be requested from the sixth form team.

Prom Tickets can be purchased on a student's behalf. Clothing or travel for the prom is not included.

Lunch can be credited to the Infiniti System to a maximum of £760 per year.

Trips can be fully or partially funded up to £400.