



Helsby High School

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Award Procedure 2026-2027

1. Introduction

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provides our school with an annual funding allocation for discretionary bursary awards, which we distribute to 6th Form students in accordance with our procedure and the ESFA's funding guidelines. Our funding allocation for the 2026-27 school year is expected to be in the region of **£11495**. In addition to this funding, some students may qualify for a vulnerable student bursary award, for whom we can claim funding on their behalf from the ESFA.

Bursary awards are used to provide students with specific financial support to enable them to remain in education. They are intended to help students 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.

Bursary awards cannot be made to:-

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

If students have a need for financial assistance to remain in education for the 2026-27 academic year, and consider that they meet all the qualifying criteria, then they should complete and submit a Bursary Fund application form to the Sixth Form team by not later than **30th September 2026**.

The online application form for the Bursary can be completed via the Sixth Form website [16 19 Bursary Application Form 2026-2027 – Fill in form](#)

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

The ESFA requires us to assess the actual financial needs of individual students when making bursary awards. Therefore, students will need to specify clearly within their applications how much funding they consider they require and how it would be spent. We are no longer able to provide certain groups of students, such as those in receipt of FSM, with a standard, fixed-rate bursary award, as each award must be awarded on its own merits.

Students 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.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- discretionary bursaries that institutions award to meet individual needs. For example, transport, meals, books and equipment

2. Age

For 2026/27 bursaries students must be aged 16 or over, but under 19, at 31st August 2026. 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 or have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

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

3. Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria as set out within the ESFA's funding regulations. For the vast majority of students within our school this will mean that you have been a resident in the UK for the 3 years proceeding September 1st 2025 and you have either indefinite leave to enter or remain, or have the right to live, in the UK.

If any students are uncertain as to whether they meet the residency criteria then they should speak, in the first instance, with Mrs Cook in the Sixth Form team.

4. Financial Information for Discretionary Bursary Award Assessment

We recognise that those students either in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM), or whose families are in receipt of tax credits (or Universal Credit) and have a household income of under **£35000** per annum (inclusive of benefits), are more likely to have a greater need for a discretionary bursary award more than other

students, although all students 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 support documentation to confirm your figures.

Bursary Award for Students in Defined Vulnerable Groups

Students 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 students 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 student needs.

The defined vulnerable groups are students 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 students meet the criteria for the bursary for the vulnerable groups in full i.e. that they are in receipt of the specified benefits in their own name or that they fully meet the definitions for in care/care leavers. We must ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes.

Payment of Bursary Awards & Associated Conditions

All Bursary award payments will be subject to the student'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 80% on attendance and 20% on behaviour / attainment. Students will be notified of any deductions and the reason(s) behind them and have the right to appeal against them through the usual appeal channels if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Award payments will be paid directly to student's own personal bank accounts in equal instalments, half-termly in arrears. Eligible students will be provided with a payments schedule.