

Policy: 16-19 Bursary Policy

Approval: Headteacher

Date: September 2025

Next review: Autumn 2026



**CHELTENHAM
BOURNSIDE
SCHOOL**

Policies

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Revision History

Date	Version	Changes made	Approved by
20.10.25	V5	Dates where relevant Section 5	Mr Jefferies, Headteacher

1. Introduction

This policy is effective for all Year 12 and 13 students from 1 September 2025

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- A vulnerable bursary for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups.
- A discretionary bursary which institutions award to meet individual needs. For example, transport, meals, books and equipment.

To be eligible for either bursary students must be aged over 16 but under 19 on 31st August 2025 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Students aged 19 or over are 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). These two-groups of aged 19+ students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.

Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

Students must meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision and be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted).

The provision must also be either:

- Funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority.
- Funded or co-funded by the European Social Fund.
- Otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19

Cheltenham Bournside School recognises its responsibilities to make the provision available to its students and this policy outlines:

- Who is eligible to receive the bursaries
- How to apply for either bursary.

Cheltenham Bournside School recognises that offering support to disadvantaged or vulnerable students requires sensitivity and respect for all of those concerned. Information relating to applications will be treated with strict confidentiality and records will be kept for auditing purposes.

This document is based on the guidance provided from the Department of Education (published 8th September 2025) and sets out how Cheltenham Bournside School will administer and distribute funds.

2. Vulnerable Bursaries

Students who meet one of the four criteria below (plus the other criteria for age and residency outlined above) and who have a financial need can apply for a for the vulnerable group bursary. They also need to be participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more

Cheltenham Bournside School does not receive an allocation of funds for vulnerable bursaries. These need to be applied for, by the school, from the Student Support Bursary Service (SSBS) when we have identified the students and seen verified appropriate evidence of those who meet the vulnerable bursary criteria.

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In care
- Care leavers
- receiving 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
- Receiving Disability Allowance or Personal Independent Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Please note that to qualify as eligible for a vulnerable student payment, the young person does not have to live independently of their parents; they can claim Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right. Parents should note that they will not be able to claim Child benefit for them if the young person's claim for Employment Support Allowance succeeds. Further information about these benefits can be found on www.gov.uk

Institutions may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. Institutions can refuse a student's application on this basis.

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks should be paid a pro-rata amount, as appropriate, based on an assessment of their actual needs.

Students who are in this category need to inform Mrs Rudge-Wills, Assistant Head of Sixth Form and provide evidence of benefits claimed. On submission of the evidence, there is a possibility of no award, or a limited award of a bursary for vulnerable groups being the outcome of an application, if it is deemed that a student's financial needs are being met.

3. Discretionary Bursaries

Discretionary bursaries are awards made by the institution to individual students. They aim to overcome the individual barriers to participation a student may face, to help keep them in education. For example, help with transport costs, meals, books and equipment. They can be for whatever amount is deemed necessary to do this. Cheltenham Bournside School will publish a statement setting out how we will use the bursary fund on our school website. The statement will be published early enough for students to be able to use the information when deciding which post-16 institution to attend. The eligibility criteria will be clear and available to students and to the ESFA and comply with the eligibility conditions set out by the Department for Education. The statement will clearly set out what type of help is offered at our centre.

Eligibility

Cheltenham Bournside School decides which students will receive a discretionary bursary and how much they will receive. All decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive, must be based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, their household income, the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme.

The sum of money that we have been given by the ESFA to distribute is finite and some funds are retained to provide support for students whose circumstances change and who then make mid-year applications for a bursary. Cheltenham Bournside School will not make blanket or flat payments to students.

4. Applications and Assessment

Cheltenham Bournside School will make every effort to ensure that all students who are entitled to bursaries, receive support. All students entering the Sixth Form will receive information about the bursaries. Students will have to complete an application form to apply for a bursary. Further details on the criteria are available from the Department for Education 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for the relevant academic year.

Students applying for bursaries will be asked to provide appropriate evidence to support their application. For example, awards notice of benefits received from the Department of Work and Pensions. The evidence must be an original document, and photocopies will not be accepted. All original documents will be returned to the applicant or parents/carers/guardians of the applicant. All documentation will be held securely and is subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Those who are applying for a bursary to help with transport costs will need to provide evidence of their transport costs.

All applications should be received by the Assistant Head of Sixth Form in accordance to the timeline set out in the application form. All applicants will receive a letter informing whether a bursary will be able to support them. If circumstances change, students can make applications later in the academic year. If funds allow, costs can be redeemed for items i.e. resources and travel costs, up to 28 days prior to the application. Receipts/evidence of costs will be required. Students will be able to appeal against any decision taken by Cheltenham Bournside School as outlined below.

5. Payments

Bursaries will be paid in-kind rather than lump sums. This means that Cheltenham Bournside School will order and pay for items that students need in order to remain in education. This helps to ensure that the bursary is spent for the reasons it was awarded for. In-kind payments can include travel passes, meal allowance, a contribution of a maximum £100 toward compulsory school trip costs, travel costs to and from school; travel costs to attend university interviews/open days (up to £50 per student maximum per academic year), required books and required equipment.

If students leave Cheltenham Bournside School before the end of the academic year, they will only receive payments-in-kind for the time that they have attended the sixth form. Any loan resources will remain the property of Cheltenham Bournside School and will need to be returned immediately. Failure to return loan resources may result in students being billed for items.

6. Appeals

Students are entitled to appeal against decisions made in relation to their application for a bursary. They should first raise their concerns with the Head of Sixth Form and, if such a

meeting fails to resolve any differences, they must refer to Cheltenham Bournside School's Complaints Procedure.

7. Fraud

Fraudulent applications for bursary allocations will be referred to the Police. Students found to have made fraudulent claims will be required to refund all of the payments received. Under Department for Education guidance, Cheltenham Bournside School could stop payments where students have been absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays, or if there is evidence that the student intends to return) and where students have decided to withdraw from a study programme. Institutions can also take back money from students if they have not spent it for the reasons it was awarded to them.