



MacIntyre Academies

Discovery Academy

16-19 Bursary Policy 2025/26

Person Responsible:	Principal
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16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

The government is committed to supporting students in post 16 education and provides financial support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund. The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome barriers so they can remain in education.

In line with Government policy, responsibility for the administration and distribution of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is devolved to school. The guidance in this policy follows the Department of Education's guidelines and aims to be fair and transparent in its application.

There are two types of 16-19 Bursary Fund available:

- Bursaries for defined **vulnerable groups** of up to £1200 a year
- A **discretionary** bursary for students who require financial support to allow them to stay in education.

Bursary funding supports eligible students with the essential costs of taking part in their study programme. This may include help with travel to and from school or college, as well as covering the cost of vital items such as books, equipment, or specialist clothing (e.g. protective overalls). These are things students would otherwise need to pay for themselves in order to fully participate.

What the Bursary fund does not cover:

- Learning support services already provided by school, e.g. counselling, mentoring
- Extracurricular activities that are not essential to the student's course
- Non-compulsory trips
- General living cost support, e.g. food, rent, household bills.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive the bursary the student must be over age 16 but under 19 years of age on 31st August 2025 for support in the 2025/26 academic year. Students must also satisfy the DfE residency criteria.

Students over the age of 19 are only eligible if they are continuing a programme started aged 16-19 or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Vulnerable Group Bursary (up to £1200)

Students may be eligible for this bursary if they fall into one of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving income support or Universal Credit in their own name
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own name, as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own name.

Discretionary Bursary (up to £1000)

Discovery Academy offers discretionary bursaries of varying amounts to support students who may struggle to remain in education without financial assistance. The 16-19 Bursary is awarded to eligible students based on the criteria outlined below and is subject to available funding and the number of applications received during the academic year.

- Students must be on a course lasting 30 weeks or more

- Students must have achieved attendance of 70% or above each term
- Students who are eligible for Free Schools Meals
- Students whose home Household income is less than £26,000
- Parents must also meet the following criteria by being in receipt of:
 - Income Support
 - Income based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income related Employment & Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
 - Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in the student's own right
 - Universal Credit.

Guidance

As per the Government guidance, receipt of the 16-19 Bursary Fund does not affect receipt of other means tested benefits paid to families.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers so they can remain in education. Examples could include:

- A bus pass so the student can attend school
- A laptop so the student can complete their work
- Payment for a school educational trip
- Equipment such as art supplies, stationery, textbooks, revision guides etc
- Purchasing of school uniform.

If eligible, these items can be purchased on your behalf, or you can be reimbursed or partially reimbursed once we have received proof of purchase/receipts. No cash payments will be made.

The above limits are subject to available funding.

Evidence Required

Vulnerable Groups

Group	Evidence Required
In care or a care leaver	Written confirmation of current or previous looked after status from the relevant local authority
Students in receipt of income support or universal credit	A copy of the award notice. For students in receipt of Universal Credit an additional document such as a tenancy agreement or utility bill is also required
Students in receipt of DLA or PIP	A copy of the award notice. Evidence of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit being paid is also required

Important Note on Vulnerable Group Bursary Awards: in some cases, a student may meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups, but if their financial needs are already fully or partially met, or they have no relevant education-related costs, they may receive a reduced award or, in certain circumstances, no bursary at all.

Discretionary Bursary

- Proof of income/benefits must be submitted along with the application form when applying to claim discretionary bursary and the student's birth certificate must be received and recorded.

Points to Note

Student and family should be aware that if false or incomplete information is submitted, the matter may be referred to the DfE or the Police. Any ineligible payments made will be sought for recovery.

Parents and students must both sign to state that they agree to and understand the terms and conditions as set out in this policy.

The award payments will be split across three terms: Autumn, Spring & Summer where applicable.

Applying for the 16-19 Bursary

Applications are welcomed to be submitted through the academic year if family circumstances change. Applications should be made by completing the 16-19 Bursary Fund Application Form (appendix 1). This policy and the application form will be distributed to students in the Autumn Term and will be made available on the school website.

Completed applications, along with all supporting evidence, should be emailed to the School Business Manager at discoveryfinance@macintyreacademies.org or in paper format to the school office. The information disclosed will only be shared with the Bursary Committee for decision making purposes. The application form and copies of evidence will be stored securely for audit purposes.

If approved by the Bursary Committee, the application is then submitted to the DfE.

There are three claim windows throughout the academic year during which the school can submit claims to the DfE:

- 8th September 2025 – 12th November 2025*
- 5th January 2026 – 11th February 2026*
- 18th May 2026 – 1st July 2026*

*These dates are subject to change as published by the DfE

Applications approved by the Bursary Committee outside of these windows will be submitted when the next window opens.

Application Review and Notification

Each application will be carefully reviewed, and successful students will be notified in writing each term. This notification will include the amount awarded and the estimated date of payment.

Receiving the 16-19 Bursary

How Bursaries Are Paid

Students who meet the eligibility criteria will receive their bursary either as non-cash support, such as a bus pass, books, equipment, or vouchers, or as a direct payment from Discovery Academy 16-19 Bursary Fund into their own bank account via BACS. In cases where special arrangements apply (e.g. Power of Attorney or someone acting on behalf of the student), payments will be made accordingly. All bursaries are paid on a termly basis, provided the eligibility criteria continue to be met each term.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited resource, and Discovery Academy will prioritise allocation of the awards in line with this policy. Large or lump-sum payments will not be made to qualifying students.

Discretionary bursary amounts may vary throughout the academic year depending on available funding and the number of eligible applications received.

Receiving bursary funding does not affect receiving other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

Changes to circumstances

A student in receipt of bursary must inform the School Business Manager of any changes to family circumstances that may affect the support during the academic year.

Where a student's financial situation has changed and they are no longer eligible to claim 16-19 Bursary Funds, such as they are no longer entitled to benefits or the overall household income limit has increased, they must notify the School Business Manager in writing all relevant details as soon as possible. The School Business Manager will look into changed circumstances and may require further evidence to support it. If the evidence submitted suggests that the student is no longer eligible; the bursary payments from Discovery Academy will cease with immediate effect.

Where a student falls into financial hardship and believes they may be eligible for 16-19 Bursary Fund, an application can be made provided all evidence is submitted to support their claim, however, if the student does become eligible to receive funds the award cannot be backdated to the start of the academic year and will only be eligible from the date that the student applied.

Appeals

Students have the right to appeal if they believe a bursary payment has been withheld or withdrawn without valid justification. In the first instance, students should raise their concern with the School Business Manager. If the issue remains unresolved, students may proceed by following the formal complaints procedure, which is available on the school website.

Further information

If you have any queries in relation to the criteria of the Bursary, or completing and submitting your application and evidence, please do not hesitate to contact the School Business Manager on the school phone number which is 02477 331070.

Communication, Governance and Monitoring

Discovery Academy will provide a policy statement on how we will administer and distribute the funds allocated. This will be available on the school website with the application form (this document). The DfE allocates a specific funding to the school each year, which is the school's allocated amount of money. Money will be allocated according to the eligibility criteria and will be subject to the school's normal governance and audit regimes.

The Bursary Award will be monitored through the external school financial audit, through the DfE and through Ofsted.

Appendix 1: 16-19 Bursary Application Form

Student Details:

Forename:		Surname:	
Date of Birth:		Age as at 31/08/25	
Home Address:			
Contact Number:		Student Email Address:	

Bursary Details:

Which bursary are you applying for (indicate below):

Vulnerable Group		Discretionary:	
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Details of Support Required:

Please list the items that financial support is required for. If support is required for a bus pass please provide details of the bus service used:

Bus Service:		School Trips:		Stationery:	
Laptop:		Books:		Uniform:	
Other (please specify):					

Is this your first application in this academic year? Yes / No

Eligibility Criteria/Evidence:

If you are applying for the vulnerable group's Bursary Fund please complete section A and if you are applying for the discretionary Bursary Fund complete section B.

YOU ONLY NEED TO COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR B, NOT BOTH.

Please note in some cases, a young person may meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for 'vulnerable groups', but if their financial needs are already fully or partially met, or they have no relevant education-related costs, they may receive a reduced award or, in certain circumstances, no bursary at all.

Section A

Vulnerable Bursary-Vulnerable Students:	Tick	Supporting Documents needed
Students in care or care leaver		Letter from care home/social worker/local authority
Students in receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit in place of Income Support) in their own right		Copies of the benefits paperwork
Students in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right		Copies of the benefits paperwork

Section B: Please tick the relevant box(es):

Discretionary Bursary Criteria	Tick	Supporting Documents needed
I am eligible for free school meals		This information will either be provided by the student feeder school (if student did not attend this school previously) or staff will be able to obtain this information in-house
Students whose household receives income based means tested benefits AND/OR whose gross annual household income is below £26,000 (Household income-this includes the combined incomes, where there is more than one source of income, of parents with parental responsibility and partner living in the household. Household income does not include income from siblings who are working, or money earned by the student themselves from part-time employment)		Please supply one or more of the following: (copies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award letter (less than 3 months old) for income based benefits • P60 (tax year ending April 2025) or the last 3 months pay slips • Evidence of self-employed earnings
Students with significant caring responsibilities at home and who are not in receipt of a Carer's Allowance		Supporting letter from social worker or parent
Students who have been affected by sudden exceptional changes to their financial circumstances		Supporting letter from parent/carer or please contact the Principal in confidence for advice

Section 5: Bank Details

In the majority of cases, successful applicants will receive an award 'in kind' in the form of a bus pass, contribution towards meals, or help with educational visits, for example. Where monetary payments are made, these will be made by BACS transfer into the learner's own bank account. Please insert the details below:

Account holder name (student) as shown on statement	
Name of Bank	
Address of Bank	
Sort Code	
Account Number	

Declarations

Please be aware that the funding covers only this academic year and there is no guarantee that funding will be available for future years, even if you are eligible for the current year.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I declare that all information I have provided in support of this application for the Discovery Academy 16-19 Bursary Fund for 2025/26 is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if false or incomplete information is submitted which results in an overpayment, all future payments will be stopped and the School will seek repayment of payments made. I undertake to notify the School Business Manager in writing of any changes to the information provided, which may affect my eligibility for the Bursary.

By signing this declaration, I confirm agreement to all the conditions and eligibility criteria of the scheme. If for any reason, I leave the school or fail to abide by the behaviour or attendance policy, I undertake to return the award upon request and I understand that the Academy may withhold payments.

Signed Date

Full name (in block capitals)

PARENT/CARER DECLARATION:

I declare that all information I have provided in support of this application for the Discovery Academy 16-19 Bursary Fund for 2025/26 is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if false or incomplete information is submitted which results in an overpayment, all future payments will be stopped, and the school will seek repayment of payments made. I undertake to notify the school in writing of any changes to the information provided, which may affect the eligibility for the Bursary.

By signing this declaration, I confirm agreement to all the conditions and eligibility criteria of the scheme. If for any reason, the learner named on this form leaves Sixth Form or fails to abide by the behaviour or attendance policy, I undertake to return the award upon request and I understand that future payments may withhold payments.

Signed Date

Full name (in block capitals)