



Sixth Form 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy 2025-26

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE) 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide for academic year 2025 to 2026, and DfE funding regulations for post-16 provision.

The 16–19 Bursary Fund forms part of the school’s commitment to removing financial barriers to education, improving attendance, and supporting successful progression to further study, apprenticeships and employment.

1. Purpose of the bursary fund

Financial support is available to eligible students through the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to help overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are two types of bursary:

- Bursary for defined vulnerable groups
- Discretionary bursary

The fund is intended to support essential participation costs and is not intended to provide learning support services, non-essential extra-curricular activities, or general living costs.

2. What SJBC may fund

- Transport to/from school or college (and placements where applicable)
- Essential books
- Equipment and materials
- Specialist or protective clothing required for a course
- Essential course-related trips
- University interviews or open days where essential to progression

Support will normally be provided in-kind wherever possible (e.g. travel passes, vouchers, or equipment purchased by the school).

3. Key rules

- No student is automatically awarded funding
- Awards are based on eligibility and actual participation costs
- Flat-rate payments will not be made unless they reflect actual evidenced costs
- Evidence will be retained for audit purposes

4. Eligibility

Students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025. Students aged 19+ may only receive a discretionary bursary if they are a 19+ continuer or have an EHC plan.

Students must be on publicly funded provision inspected by a quality assurance body and leading to an approved qualification up to Level 3.

Apprenticeships, waged training and higher education qualifications for under-19s are not eligible. Residency requirements must meet DfE post-16 funding regulations.

5. Vulnerable group bursary

Students may apply if they are in one of the defined vulnerable groups and have financial need:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Universal Credit or Income Support in their own right
- Receiving DLA or PIP in their own right and ESA/UC in their own right

Awards are based on assessed participation costs. Students are not automatically awarded £1,200.

6. Discretionary bursary

Students not in a vulnerable group may apply based on financial hardship and participation costs. Household income and individual circumstances will be considered.

Household income may be checked annually or once at the start of a typical two-year programme. A signed declaration will be required if not checked annually.

7. Applications

Applications should normally be submitted by 31 October 2025 but remain open throughout the year due to changing circumstances. Students will be informed in writing of decisions.

8. Payments

Direct Payments to Students

Where in-kind support is not practical, St John Bosco College may make payments directly to students by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account.

Students are expected to use bursary payments only for agreed educational purposes, such as travel to and from school, meals during the school day, and essential course equipment.

Students and parents/carers will sign a bursary agreement confirming the purpose of the funding and that it will be used only for educational participation costs.

The school may request receipts or evidence of expenditure at points during the year. Continued payments may be linked to attendance and engagement with the study programme.

If funding is not used for the agreed purpose, the school reserves the right to stop future payments and recover funds where appropriate.

Support will normally be provided in-kind. Where payments are required, they will be made by BACS to the student's own bank account. Large or lump sum payments will not be made.

9. Conditions

- Minimum 90% attendance unless exceptional circumstances apply
- Compliance with the school behaviour expectations
- Agreement to bursary conditions

10. Emergency meal support

Short-term meal support may be provided in severe hardship while a full assessment is completed. Records will be retained for audit.

11. Audit and records

Receipts and evidence will be retained. Records will be securely stored for six years in line with audit and data protection requirements.

Any paperwork and documents retained for audit purposes (for example, copies of application forms, evidence documents and any agreements signed by students) will be kept securely in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, privacy notices and record retention schedule. Records are stored on the school bursary system (Applicaa), where students upload evidence directly. Documents can be provided on request. All audit and evidence requirements referenced within this policy are fulfilled through records held on Applicaa.

12. Unspent funds

Funds may be carried forward for one year only. Unspent funds must be reported and returned in line with DfE rules by 31 March each year where required.

13. Monitoring

The governing body will review the policy every three years or earlier if DfE guidance changes.

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