



Burnley College Financial Support and Bursary Guidance Academic Year 2025 - 2026

1 Introduction

This guidance outlines the eligibility, allocation, and administration of free college meals, the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund, the Vulnerable Learner Bursary, and the 19+ Bursary Fund, in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidelines.

2 Scope

This guidance applies to students aged 16 to under 19 (for the 16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary Fund) or 19 or over (for the 19+ Discretionary Fund) as of 31 August 2025 who are enrolled in and attending a Burnley College course funded by the DfE. Students must meet the residence eligibility criteria for DfE funding.

3 Purpose

The DfE provides funding for free meals to enable colleges to offer meals to disadvantaged students. Additionally, the DfE supplies the Bursary Fund to support students facing significant financial barriers for continuing their education. The Bursary can cover costs such as transport, essential books, specialist clothing and equipment, UK-based trips necessary for completing assignments leading to qualifications, UCAS application fees. Whenever possible, these will be provided as in-kind payments. Furthermore, the fund can help with expenses related to mandatory industry placements, university interviews, and open days, given proof of booking or attendance.

The most vulnerable students, as defined by DfE, may receive a Bursary of up to £1,200 per year. All other funds will be distributed at the discretion of the College, following the procedures outlined below.

4 Summary

Burnley College recognises that the Student Bursary has an important role to play in removing barriers for some students accessing and completing further education courses. It is the aim of the College to use funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, and achievement. The fund will be distributed in a consistent and transparent way and in accordance with the guidance issued by the DfE.

The Bursary is intended to help with the financial hardship needs of individual students studying a programme at College. Awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course related costs such as travel, meals at college if eligible, equipment, trips and other costs associated with learning (see Types of Support). Discretionary and Hardship awards will be subject to sufficient funds being available.



5 Statement of Principles

- The bursary payment is subject to attendance and punctuality. Attendance should normally be at a minimum of 90%, if attendance drops below this payments for travel and childcare will be reduced. Extenuating circumstances that are affecting attendance will, however, be taken into account.
- The bursary should be applied fairly and consistently.
- The process must be easily understood and accessible. The Student Bursary and Hardship Fund will be publicised via Student Support information leaflets and the college website.
- The process should identify eligible students in a timely fashion.
- There is a commitment to ensuring bursary funds allocated to the College are fully distributed in order to support as many students as possible, however, budgets are provided by DFE, and therefore, the college can only make payment if there is sufficient funds. Availability of bursaries depends on the funds available.
- Funding is only available from the application date onwards – funds cannot be backdated.

6 General Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the Student Bursary students must be:

- Enrolled on an eligible course at the College.
- Their place on the course must be funded by either the DFE.
- University or Commercial courses are not eligible to apply.
- Students following an Apprenticeship, or any waged training are not eligible to apply.
- Students must be aged 16 years or over on 31 August 2025.
- They must be a “home” student, for example having been ‘ordinarily resident’ in the British Isles (see Appendix 1)
- Accompanied asylum-seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner) - As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, institutions can provide in-kind student support such as meals, books, equipment or a travel pass.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups (‘in care’ group), where they have a financial need.
- Live in a household where the income is below £60,000 per annum or are in one of the categories listed in the Vulnerable Bursary section.

There are 5 Bursary streams:

1. 16 – 18 Discretionary Bursaries
2. Vulnerable Bursaries
3. 19+ Discretionary Bursaries (Pre-Advanced & Advanced)
4. Childcare Support
5. Free School Meals



7 **Bursary 1**

16-18 Discretionary Bursaries – based on household income

Can be awarded to any student aged 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year) who face genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and training to help with costs such as transport, meals at College and other course related costs.

16-18 Discretionary Bursary awards will only be made subject to a fully completed application with supporting evidence and will only be made to support genuine financial barriers to continuing studies and will be subject to financial limits.

Students whose household income is in excess of £60,000 can still apply for support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances.

8 **Bursary 2**

Vulnerable Bursaries

Vulnerable Bursaries are available for up to £1200 a year for students aged 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year) who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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 Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Vulnerable Bursaries are available for up to £1200 for courses and are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation that they face and institutions must ensure the funds go to those who genuinely need them. No student will automatically be awarded a set amount of funding without an assessment of the level of need they have and therefore applicants will need to provide evidence to support their claim for transport, meals, or equipment up to the value of £1200.

Vulnerable bursaries will not pay the costs of purchasing electronic devices such as laptops or tablets, where applicable students should contact their social worker as there is a national scheme to provide this equipment for vulnerable young people supported by social workers.

Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers

The bursary is for eligible apprentices who are in care or are care leavers that helps remove financial barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeship. The bursary is paid by the DFE to the apprenticeship training provider once the apprentice has been on the apprenticeship for at least 60 days.

For apprentices who start their apprenticeships up to and including 31 July 2023, the bursary is a single payment of £1,000. It can only be claimed once by an



individual care leaver. For apprentices starting their apprenticeship on or after 1 August 2023, the bursary will be £3,000. It is payable in instalments over the first year of the apprenticeship.

For more information, please see [Apprenticeships Care Leavers' Bursary Guidance](#)

9 **Bursary 3**

19+ Discretionary Bursaries – based on household income

Provides support for students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year where the student is funded through the DFE Adult Skills Fund (HE, Cost recovery, Apprenticeships are not eligible). Awards will be made subject to a successful application and only to students who face genuine financial barriers to completing their course, and priority will be given to co-funded students who are unable to afford their tuition fees or examination fees.

Students whose household income is in excess of £60,000 can still apply for support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances.

This fund can also be used to support childcare costs if an Ofsted registered provider is used.

10 **Bursary 4**

Childcare Support

Available only to students with a household income of £60,000 or less who are aged 20+ who are funded from the Adult Skills Fund from the DFE or from the Advanced Loan Bursary.

The funds will only reimburse the daily childcare fee (agreed with the bursary team in advance) for attendance to an Ofsted Approved childcare provider on the days the student attends the timetabled course. If entitled to use the Free Early Education & Childcare funding this must be used to fund the days students are required to attend College and therefore students must only claim for childcare fees in addition to the free placement.

Applications must have confirmation from the Ofsted Approved provider of the daily rate to be charged. The Learner support funds will only reimburse the agreed daily childcare rate – any other fees or charges made by the Ofsted approved childcare provider will not be covered by this fund.

If funding for the course is provided through an Advanced Learning Loan we will not be able to consider your claim until your loan application has been approved – evidence must be uploaded with the application.

If your application is successful, then students must submit receipted invoices from the Childcare provider confirming the days the child attended (this must match the attendance to the student's course) and the daily fee invoiced. We will not consider payments for childcare were the student fails to attend their course. Once the childcare bursary application has been approved receipted invoices will need to be submitted to the Bursary team and these will be reconciled with your attendance and payment made.



11 Bursary 5

Free School Meals

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit .

In addition, the following pupils will be protected against losing their free school meals:

- Since 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants have continued to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This applies regardless of any change in household circumstances, including if their earnings rise above the threshold during that time. Protections will remain in place until the end of the 2025/26 school year.
- From the start of the 2026/27 school year, the Department for Education will extend entitlement to free school meals to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. It is our intention to end transitional protections alongside this change in threshold, with eligibility for all pupils reverting to whether they meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they were previously protected. We will issue further guidance ahead of September 2026.

A pupil is only eligible to receive a free school meal when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf and their eligibility, or protected status, has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or by the local authority.

12 Care to Learn

Care to Learn is a Government scheme that helps young parents under the age of 20 to continue in, and return to education after the birth of a child by providing funding for childcare whilst the young parent is studying.

Young parents must complete and submit a new application for each academic year they want to claim Care to Learn funding, even if their study programme runs for more than one year. Learners must apply directly to Care to Learn for this funding.



Students are eligible for Care to Learn if:

- They are a parent under the age of 20 years old at the start of their course
- They are the main carer for their child
- They live in England
- They are either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England
- Their course qualifies
- Their childcare provider qualifies

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- A childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- Keeping a childcare place over the summer holidays
- Taking the child to the childcare provider

For more information, please visit [Care to Learn](#)

13 **Application Process**

Students should complete the relevant application form via Pay My Student which can be found through logging into your College Services Portal. They can log in using their College Microsoft Email username and password.

Links to all the services, including the Bursary system can be found by visiting the college website here [Student portal | Burnley College](#). The application form must be completed in full, signed and dated and submitted via Pay My Student with all the required evidence. Bank details must be provided with the application as all awards made will be paid by BACS. Bank details must be for the student's own personal bank account. We cannot accept any responsibility for any incorrectly entered bank account information – where payments are made to incorrect accounts there will be no further payments made as we are unable to recover these funds. Applications submitted without the required evidence will not be processed and will therefore cause delays in approving any support funds.

The Student Support team will email the student (using the email address provided to the College at Enrolment) confirming the evidence that is missing. Once an application has been submitted, it will be assessed by the Bursary department and a decision made on whether an award can be made. We aim to process applications within 10 working days however during busy periods this will take slightly longer.

An appeals process is available which is below.

14 **Types of Support** **Free College Lunches**

Students who are not eligible for Free School Meals may be eligible for Free College Lunches. Students with a household income of under £60,000, and who are not in receipt of the benefits listed for Free School Meals, will be able to apply for Free College Lunches.



Termly Bus Ticket

Students residing over 1.3 miles from the College with a household income below £60,000 annually are eligible to apply for Financial Support to cover travel expenses. Those within 1.3 miles are required to purchase a bus pass if desired, even if they qualify for financial assistance.

	Lancashire	West Yorkshire
Term 1	£60	£60
Term 2	£60	£60
Term 3	£60	£60

Prices may be subject to change according to new travel details with travel companies, available funding and rise in ticket costs.

Travel Grant

Learners who reside more than 3 miles from the College with a household income of less than £60,000 per annum and are resident outside of a Transdev or First travel pass areas may apply for the travel grant. Support will be determined on their individual circumstances.

Uniform, Equipment and Books

If students are required to purchase uniform, kit, equipment or books as part of their course then they will be able to submit a receipt for reimbursement.

Educational Visits and Trips

If students are required to attend an educational visit or trip that is related to their course (essential), they will be able to submit an online application form. These costs will be confirmed by the curriculum area

What the bursary fund cannot be used for

The bursary fund (discretionary bursary and bursary for defined vulnerable groups) is not intended to:

- Provide learning support – examples including counselling, mentoring, extra tutoring, or support such as servicing laptops/tablets.
- Support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme
- Support the costs of foreign/overseas field trips where the content can be found within England at a much cheaper cost and/or to support the costs of field trips that are not a compulsory part of the student's curriculum

See section 5.1 of the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2025-26](#)

Conditions for receiving bursary funding

Discretionary bursaries are conditional on the student meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour. Students must attend all required classed. Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions of the bursary will be obtained and retained. The College can withhold payments/funding if a student does not meet agreed standards. If the College purchases books or equipment, the College may require the student return it once they have completed their study programme.



See section 7.2 of the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2025-26](#)

Appeals Process

If you find yourself in disagreement with a decision made regarding your financial application, please reach out to s.support@burnley.ac.uk initially, as we may have the opportunity to resolve the matter for you. Should you remain dissatisfied with the decision, you are able to contact the Manager of Corporate Services at slomas@burnley.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can complete the [Complaints Form](#) found on our website.

Data Protection

All personal data processed by Burnley College is maintained in compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.



Appendix 1

Residency Eligibility

Students eligible for funding.

The following persons will be eligible for funding a. a person on the 'relevant date'¹ who is 'settled' in the UK, and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (that is including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the 'relevant date'. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR) or having the right of abode in the UK. British citizens and certain other people have the right of abode in the UK as follows:

- i. British nationals who hold a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland passport
- ii. Irish nationals
- iii. European Union nationals or family members of EEA and Swiss workers (resident in the UK before 1 January 2021) with settled or pre-settled status
- iv. students who are children of Turkish workers where the Turkish worker has been lawfully employed and resident in the UK before 1 January 2021
- v. British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
- vi. those whose passports have been endorsed to show they have right of abode in the UK
- vii. those who have a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen
- viii. those with Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa who have been given Home Office permission to reside in the UK.

In addition to the groups outlined above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years) to be eligible for funding:

- a) people with refugee status (RS) or humanitarian protection (HP) or discretionary leave (DL) or exceptional leave to enter or remain (ELE/ELR), their spouses, civil partners and children
- b) people with recently settled status (this means those having been granted indefinite leave to enter or remain, right of abode or British citizenship within the 3 years immediately preceding the start of the course)
- c) people granted pre-settled status following our exit from EU

In addition to the groups above, DFE will also consider the following groups of students (including those who may not have lived in the UK for the last 3 years), aged up to and including the age of 18, as eligible for funding as follows:

- a) those who are accompanying or joining parents or spouses or civil partners who have the right of abode or leave to enter or remain in the UK (or accompanying or joining relevant family members, usually parents, who are UK or Irish nationals), or those who are children of diplomats
- b) those who are dependants of teachers coming to the UK on a teacher exchange scheme
- c) those who are residing legally in the UK (including those entering the UK in the last 3 years who are or were not accompanied by their parents) who are British (or Irish)



- citizens or those whose passports have been endorsed (or as part of move to digital immigration systems, either a Biometric residency permit (BRP), or an equivalent digital status and/or an endorsement letter) to either show they have the right of abode in this country or to show that they have no restrictions on working in the UK
- d) those who are dependants of adults residing legally in the UK who have been given immigration rights as workers to reside in the UK
 - e) those who are dependants of foreign students where the accompanying parent or legal guardian has a Student visa (the accompanying parent or legal guardian is excluded from our funding)
 - f) asylum seekers
 - g) those having been granted leave under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the 'Dubs' amendment)
 - h) those having been granted Calais leave to remain
 - i) those who are (including unaccompanied asylum seekers) placed in the care of social services or those in receipt of Section 4 support.

No recourse to public funds.

Someone who has 'no recourse to public funds' included in their passport stamp would not be in breach of their immigration conditions if they had access to state-funded education in the UK. 'Public funds' are defined in the immigration rules, and the benefits and services listed do not include education or any education funding. This condition in a passport therefore makes no difference to a student's eligibility, which must be determined under the normal eligibility criteria described in the paragraphs above.