

Raynes Park High School Sixth Form: 16-19 Bursary Fund Statement 2026-2027

At Raynes Park High School, we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they can access their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. The bursary is intended to help students with the essential costs of their studies, e.g. important books, equipment and travel costs. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from disadvantaged and more advantaged backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available: discretionary and vulnerable. Each bursary is allocated based on students meeting the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the vulnerable bursary which entitles students to the funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursary is determined by the school. In both cases, the school is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We will:

- Distribute 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood
- Ensure that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all
- Widen access to, and participation in, 16-19 education
- Ensure all students who are eligible for funding have access to it

1. Eligibility

Students aged 16 or over and under 19 years old on 31 August 2026 will qualify for bursaries for the 2026/2027 academic year. Students aged 19 or over can receive a bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18, or if they have an EHC plan, provided they remain eligible and the setting determines they need the support to continue their participation. Students aged 19 or over will not be eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

We will only pay bursaries to students aged under 16 in exceptional circumstances. We will use our discretion to decide whether a student's individual circumstances make them eligible for a bursary, e.g. where a student is following an accelerated study programme.

Students on apprenticeship programmes, or any waged training, are considered to be employed rather than in education – as such, they will not be eligible for the bursary.

Students on distance learning provision will not likely need help from the bursary, but in instances where they require financial help, support in-kind will be provided, e.g. a temporary travel pass to attend exams.

All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our 16-19 Bursary Application Form.

Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once. In this case, the student will be reassessed, to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.

The level of actual financial need will be assessed for all students, and a set amount of funding will not be automatically awarded.

2. Vulnerable bursaries

Students who meet one of the following criteria will be eligible for a vulnerable bursary:

- LAC (this includes those classed as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child)
- Previously LAC (PLAC)
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right

Any student who meets the above criteria can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 per year if their study programme lasts for 30 weeks or more; students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will receive a pro-rata amount.

We will consider the particular circumstances of each individual case, and may choose to award a reduced amount, e.g. where the financial help needed is limited. We will make clear in the application form that there is a possibility of no award or a limited award.

We will only pay students the amount they need to access education, based on individual assessment. Students will not automatically receive £1,200 or a set amount of funding unless this is in line with their actual financial need. There will be no blanket or flat-rate payments without consideration of the student's specific financial needs.

We may decide to allocate more than £1,200 if we believe a student needs extra help to remain in education; the extra payment will be paid from the setting's discretionary bursary allocation or its own funds. The rationale for such a decision will be included as part of the setting's auditable records.

We are responsible for determining whether a student is eligible for a vulnerable bursary. If a student meets the above criteria, but we believe a bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support, we may decide not to distribute a bursary to this student. This may include, for example, where:

- A student attends specialist residential provision that covers their education costs in full
- A student undertakes a distance learning programme and there are no financial barriers to participation, e.g. no travel or food costs
- A student is in LA care and education costs are covered in full by the LA
- A student is financially supported by their partner

Where such a bursary is refused, we will explain to the student and/or the student's parents or support worker the aim of bursary funding and why it is appropriate not to award any in this instance.

3. Discretionary bursaries

We allocate discretionary bursaries based on those who are most in need of financial support. Discretionary bursaries may be awarded up to the value of £300, and will be reviewed each year the student requires support. Where a bursary is over £300 due to a clearly identified need for an individual student with costs requiring this level of funding, the rationale will be included as part of the setting's auditable records. Our eligibility criteria for a discretionary bursary includes the following:

- Students who are completing a high-cost course in which specialist equipment and clothes are required
- Students living in a low-income household (outlined below)
- Students who are from a single-parent family or have one or more dependent siblings in their family
- Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent
- Students who travel greater than 8 miles to the school

Discretionary bursaries may be awarded for students from low-income households. The amount awarded will be dependent on the amount of income, relevant to the following levels:

Level	Minimum	Maximum
L1	£0	£16,190
L2	£16,191	£20,817
L3	£20,818	£25,521

Where possible, we will retain a small emergency fund from its allocation to support students who face exceptional circumstances during the year due to a change in their situation that impacts on their ability to participate in education. Evidence of the student's eligibility, the individual assessment and their actual participation costs must be held for audit purposes as for any other bursary award.

4. Applying for a bursary

Students must complete the application form and provide the necessary supporting documentation. All applications should be submitted by 18th September of each academic year; however, we do understand that needs may arise throughout the academic year, and we will still consider applications after this date where appropriate.

Our application process will maintain the student's confidentiality.

If an application is successful, we will send an email to the student confirming the amount of support, what support will be made in-kind, and the payment conditions.

5. Conditions for receiving the bursary

All students must meet the agreed standards set by us to be eligible for the funds – these are explained to all students during the application process. Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions, such as an agreement signed by the student, will be kept for audit.

Students must continue to meet these criteria after receiving the bursary. We may withhold payments where students breach these conditions; however, the student's individual circumstances will always be considered first and sanctioning will not occur to the extent that a student's ability to attend is undermined.

The conditions are as follows:

- Students must have 90 percent attendance at timetabled lessons, unless the absence is authorised
- Students must abide by the Behaviour Policy

Payments will be stopped where:

- A student is absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or more excluding holidays
- A student withdraws themselves from a study programme
- Money is not being spent for the reasons it was awarded
- A student breaches any of the conditions for payment

Receipt of the bursary will not affect the receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, e.g. Income Support.

6. Paying the bursary

Funds will be allocated in-kind rather than in cash where possible, e.g. through travel passes, vouchers or credits for meals, or required books or equipment. Where in-kind payments are given to students within vulnerable groups, the setting will explain the value of these payments to the student and how these have been deducted from the total.

Bursary funds will not be given to students in large lump sums. A percentage of funding will be kept back as hardship funding to respond to any emergencies throughout the year.

In instances where payments in-kind are not possible, we will pay funding by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account. In exceptional circumstances where the student is unable to manage their own funds, we will consider who will manage the bursary on the student's behalf. Payments will be made on a half termly basis

7. Using the bursary

Upon receiving a bursary, students will receive help based on their areas of need.

The following priority areas will be addressed first:

- Travel costs e.g. bus passes and travel cards
- Equipment costs, e.g. books, stationery, iPads or clothing
- Meals, e.g. food vouchers. (please note that if a student is entitled to Free School Meals they will not receive bursary funding for meals)
- Any other educational support, e.g. attendance at university open days and interviews
- Costs related to industry placements

We reserve the right to request that, if a student has had books or equipment bought for them through the fund, they return it at the end of their study programme. We may also request that the equipment is kept on the college site.

8. Appeals process

If students disagree with the outcome of their application, or where payment has been withheld due to not meeting the outlined conditions, they should follow our complaints procedure, detailed in our Complaints Procedures Policy – this is available on our website.

9. Further information

More information on the use and allocation of 16-19 bursaries can be found in our 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy, available on the school website.