16–19 Bursary Fund 2026–27 Guidance Notes

These guidance notes are aligned with the Department for Education 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide for the 2026–27 academic year.

The official guidance can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2026-to-2027

Newman College receives an annual allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible students aged 16–19 who may face financial barriers to participating in education. The bursary fund is intended to help students overcome specific financial barriers so they can remain in education and access their study programme.

Bursary funding is intended to support essential education-related costs. It is not intended to cover general living costs, non-essential extra-curricular activities, or pastoral support services already provided by the college.

Types of Financial Support Available

1. Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students who fall into one of the defined vulnerable groups below may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year:

- Young people in care
- Care leavers
- Young people receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name because they are financially supporting themselves, or financially supporting themselves and someone dependent on them
- Young people receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit, in their own right

Please note:

- A bursary award is not automatic
- Students must meet the eligibility criteria and have an assessed financial need
- The amount awarded will depend on the actual costs the student faces in participating in education

- Students should not automatically receive the full £1,200 unless their assessed need shows this level of support is required
- Support may be provided in-kind rather than as a direct cash payment where appropriate

Evidence Required

For students in care or care leavers:

- Written confirmation from the local authority

For students receiving Income Support or Universal Credit:

- The most recent 3 months of award statements

For students receiving ESA/UC and DLA/PIP:

- Current award letters
- Evidence of payments received within the last 3 months

Definitions

In Care: A young person looked after by a local authority under Section 20 or Section 31 of the Children Act 1989.

Care Leaver: A young person aged 16 or over who was previously looked after by a local authority for a qualifying period, in line with the Department for Education guidance.

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2. Discretionary Bursary

The Discretionary Bursary is available to students whose household income is below £28,000 per year.

This may include families receiving:

- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Carer's Allowance
- Tax Credits
- Low earned income

Applications are assessed on an individual basis and funding is not guaranteed. The college will consider both eligibility and the actual financial barriers a student faces when deciding the level and type of support to award.

Evidence Required

Applicants must provide evidence of household income. This may include:

- Universal Credit statements; the most recent 3 monthly statements are required
- DWP or local authority award letters dated within the last 3 months
- If award letters are older than 3 months, a recent bank statement showing payments
- HMRC Tax Credit Award Notice
- P60
- Recent wage slips
- Self-assessment tax documents

Please provide full documentation where applicable.

Where a student continues into the second year of a typical 2-year study programme, the college may ask for updated evidence or a signed self-declaration confirming that household circumstances have not changed.

What the Bursary May Help With

Support may include assistance with essential participation costs, such as:

- Transport costs (for students living over 2.7 miles from college)
- Essential textbooks, equipment, or specialist materials
- Stationery packs
- Curriculum-related trips and visits
- UCAS application costs
- University interview travel expenses
- Exam resit fees
- Other essential participation costs identified by the college

Please note:

- Some support may be provided directly by the college rather than as cash payments
- Reimbursements may require receipts or proof of purchase
- All support must be linked to actual participation needs
- Support is awarded based on available funding and assessed need

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Payments and Conditions

Where approved, bursary payments are normally made directly into the student's bank account.

Some costs may need to be paid upfront by the student and later reimbursed upon submission of valid receipts.

All bursary awards are conditional upon students meeting college expectations, including:

- A minimum attendance target of 90%
- Positive behaviour and conduct
- Appropriate academic engagement and progress

Failure to meet these expectations may result in bursary payments being reduced, suspended, or withdrawn.

Students may be required to sign a Student Bursary Agreement confirming the conditions attached to their award.

Receipts and Evidence of Spending

Receipts and evidence of spending may be required for audit purposes. This helps the college demonstrate that bursary funding has been used for the purpose it was awarded.

For regular costs such as travel, the college may use evidence such as a receipt for a standard journey, expected attendance patterns, and the student's timetable to calculate support.

Emergency Support

In cases of severe hardship, the college may provide temporary emergency support for meals or travel before a full bursary assessment has been completed.

Emergency support will be limited and must be recorded by the college for audit purposes. A full bursary assessment will still be required where ongoing support is needed.

Applications During the Academic Year

Applications for bursary support may be submitted at any point during the academic year.

All applications will be assessed on an individual basis, taking into account financial need, supporting evidence, and available funding.

Free School Meals (FSM)

Free School Meals for eligible students aged 16–18 are administered by Brighton & Hove City Council.

Eligible students currently receive a daily allowance to use within college food outlets. No cash alternative is available.

FSM eligibility may include students or families receiving:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, subject to the relevant government earnings threshold
- Child Tax Credit, subject to the relevant government income threshold
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

Students eligible for Free School Meals are strongly encouraged to also apply for the Discretionary Bursary for support with other essential college-related costs.

Apply here: https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/free-school-meals

Families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Further information regarding eligibility can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities/providing-free-school-meals-to-families-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf

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Application Process

- Application forms are available on the Newman College website
- Students must complete the online application form in full
- All supporting evidence must be uploaded via the online form
- Evidence should not be submitted by email unless specifically requested

For support with an application, please contact:

newmancollege@cncs.co.uk

Key Deadlines

- Initial application deadline: 23rd October 2026
- Applications submitted before 23rd October 2026 may be backdated to 1 September 2026 where appropriate
- Applications submitted after the deadline will only be considered if funding remains available

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Assessment and Notification

- Students will normally receive an outcome within 15 working days of submitting a complete application
- Students will be informed via their college email account
- Decision emails will outline the support awarded, how it will be provided, and any conditions attached

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Appeals Process

If an applicant wishes to appeal a bursary decision, this must be submitted in writing within 2 weeks of receiving the decision.

Appeals should be addressed to:

Mr R Marsh
Head of College

General Notes

- Funding is limited and cannot be guaranteed, even where eligibility criteria are met
- All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis
- Students must meet the relevant age, residency and study programme eligibility criteria
- For the 2026–27 academic year, students must usually be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 to be eligible
- The college may request additional evidence where necessary
- Any false or misleading information may result in the withdrawal of support and may require repayment
- Bursary records, evidence and payment documentation may be retained for audit purposes

If you are worried about finances but are unsure whether you are eligible, please speak to your PPL, PAM, or Mr Marsh.

Email: newmancollege@cncs.co.uk
Tel: 01273 234332