



16–19 Vulnerable Bursary & Discretionary Bursary

Applicant Guidance Notes 2026-27

Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund was introduced by the government to help 16–19-year-old students from families experiencing the greatest financial hardship to continue with their education.

If you are awarded a bursary, this will not affect any entitlement to any other DWP means-tested benefits. However, if a student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independent Payments) and Employment Support Allowance or in receipt of Universal Credit, parents can no longer receive certain household / family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

Caroline Chisholm School will allocate bursary funds in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Completion and submission of the school's 16-19 Bursary Application Form will be required. The information provided in your application form will enable the school to identify individual financial need and appropriately allocate the available funds. These guidance notes should help you to complete the application form accurately.

Only students enrolled at Caroline Chisholm Sixth Form in September of 2026 can apply; we are unable to accept applications in advance of enrolment. Please hand applications to the Sixth Form Administrator along with the required documentary evidence before **September 30th, 2026**.

We will accept new applications throughout the year, should a financial need be identified. The school will also consider further assistance for any successful applicant due to the onset of an unexpected or large expense (such as a school trip) or a change in circumstances at home leading to financial hardship.

Which type of bursary you are applying for?

There are two types of bursary; the **Vulnerable Bursary** and the **Discretionary Bursary**. Please tick the box on the application form that applies best to your circumstances. To be eligible for either type of bursary students must be:

- Be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2026 or
- Be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 and are continuing on a study programme you began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Meet the residency criteria ESFA 2026 to 2027 academic year funding regulations for post 16 provision
- Be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality, the provision must also be either funded directly by the ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

Vulnerable Bursary Fund (Level 1)

The highest level of support of up to £1,200 a year will be paid to those students in one or more of the following categories:

- A young person in care
- A care leaver
- A young person in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and someone who is dependent on you and living with you (such as a child or partner)
- A young person in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independent Payments in your own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in your own right

All other bursaries will be discretionary and will be allocated by the School dependent on the level of your household's income and matched to the financial needs identified by you on the application form. Discretionary Bursaries will be awarded as follows:

Discretionary Bursary Fund (Level 2)

The Discretionary Bursary (Level 2) will support students from households with the lowest incomes. For guidance, this would normally be students:

- entitled to free school meals, and / or
- whose families receive income related benefits, where family income is below £16,190 per annum

Information on entitlement to free school meals can be found on the Northamptonshire County Council website.

Severe Hardship Payments (Level 3)

Where it can be evidenced that a student faces identifiable financial barriers to education, but is not eligible to receive a Vulnerable Bursary (Level 1) or Discretionary Bursary (Level 2), a student may apply for a Discretionary Individual Hardship Payment (Level 3) for a specific educational purpose. For guidance, this would normally be awarded for:

- Families who receive income related benefits, or where family income is between £16,190 and £25,500 per annum.

NOTES FOR COMPLETION

Section 1 PERSONAL DETAILS

Please enter your personal details. This section identifies whether you satisfy the age and residency criteria and whether your chosen programme of study qualifies you to receive the bursary. To be eligible to receive the bursary:

- Be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2026 or
- Be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2026 and are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Meet the residency criteria ESFA 2026 to 2027 academic year funding regulations for post 16 provision
- Be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality, the provision must also be either funded directly by the ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority

Section 2 BACKGROUND

This section helps identify whether you qualify to receive the highest level of bursary, known as the Vulnerable Bursary (Level 1).

You will need to submit documentary evidence with your application form.

If you are claiming a Vulnerable Bursary, please go straight to Sections 6 and 7.

Section 3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

This section identifies the students most in need of financial support from the discretionary bursary fund by assessing the total level of household income. It is important that we have full details of any benefits and income (earned and unearned) received by the household.

Question 1. Please tell us what benefits are received by the household and submit evidence such the most recent benefit notification, or HMRC Tax Credit Notification (renewal notices will not be accepted).

Question 2. Please tell us about any earned income from employment, self-employment, and work in your household. We will need to have a copy of a recent P60 and pay slip or an HMRC approved notice.

Question 3. For any unearned income in your household, such a shared, bonds and investments, rental income, pensions, we will need to see a recent bank statement.

Question 4. If you are in receipt of free school meals, then please submit your notification from NCC.

Question 5. We also need to know how many dependents (in full time education under the age of 19) there are in your household. This will give us an idea of the financial demands placed on the household income.

Section 4 OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Please use this section to tell us about anything else that you feel is important to do with your household's current financial situation. This will give us a better picture of the financial circumstances that you may be dealing with.

Section 5 DECLARATION

By signing this declaration, you are confirming that the information you have provided is true and accurate and you will notify the school of any changes of circumstances during the academic year.

Bursaries are payable subject to certain criteria being met. You are agreeing to maintain agreed levels of attendance, behaviour and effort as specified in the declaration. Bursary payments may be withheld if these conditions are not met. Regular reviews of attendance, behaviour and effort will take place to determine whether you can continue to receive bursary support.

The declaration states that the school will seek to recover any monies paid where information submitted has proved to be false, incomplete or changes in circumstances have not been notified. The matter may be referred to the Department for Education or the police and you could face prosecution as a result.

You and a parent will need to sign and date the form.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Supplying evidence in support of your claim requires applicants to provide letters from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Universal Credit Journal details, Bank Statements and Pay slips. Where original documents are submitted please add a note requesting their return. Providing complete evidence makes it easier for the school to process claims. Where additional evidence is required parents/students will be contacted by the Sixth Form Administrator.

APPEALS

Once you have submitted the application form, it will be assessed, and you will be informed in writing whether you are eligible to receive a bursary and the amount.

You have the right to appeal against a decision that the school has made if you believe it to be wrong and can provide evidence to support this. If a student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) is dissatisfied with Caroline Chisholm School's decision not to award a Guaranteed or Discretionary Bursary, the student or their parent/guardian/carer(s) should discuss this in the first instance with the Mrs Treagus.

If the student or their parent/guardian/career is still unsatisfied following the conversation with Mrs Treagus, then the student (not someone on his/her behalf) can make an appeal. The appeal should be made to the KS5 Assistant Principal (acambio@ccs.northants.sch.uk) either by email or in writing, within one week of the decision. The appeal outcome will be communicated to the student by email within one week of the appeal being received.

If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may further appeal to the Vice Principal Mrs Husband. Ehusband@ccs.northants.sch.uk. The outcome of this final appeal stage is final.