16-19 BURSARY FUND POLICY 2026-27

Students aged between 16 and 19 years facing financial hardship whilst in full-time education, may be eligible to receive a payment from the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Schools, colleges and training providers have been given responsibility for awarding bursaries to students, which includes decisions on the amount, when it is paid and the criteria for payments. Leigh Academy Tonbridge is committed to providing a fair and consistent policy for bursary awards. Items are purchased upon request by the school.

Eligibility

Students must be aged 16 or over, but under 19 years on 31st August 2026 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2026-27 academic year and must have the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom at the start of their study programme.

Students must also satisfy the following conditions to continue to receive the bursary:

- The student must not have unauthorised or unexplained absence from lessons/school
- The student must continue to meet Sixth Form expectations in relation to attendance, punctuality, submission of work assignments and general conduct.

Types of Bursary

Vulnerable Bursary

Up to £1,200

Criteria: Students in local authority care, care leavers, students in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner. Students 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. Students must be able to demonstrate that they have a financial need which is not already being met by the income they receive from statutory support.

Discretionary Bursary

Criteria: Students in receipt of Free School Meals and/or Universal Credit or low income

Special Educational Purposes

These include (but are not limited to) transport costs, including the full cost of, or contribution towards the Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card, where it is necessary for the student to have the card in order to travel to school; essential books and equipment; specialist clothing (such as protective overalls) that the student would need in order to participate in the course.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

Application Process

Eligible students should apply for the bursary as soon as possible after enrolment in September for Year 12, and/or soon after progressing to Year 13, by completing the application form available to download from the Sixth Form section of the Leigh Academy Tonbridge website. Completed applications, with copies of supporting evidence, should be submitted to Leigh Academy Tonbridge reception.

Initial applications must be submitted by **Friday 26th September 2026**. Assessments will be conducted in October, January and April each year to confirm, review and/or authorise ongoing payments. Students' attendance and behaviour records will be taken into account when considering applications and the school reserves the right to cease payments to a student where their level of attendance or behaviour falls below the expectations of the Sixth Form.

Important Note

It is necessary for the assessment of financial need to see evidence from the student and/or student's family. This may include a letter setting out the benefit/s to which the student is entitled or written evidence (if previously unknown) of the student's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority. Please provide copies of these documents, not the originals, when submitting your initial bursary application.

It may also be necessary to take into account the student's household income (that of the parent/guardian with whom the student is living) as evidenced by receipt of benefits and/or P60, Tax Credit Award Notice, Universal Credit Award Statement or evidence of self-employment income, and circumstances within the household, such as the number of dependent children of the householder.

Income criteria

- Households with a low income or have previously applied for free school meals are encouraged to apply for the Discretionary Bursary, unless eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary.
- Payments will be dependent on the volume of applicants in the academic year but successful applicants can use payment awards for travel, clothing, stationery or any other items required for school.

Further Information

In addition to the support that is available directly to young people through the 16-19 Bursary Fund, all families of 16 to 19 year-olds who are in full-time, non-advanced, education such as A Levels or BTECs are entitled to

Child Benefit. Young people may also be entitled to other benefits such as Care to Learn, Income Support or Housing Benefit.

Citizens Advice Bureau can offer advice about eligibility for benefits.
See https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice/ for information about how to contact them.

Privacy Notice

Any information you provide to Leigh Academy Tonbridge as part of an application for the 16-19 Bursary 2026-27 will only be used for the purposes of assessing your application in line with Department for Education guidelines, and awarding funds where appropriate. The information will only be seen by school staff who are authorised to conduct bursary assessments, and will be held confidentially for the duration of the 2026-27 academic year only. After this time your information will be disposed of securely.