

Bursary Application Guidance 2026/27

Kennet School Sixth Form



1. General

Kennet School will administer the Bursary Fund awarded within the Education Funding Agency's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guidelines. We aim to have clear and transparent processes including an appeals procedure. All recording along with evidence of eligibility will be treated in line with Kennet Schools procedures and guidelines.

The main contact for 16-19 Bursaries is the Sixth Form administrator.

2. Bursaries

Two types of bursaries are available to students aged 16-19:

- Discretionary Bursary, awarded to meet individual needs such as transport, meals, books and equipment (up to £1,200 per year).
- Vulnerable Bursary, for young people in one of the define vulnerable groups (up to £1,200 per year).

To access either bursary, students must

- Be aged either:
 - i. 16, 17 or 18 on 31 August at the beginning of the school year (e.g. 31/08/2025 for the academic year 2025/26).
 - ii. Or be aged 19 or over while continuing a course you started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer),
 - iii. Or be aged 19 or over and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Note that Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable bursary.
- Satisfy the residency criteria, having the right of abode in the UK and having been resident her for the last three years
 - For details, see [ESFA's residency criteria >>>](#)
- Meet Kennet School's Behaviour and Attendance standards (attendance at least 95% with no unauthorised absences), plus being in line with specified targets.
- Bursary decisions (i.e. which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive) depend on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student, depending on, for example, eligibility based on household income, and actual financial need such as travel distance and study requirements.
- Specific financial need as submitted (and discussed as necessary), will be taken into account. Where appropriate, the preference will be for support in-kind (e.g. a bus pass may be provided directly by the school, instead of cash provided for this).

2.1 Discretionary Bursary

This may be awarded on an identified needs basis and at the discretion of Kennet School to cover costs such as books, equipment, transport, meals, accommodation, exam re-sit fees and other miscellaneous items associated with being in learning and will meet the following Institution's assessment criteria:

- Fulfil the same criteria as for Free School Meals. [Further details of West Berkshire Council's criteria can be found here >>>](#)
- In summary, the criteria are where the parents/guardian are in receipt of:
 - Universal Credit (provided an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (Children who receive Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also eligible).
 - Income related Employment Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support Service)
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of no more than £16,190
 - Working tax credit run on-paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Each application is individually assessed considering individual circumstances.
- Evidence (e.g. recent statement of benefits) must be provided for all applications to show eligibility for the relevant criteria, including proof of income (e.g. P60 or payslips) for Universal Credit where income thresholds apply. Applications provided without evidence will not be processed.
- Students in exceptional circumstances suffering financial hardship (who meet the general ESFA eligibility criteria but not the specific criteria for bursaries) may apply in writing to justify their application. Based on the information received and if financial hardship is identified, the student may be awarded an amount of money to be determined by Kennet School depending on individual circumstances and availability of funding.

Re-imbusement of some costs such as travel cost may depend on submission of evidence e.g. Travel Ticks/Weekly Pass. In addition, if other barriers are identified, students assessed as being eligible for the discretionary element, can also request financial assistance. This could be for clothing, equipment etc. in both cases the student will complete an application form and will provide the required evidence as listed on the Bursary Fund Application Form. The application will be processed in a timely manner by Kennet School (upon receipt of the required evidence) and the student will be made aware of the outcome in writing.

Receipt of the bursary will be conditional on the student meeting Kennet School's standards of attendance and behaviour.

2.2 Vulnerable Bursary

This category is defined as a student who is receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner. Applicants must meet the [ESFA's residency criteria](#).

The defined vulnerable groups are students who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- in care, defined as 'Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (Section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'.'
- care leavers, defined as
 - a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
 - a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16
- 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. Note that this means the student themselves must be in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit, not the student's parents or carers.
- 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.

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after and defined as 'in care' for the purposes of the above categories. A child who is privately fostered is not classed as a 'in care' and is not eligible for the bursary for vulnerable groups.

Evidence to support the application will be needed such as a letter setting out the benefit to which the student is entitled, or written confirmation of current/previous 'Looked After' status from the relevant Local Authority or their Leaving Care Review Document.

3. Applications & Evidence

Applications for bursaries are submitted to the Head of Sixth form and determined based on individual circumstances by the Head of Sixth Form and Sixth Form Team. All applications must be submitted within four weeks of the start of Autumn Term, unless in exceptional circumstances and authorised by the Head of Sixth Form.

A detailed Application Form is provided for this purpose and must be completed, including the declaration. All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence shall be retained by the School to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential in line with Kennet School's procedures and guidelines.

4. Attendance & Behaviour

Receipt of both vulnerable and discretionary bursaries is dependent on meeting behaviour and attendance targets and school policies, as detailed in the relevant school documents.

- The student agrees to always follow Kennet School's code of conduct
- Attendance must be at least 95% (with no unauthorised absence). Any exceptional circumstances, such as absence due to illness, will be considered at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form.
- All Examinations are attended.

5. Queries & Appeals

Queries/disagreements over applications will be handled by the Head of Sixth Form in the first instance. Appeals, complaints and escalations must be submitted to the Headteacher in writing, detailing background and reasons for the appeal, and will be handled with in-line with the policies and procedures for general complaints.

Queries/disagreements over agreed standards of attendance and behaviour will be handled by the Head of Sixth Form in the first instance and appeals by the Headteacher.

6. Payments

Subject to meeting the condition requirements and being awarded a bursary, all payments will be made by BACS to a nominated Bank Account belonging to the student by the Bursar's Office. Payments will be made after every half term holiday (Oct, Feb and May). Students must complete and return the appropriate form.

7. Changes to Circumstances

It is students' and parents' responsibility to notify Kennet School immediately of any relevant changes in circumstances (which may result in changes to the claim).

It is students' and parents' responsibility to provide valid payment details and notify Kennet School of any changes to these details.

8. Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential and be treated in line with Kennet School's procedures and guidelines. If it is necessary to share information or to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the student and/or their parent will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to sharing any information further.

9. Further Information

Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found as follows on the [Department for Education website >>>](#)