

Bursary Application Guidance 2026/27

Kennet School Sixth Form



1. General

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

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

2. Bursaries

Two types of bursaries are available to students aged 16 to 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 defined 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. 31/08/2026 for the academic year 2026/27).
 - ii. Or be aged 19 or over while continuing on a course they started when 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).
- Please 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 in the UK for the last three years
 - For details, see [ESFA's residency criteria >>>](#)
- Each student's specific financial needs, as detailed in their application and discussed where necessary, will be taken into account.
- 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 resit fees and other miscellaneous items associated with being in learning. Applicants must 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 a parent or carer is in receipt of one or more of the following:
 - Universal Credit (provided an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance (Children who receive Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also eligible).
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support Service)
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided you are 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 submitted without the required 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. Kennet School may award an amount based on the student's individual circumstances and the availability of funding.

Reimbursement of some costs such as travel costs may depend on submission of evidence e.g. travel tickets/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 include clothing, equipment, or other items required to participate in learning. In all cases, the student must complete an application form and provide the required evidence as listed on the Bursary Fund Application Form 2026/27. 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

Applicants must meet the [ESFA's residency criteria](#) and fall into one or more of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- 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 Payment 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 will be considered by the Head of Sixth Form and the Sixth Form Team, based on each student's individual circumstances. All applications should be submitted within four weeks of the start of Autumn Term. In exceptional circumstances, or where there is a change in financial circumstances, students are advised to consult with the Sixth Form pastoral team as early as possible and submit any new applications directly to the Head of Sixth Form for authorisation.

A detailed application form is provided for this purpose and must be completed, including the declaration. All applications to access the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence will 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 the required behaviour and attendance standards and complying with school policies, as detailed in the relevant school documents.

- Students must follow Kennet School's code of conduct at all times.
- Attendance must be at least 95% (with no unauthorised absence). Any exceptional circumstances affecting attendance, such as absence due to illness, will be considered at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form.
- Students must attend all examinations.

5. Queries & Appeals

Queries or disagreements relating to applications will be considered by the Head of Sixth Form in the first instance. Any appeal, complaint or escalation must be submitted to the Headteacher in writing and must set out the background to, and reasons for, the appeal.

Queries or 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

If an application is successful, students will be informed of the value of their bursary entitlement to support their educational needs for the academic year. Students should plan carefully how they will spend their bursary entitlement to ensure that it covers all academic costs for the academic year.

To request a payment, students should submit a list to the Sixth Form Administrator that they wish to purchase together with the cost and proposed supplier or retailer, where possible. Students are expected to explain the educational value of each item they have listed. This will help the school determine whether the items can be authorised.

If authorised by the Head of Sixth Form, payments will be made directly to the student's bank account. All receipts should be submitted to the Sixth Form Administrator as evidence of purchases made.

In some instances, it may be appropriate to request that the school purchase an item on a student's behalf, particularly where an item is expensive. The same authorisation process as above should be followed.

7. Changes to Circumstances

It is the responsibility of students and their parents or carers to notify Kennet School immediately of any relevant changes in circumstances, as these may affect the student's eligibility or bursary entitlement.

It is the responsibility of students and their parents or carers to provide valid payment details and notify Kennet School of any changes to these details.

8. Confidentiality

Applications and supporting evidence will be kept confidential and 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, where appropriate, their parent or carer will be told the reasons why this is necessary before any information is shared.

9. Further Information

Further information about the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is available on the [Department for Education website](#).