North Oxfordshire Academy
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2026

NOA Sixth Form Bursary Policy

2026-27

REVIEW FREQUENCY – 1 YEAR

Principal: Mrs Ellie Jacobs

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North Oxfordshire Academy Sixth Form

16-19 Bursary Statement

2026-27

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is provided by the Department for Education (DfE) to help students overcome financial barriers to participation in post-16 education.
The fund is intended to support eligible students with essential education-related costs, enabling them to access and successfully participate in their study programme. Support may be provided towards costs such as:

- Transport to and from school or college
- Essential course equipment, books and materials
- Educational visits and field trips
- University and apprenticeship application costs
- Other costs directly associated with participation in education

The fund consists of:

- **Vulnerable Student Bursaries** of up to **£1,200 per academic year** for students who meet the DfE's defined vulnerable group criteria.
- **Discretionary Bursaries** for students who face financial hardship and require support with education-related costs.
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All students who meet the age, residency and study programme requirements may apply. Applications are assessed individually, taking account of household income, financial circumstances and evidence of educational need.

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2. Eligibility

2.1 Age Criteria

Students must be under the age of 19 on 31 August 2026 when starting their study programme.

Students who turn 19 during their programme may continue to receive support until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, where funding regulations permit.

2.2 Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students may be eligible for a bursary of up to **£1,200 per year** if they fall into one of the following DfE-defined vulnerable groups:

- Young people in care (looked-after children)
- Care leavers
- Young people receiving Income Support in their own name
- Young people receiving Universal Credit in their own name and financially supporting themselves
- Young people receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

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Appropriate documentary evidence must be provided, such as:

- A benefits award letter confirming entitlement
- Written confirmation of current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority

Awards will be based on an assessment of actual educational need and may be provided as cash payments, reimbursements or direct purchases of items and services.

2.3 Discretionary Bursary

Students who do not qualify for the Vulnerable Student Bursary may apply for discretionary support.

Applications will be assessed using evidence of:

- Household income
- Financial hardship
- Individual circumstances
- Costs associated with participation in education

The Academy reserves the right to prioritise funding where demand exceeds the available allocation.

Students currently or previously eligible for Free School Meals are encouraged to apply, although this does not automatically guarantee a bursary award.

Evidence of household income may include:

- Universal Credit statements
- Tax Credit Award Notices
- P60s
- Recent payslips
- Self-employment tax calculations (SA302)
- Other relevant financial documentation

2.4 Discretionary Bursary Bands

The following income bands will normally be used when allocating discretionary support:

Band 1
Household income up to £16,190
Students in this category will receive the highest priority for discretionary support.

Band 2
Household income £16,191 - £20,817
Students may receive support where educational need is demonstrated.

Band 3
Household income £20,818 - £25,521
Students may receive support where significant financial barriers to participation are identified.

In-Kind Support
Where appropriate, support may be provided directly through the purchase of goods or services rather than through cash payments.
Examples include:

- Laptops or IT equipment
- Course materials and textbooks
- Educational visits
- DBS checks
- UCAS application support
- University open day travel
- Examination re-sit fees

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3. Conditions of Support
Financial support is provided to help students participate fully in education.
Students receiving bursary support are expected to:

- Maintain good attendance and punctuality
- Engage positively with their study programme
- Meet Academy expectations regarding conduct and behaviour
- Notify the Sixth Form Office of any significant changes to their financial circumstances

The Academy will normally expect students to maintain at least **96% attendance**, unless there are authorised circumstances such as illness, disability or other exceptional factors.
Failure to engage with studies or attend regularly may result in bursary payments being reviewed, reduced, suspended or withdrawn.
Each case will be considered individually and fairly.

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4. Application Process

4.1 Applications
Students should submit an application, together with supporting evidence, by **Wednesday 30 September 2026**.

Applications must identify the educational costs for which support is being requested.
Applications received after this date may still be considered where funds remain available.

4.2 Assessment of Applications
Applications will be reviewed by the Sixth Form Bursary Assessment Panel.
The first assessment meeting for the 2026-27 academic year will take place on:
Friday 16 October 2026
The Panel will assess:

- Eligibility
- Household income
- Financial need
- Educational costs
- Available bursary funding

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All decisions will be recorded for audit purposes.

4.3 Notification of Outcomes
Students will normally be informed of the Panel's decision within one week of the assessment meeting.

4.4 Duration of Awards
Successful applicants will normally remain eligible for support for the remainder of the academic year, subject to continuing eligibility and satisfactory engagement with their study programme.

Students must reapply each academic year.

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5. Payments (
Payments may be made through:

- Direct BACS payments to the student
- Reimbursement of approved expenditure upon receipt of evidence
- Direct payment to suppliers
- Purchase of approved goods and services by the Academy

Payments will normally be made only into an account held in the student's name.

In exceptional circumstances, alternative arrangements may be considered where a student is unable to manage their own account.

For transport support provided through the County Council, reimbursement will only be made upon submission of proof of payment.

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6. Equality and Fair Access

The Academy is committed to ensuring that bursary decisions are made fairly, consistently and transparently.

Applications will be considered without discrimination and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

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7. Record Keeping

The Academy will maintain all bursary documentation, applications, evidence and payment records for a minimum of six years in accordance with audit requirements