



16–19 Bursary Fund Policy

Academic Year 2026 - 2027

1. Policy Statement

The 16–19 Bursary Fund is provided by the Department for Education to support eligible students facing financial barriers to participation in education.

The fund is intended to help students remain in education by assisting with essential course-related costs including:

- travel to and from College
- essential books and equipment
- specialist clothing or equipment
- meals during the College day
- other exceptional costs directly related to participation in learning

This policy sets out how the Oakes College will administer the 16–19 Bursary Fund in accordance with [DfE guidance](#).

2. Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled at The Oakes College who:

- are aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026; or
- are aged 19+ and continuing on a study programme started before age 19; or
- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Students on apprenticeship programmes or waged training are not eligible.

3. Types of Bursary

The fund has two main categories:

3.1 Vulnerable Student Bursary

Students may be eligible for support of **up to** £1,200 per year if they are:

- in care
- a care leaver
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit in their own name. Students whose parents receive Universal Credit would not qualify under this criteria.
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their own name as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own name.

Awards are based on assessed actual financial need and essential participation costs. Students are not automatically entitled to the full £1,200.

3.2 Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary bursaries are awarded to students facing financial hardship who require support to remain in education.

Eligibility will normally be based on:

- household income is below £35,000 per annum
- individual circumstances
- distance travelled
- course requirements
- evidence of financial hardship

Priority may be given to:

- students eligible for free College meals
- young carers
- students with disabilities or additional needs
- students from households in receipt of means-tested benefits

4. Household Income Thresholds

For discretionary bursaries, the following thresholds will normally apply:

Household Income	Support Level
Up to £35,000	High priority support
Above £35,000	Exceptional circumstances only

The College reserves the right to consider exceptional cases outside these thresholds.

5. Eligible Expenditure

Bursary support may include:

- public transport tickets/passes
- essential books and stationery
- specialist equipment

- examination or UCAS-related costs
- compulsory educational visits

Support may be provided:

- in kind
- through reimbursement
- through direct payment

The fund will not normally support:

- non-essential trips
- social activities
- driving lessons
- mobile phones
- general living costs
- non-course-related technology purchases

6. Application Process

Students must:

1. Complete the online College bursary application form
2. Provide supporting evidence
3. Submit applications by the published deadline

Late applications may be considered where funding remains available.

7. Evidence Requirements

Evidence may include:

- Benefit statements
- P60s
- Payslips
- Universal Credit statements
- Tax credit notices
- Evidence of free College meals eligibility
- Evidence of looked-after or care leaver status

The College may request additional evidence where necessary.

8. Assessment of Applications

Applications will be assessed individually based on:

- financial need
- actual participation costs

- attendance requirements
- course demands

Awards will reflect actual costs and will not be made as automatic flat-rate payments.

If The Oakes College is the nearest appropriate post-16 education provider to your home offering your chosen course, and you are under 19 as at the 1 September 2026, live more than 3 miles from the college, and in receipt of an eligible benefit, you should contact your local County Council in the first instance to check if you qualify for subsidised public transport. If your application is rejected, then you can apply to the Colleges Discretionary bursary.

Please submit tickets and/or receipts to bursary@oakescollege.org as proof of purchase. The amount you receive will be based on

- where you live
- the cost of public transport via the cheapest method (including discount cards)
- actual days attended (proof of travel if attendance is less than 80%).

With this in mind if you live less than 3 miles from the College it is unlikely that you will receive travel payment unless in exceptional circumstances. Please keep in mind that, due to demand, we may not be able to cover the full cost of transport.

9. Conditions of Payment

Students in receipt of bursary support are expected to:

- maintain satisfactory attendance and punctuality (expectation is 80% attendance to lessons)
- demonstrate appropriate conduct
- engage fully with their study programme
- use bursary funds only for agreed educational purposes

The College may suspend or withdraw support where these conditions are not met.

10. Payment Arrangements

Payments may be made:

- half termly
- by reimbursement
- through provision of goods or services

Payments will normally be made by BACS transfer.

Students will be required to provide receipts or evidence of expenditure.

11. Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with a bursary decision may appeal in writing within 10 working days.

Appeals should be addressed to:

Ruth Scott
Director
The Oakes College
Queen Edith's Way
Cambridge
CB1 8NN

A review panel or senior leader not involved in the original decision will consider the appeal.

The outcome of the appeal will be final.

12. Fraud and Misuse

The College reserves the right to:

- withdraw bursary support
- recover funds paid
- refer cases for investigation

Where false or misleading information has been provided.

13. Data Protection

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR and the College's data protection policy.

Information will only be used for the administration of the Bursary Fund.

14. Monitoring and Review

The College will monitor bursary awards to ensure funds are used appropriately and fairly.

This policy will be reviewed annually.