Post 16 Bursary Fund Guidance (Academic Year 2026/27)

A Guide for Learners, Parents, Guardians and Carers

What is the 16–19 Bursary?

The Bursary Fund gives financial support to help you stay in education. You can use the funds to cover costs related to your studies, such as:

- Travel and transport costs
- Books, stationery, and essential equipment
- Clothing or uniforms required for school
- Meals during the school day

1. Do You Qualify? (Check Your Category)

You can apply under **one** of the following three categories:

Category 1: Vulnerable Bursary

You qualify if you meet **any** of these:

- You are currently in care (defined by Social Services).
- You are a care leaver.
- You receive Universal Credit or Income Support in your **own name**.
- You receive both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) **AND** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your **own name**.

Category 2: Free School Meals Bursary

- You qualify if you are currently claiming or eligible for **Free School Meals** in Year 12 or Year 13.

Category 3: Household Income Bursary

- You qualify if your total gross household income is below **£35,000 per year**.

2. How to Apply

1. **Submit Online:** Fill out the **Microsoft Form online bursary application** provided by your school.
2. **Complete all sections carefully:** Double-check your bank details, as errors will delay your payments.

3. **Use Your School Email:** Always use your official school email address on the form.
4. **Email Evidence:** You must email relevant evidence to: 16-19StudentBursary@plymouth.gov.uk . Please ensure they are upright photos or PDF documents of your proof of income/benefits. **Please note you must include your full name and your school on the email with the supporting evidence.**
    a. Note: If you are in care or care-experienced PCC will seek evidence within council systems, if we are unable to gain evidence you may be required to provide this yourself.

3. Evidence Required

If you are uploading financial proof, please ensure you attach **all pages** of the official document:

Category	Primary Criteria	Evidence required
Category 1 *(Vulnerable)*	Currently in care, care leaver, or receiving PIP/DLA **and** ESA/Universal Credit in your own name.	Submit benefit(s) or care evidence.
Category 2 *(Discretionary)*	Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) at time of application or during Years 12/13 - up to the age of 19.	None – PCC can access this evidence, you do not need to submit anything.
Category 3 *(Discretionary)*	Gross household income below **£35,000/year** (tax credits/UC statements/payslips for the relevant tax year) or DLA/PIP in your own name.	Submit payslips or relevant benefit evidence.

4. How Payments Work

- **Direct Transfer:** Approved bursaries are paid directly into **your own bank account** across **10 monthly payments**.
- **September Guarantee:** Everyone who is approved gets 100% of their September payment.
- **Attendance & Behaviour:** Payments from October onward depend on your school attendance and behaviour. If your attendance drops or you breach school policy, part or all of that month's payment may be withheld.

5. Important Deadlines & Back-Pay Rules

Apply as early in the term as possible!

- **Autumn Term (Sept – Dec):** Applications submitted before the last day term can be backdated to the start of September.
- **Spring Term (Jan – Easter):** Back-pay only applies to the Spring term. You cannot claim back-pay for the Autumn term.
- **Summer Term:** Back-pay only applies to the Summer term.

6. What if Your Circumstances Change?

- **Moving Schools within Plymouth?** You do **not** need to fill out a new form. Just inform your new school so they can transfer your bursary account.
- **Income Changes Mid-Year?** (e.g., you become eligible for Free School Meals later in the year). You don't need a full new form—speak to your Head of Post-16 immediately so your funding can be adjusted.
- **Personal details** Tell your school immediately if your bank or personal details change i.e. address, email.

7. Need Help?

If you have questions about your application or a missing payment, contact your school's **Head of Post-16** or Sixth Form Office. **Please do not contact the Finance team at Plymouth City Council as you will be redirected to your school.**

Local authority contact email

16-19StudentBursary@plymouth.gov.uk