



# VYNER'S SCHOOL

## 16-19 BURSARY FUND

### GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

This fund has been given by the EFSA to schools and higher education institutions to enable students to overcome individual financial barriers to their participation in education. The fund is aimed at 6<sup>th</sup> Form students only.

For eligible students, the fund can help towards the cost of essential course related costs such as travel to school, equipment, books, essential trips, specialist school clothing and attending university/job interviews. The fund will not meet the cost of participating in optional extra-curricular activities or meeting the cost of services such as counselling or mentoring.

**Bursary awards are paid entirely on the basis of financial need, not on a 'flat fee' basis. Students must therefore specify as part of their application what costs they need support with.** Bursary payments are not intended to meet normal household costs such as rent or other living costs.

#### GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Students must be aged **over 16 years and under 19 years on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026** (students who turn 19 during the 2026-2027 academic year will continue to receive payments until the end of the academic year).

#### **AND**

Students must have a legal right of residency in the UK.

#### **AND**

Students must demonstrate regular attendance at school. Attendance will be monitored regularly and students failing to meet this standard will be asked to explain the reasons for their poor attendance. Future payments may be withheld if good attendance is not maintained.

#### **AND**

Students must continue to make good progress in their studies and demonstrate an acceptable standard of conduct. If there are concerns over a student's attendance, progress or conduct, this will be discussed with them by the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Team in the first instance.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers are treated as 'looked after children' by the local authority and may therefore apply for a bursary as a member of a 'vulnerable group'. Accompanied asylum seekers are not eligible under this scheme to receive a cash payment, but are encouraged to speak, in confidence, to the school about their needs as we may be able to provide 'in kind' support such as books or equipment.

Students who are aged 19 or over at 31 August 2026 will only qualify for an award under the scheme if:

- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place and are attending eligible education provision;
- Are a 19+ continuer i.e. they are an eligible student continuing a course they began age 16-18.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

## **AWARDS TO 'VULNERABLE GROUPS'**

The following students are defined as being in a 'vulnerable group':

- Young people who are currently in care, or who are care leavers; **OR**
- Young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers and students in Local Authority provided foster care; **OR**
- Young people who are claiming Income Support/Universal Credit in their own name; **OR**.
- Young people who are 16-19 and in receipt of both Universal Credit (UC)/ Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment. Receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the eligibility criteria

Applicants will be asked in all cases to provide written evidence of their personal circumstances (e.g. a letter from the Local Authority or benefit statement).

Applications that fall into this group are the highest priority group and may apply for a bursary of up to £1200 per academic year. Award of a bursary is, however, strictly dependent on proof of financial need and the School reserves the right to determine the appropriate financial amount of an award, dependent on the individual circumstances of the student.

If a student is deemed to not be in financial need, the school has discretion to not make any kind of award under this scheme.

The School may exceptionally choose to make an award of over £1200 per annum, if a student needs additional help to remain in education.

## **DISCRETIONARY AWARDS**

Students who are suffering financial barriers to their participation in post-16 education but who do not qualify as part of a vulnerable group, may apply for a discretionary award.

Discretionary awards are made purely on the basis of proven financial need, and will therefore vary from student to student. They may take the form of a small one-off award (e.g. to meet the cost of a particular field trip) or, where the financial need is ongoing (e.g. travel costs, attendance at university open days / interviews), costs may be reimbursed during course of the academic year.

As Vyners School operates a formal uniform policy for its Sixth Form, eligible students may also request a contribution towards the cost of clothing. Reimbursement will only be made upon proof of receipts, and where items purchased comply with the published uniform policy.

Students whose financial circumstances change during the course of the academic year (e.g. there may be a sudden change in circumstances such as redundancy or a sudden drop in household income) are encouraged to apply whenever their need arises. Such an application may cover specific one-off costs. A covering letter should be included with this application form, outlining the particular circumstances and providing supporting evidence.

The School is instructed by the DfE to directly purchase materials and equipment for students, in order to support their course of study. Support may take the form of the purchase of textbooks, educational materials (e.g. art materials for those studying A level Art, or a scientific calculator for those studying Maths or Physics) or funding to enable a student to participate in curriculum compulsory field trips or activities.

The School is only able to reimburse students via BACS for costs which have been unavoidably incurred by them. Such costs may include the UCAS application fee, fees to support an

application to Oxbridge or to study medicine, and travel costs to University interviews and open days. In those cases where the school has advanced money to an eligible student, receipts must be provided to support the expenditure.

Where costs are reimbursed, payment will be made to the student (not the parent). Students applying for assistance under the scheme are therefore required to have their own bank account.

The School is unable to fund students to attend counselling or mentoring sessions held in school or to cover the costs of online revision tools.

If a laptop, chromebook or digital camera is requested, this will be purchased directly by the school and will be to a specification set by the school.

The school reserves the right to ask for certain items to be returned at the end of the student's course. This includes laptops, chromebooks, digital cameras and textbooks. The return of such items enables the school to reissue them to another student in need.

Discretionary awards are aimed at those students who do not meet the criteria for a vulnerable group's bursary, but the student's household is on a modest . The school will consider applications for any family with a **total** household income (including benefits) of up to **£35,000**.

Should there be more demand for bursaries than funds available, awards will be prioritised according to total household income, with the lowest incomes receiving an award first.

All claims for the discretionary award require evidence of household income such as P60, copies of last 3 months of payslips, proof of self-employment income or proof of receipt of benefits. Letters supplied should be for the last financial year (if it is an annual return such as a P60) or dated within the last 3 months. A copy of Universal Credit statement(s) for the last 3 months may also be submitted as evidence.

## OTHER INFORMATION

Previous eligibility for Free School Meals is not an automatic entitlement for the 16-19 Bursary, but will be taken into account as part of assessing an applicant's request for funding.

This is a cash-limited fund. The deadline for applications for payment in October is **Friday 18th September 2026**.

The amount of discretionary bursary paid each year may vary depending on the number of applicants and the level of funding received. The school will review the operation of the scheme annually and may make changes to its operation.

Entitlement to a bursary in one academic year does not give an automatic entitlement in any subsequent academic years. Students must make a fresh application at the beginning of each academic year.

## FREE MEALS ELIGIBILITY

All 6<sup>th</sup> formers and their families are reminded that the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduced significant changes to free school meal eligibility. These changes will take effect from the start of the 2026/27 academic year, and apply to ALL students - including those in the 6th Form.

The most critical change is the expansion of Free School Meals for students in Years 7 to 13 to **all households in receipt of Universal Credit, regardless of annual earnings**.

Many families who were previously ineligible due to the income threshold will now be able to access this support. Regardless of whether you are eligible for bursary funding, we strongly encourage you to apply for the free meal allocation if you are in receipt of Universal Credit. Please complete this [Google form](#) to apply.

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

If you wish to apply for a bursary you should:

- Check that you meet both the general and specific eligibility criteria detailed above.
- Complete a Vyners School 16-19 Bursary Fund Application Form, answering all questions in full to avoid delay when processing your application.
- Attach copies of the required evidence as indicated on the form.

The School will assess all applications immediately after the closing date. All applicants for support will receive a letter informing them of the outcome of their application.

All information provided to the school in connection with an application will be held in strict confidence.

Where it is deemed appropriate to reimburse students for expenses directly incurred, such reimbursement will be made directly to students (not their parents). Eligible students should therefore ensure that they have a bank account into which payments can be transferred. Payments will be made in arrears, on proof of the expense being incurred and continued payment will be dependent on good attendance, academic progress and conduct.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Any student or parent who is unhappy with how an application has been assessed is encouraged to contact the Business Manager in the first instance. If they remain unsatisfied, they may raise their concern more formally through the school's complaints procedure (details of which are on the school website).

June 2026