16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy

Policy Updated: September 2026 **Date of next review:** September 2027

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Gumley House School FCJ administers the Department for Education (DfE) 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The fund provides financial support to students who face barriers to participation in education due to financial hardship.
This policy ensures:

- Fair, transparent, and consistent decision-making
- Compliance with DfE requirements
- Prioritisation of students with the greatest need
- Clear communication to students and families
- Responsible stewardship of public funds

The policy is reviewed annually and published on the school website.

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2. Types of Bursary

The DfE provides two types of bursary:

2.1 Vulnerable Student Bursary
Up to £1,200 per year (pro-rata for programmes under 30 weeks) for students in defined vulnerable groups who also demonstrate financial need.

2.2 Discretionary Bursary
Allocated by the school to students facing financial barriers to participation. Awards are based on assessed need and may support essential costs such as travel, equipment, specialist clothing, exam resits, or syllabus-required educational visits.

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3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Vulnerable Student Bursary
Students aged 16–18 who are:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially independent
- Receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) *and* Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Students must also meet DfE residency criteria and be enrolled on a DfE-funded study programme.

3.2 Discretionary Bursary
Students may be eligible if they face financial barriers to participation and household income falls within one of the following levels:

- Level 1: Under £12,000
- Level 2: £12,000–£20,000
- Level 3: £20,000–£25,000

Additional help may be provided where exceptional circumstances arise.

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4. Evidence Requirements

Students must provide at least two forms of evidence, which may include:

- DWP benefits letter
- P60
- Tax Credit Award Notice
- Annual household income evidence
- Three months' payslips or bank statements
- Universal Credit monthly award
- Local authority Free School Meals confirmation
- Self-employment income evidence
- Local authority confirmation of looked-after or care-leaver status

Evidence must be current and relate to the household in which the student resides.

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5. Assessment and Prioritisation

Funding is limited. Gumley House prioritises applications in the following order:

1. Vulnerable Student Bursary applicants
2. Discretionary Bursary applicants
3. Students requesting additional help due to exceptional circumstances

Assessment considers:

- Household income
- Financial need
- Distance from school
- Course requirements
- Changes in circumstances
- Attendance and conduct

The Bursary Fund Committee oversees decisions and ensures fairness and compliance.

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6. Payments

6.1 Vulnerable Bursary
Paid in equal half-termly instalments.

6.2 Discretionary Bursary
Payments may be:

- Half-termly
- One-off
- Cash, cheque, or bank transfer
- Provided as items (travel pass, meals, books, equipment)

The school may purchase items directly or reimburse costs upon receipt.

6.3 Conditions
Payments may be withheld if:

- Attendance falls below 90%
- There are unauthorised absences
- Behaviour breaches the Sixth Form Contract

- Evidence is not provided
- Circumstances change and eligibility is affected

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7. Attendance Requirements

Students must maintain 90% attendance, including morning and afternoon registration.

Authorised absences include:
- Medical procedures or illness with evidence
- Hospital appointments
- University interviews or open days (authorised)
- School trips
- Official school closure
- Official study leave

Absences not accepted include:
- Hair appointments
- Dentist appointments
- Self-certified absence
- Exclusion
- Family holidays
- Lateness affecting lesson attendance

Failure to meet attendance requirements may result in suspension of payments.

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8. Application Process
- Application forms are available from the Sixth Form Office or online.
- Completed forms should be submitted to Mrs Aryee (School Business Leader).
- Deadline: 1 December each academic year.
- Students who become eligible mid-year should contact the School Business Leader.
- Students must report changes in household circumstances immediately.

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9. Appeals
Students may appeal bursary decisions within two weeks of receiving their allocation email.
Appeals should be made in writing to the Sixth Form Administrator and may require additional evidence. Appeals are reviewed by the Bursary Fund Committee.

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10. Safeguarding and Confidentiality
All bursary applications are handled sensitively and confidentially. Information is stored securely in line with:
- DfE requirements
- GDPR
- School safeguarding procedures
- Catholic/FCJ values of dignity, respect, and care

Financial hardship is treated as a potential safeguarding concern where appropriate.

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11. Governance and Monitoring
- The School Business Leader oversees administration of the fund.
- The Headteacher provides strategic oversight.
- The Bursary Fund Committee reviews applications and monitors expenditure.

- The school may reserve up to 20% of the allocation for in-year changes.
- Annual reporting is completed in line with DfE requirements.

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12. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if DfE guidance changes. The updated policy is published on the school website and shared with students during induction.