

Purpose of the fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund exists to remove financial barriers that could prevent an eligible student from participating fully in education. BCX will use the fund fairly, transparently and according to each student's individual circumstances and actual participation costs.

1. Scope and principles

BCX administers two forms of support: the **Discretionary Bursary** and the **Bursary for Students in Defined Vulnerable Groups**.

- Awards are not automatic. Every application will be assessed against individual financial need and the actual costs of participating in the student's programme.
- BCX will seek to ensure that lack of money does not prevent an eligible student from attending, accessing essential resources or taking part in required learning and progression activities.
- Support will normally be provided in the most appropriate form, for example a travel pass, meal support, direct purchase of equipment or reimbursement/payment towards an agreed cost.
- Eligibility and financial need will be reassessed each academic year. Students may also ask for a reassessment if their circumstances change during the year.
- All awards are subject to available funding and the Department for Education funding rules.

2. General eligibility

For the 2026-27 academic year, students will normally need to be aged **16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2026** and meet the relevant residency and programme eligibility rules. Students aged 19 or over may only receive a discretionary bursary where they are an eligible 19+ continuer or have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the defined vulnerable groups bursary.

3. Discretionary Bursary

3.1 BCX household income threshold

Students from households with a combined annual income of **below £80,000** are invited to apply for discretionary bursary support. Being below the threshold does not guarantee an award or a fixed level of payment; BCX must assess what support the individual student actually needs in order to participate in education.

3.2 Individual circumstances

BCX will consider the whole picture, including the student's actual costs and any pressures affecting the household. Particular consideration may be given to students who:

- have significant travel costs to attend BCX or an essential placement;
- were previously eligible for free school meals or whose household receives means-tested benefits;
- live in a single-parent household or a household with dependent children;
- have additional caring or parenting responsibilities;
- face an unexpected change in household circumstances, such as loss of income or another significant financial pressure; or
- would otherwise be unable to access an essential element of their study programme.

Applications from households at or above £80,000 will not normally qualify under the BCX income criterion. However, BCX may consider exceptional cases where there is clear evidence of acute financial hardship and a specific barrier to participation. Any such award must remain compliant with Department for Education rules.

3.3 Evidence

Applicants will be asked to provide enough evidence for BCX to verify household circumstances and assess actual need. Depending on circumstances, evidence may include:

- recent payslips, P60s or other evidence of earnings for relevant adults in the household;
- Universal Credit or other relevant means-tested benefit statements;
- for self-employed applicants, an official tax return, tax calculation or appropriate accounts;
- bank statements where needed to clarify current household circumstances; and
- evidence of the participation cost being requested, such as travel fares, equipment prices, trip costs or placement expenses.

BCX may request additional evidence where necessary. Information will be handled in line with the College's data protection arrangements and retained as required for audit.

4. What the Discretionary Bursary can support

Support must be directly connected to removing a financial barrier to the student's education. Depending on individual need, this may include:

- travel to and from BCX, and essential travel to work placements or other required programme activity;
- meals while attending education where this is an identified participation need;
- essential books, stationery, course materials and specialist equipment;
- specialist or protective clothing required for a course or placement;
- essential course-related visits, trips and experiences that are clearly linked to programme goals;
- reasonable costs associated with progression activity, such as an essential college, university, apprenticeship or employment visit/interview, where this is directly linked to the student's programme and would otherwise be unaffordable; and
- other specific education-related costs where BCX is satisfied that the cost is necessary for participation and is permitted by the national funding rules.

The bursary is not a general cash allowance

BCX will not make blanket or automatic payments. Bursary funding cannot be used as general living-cost support, as a reward, or for non-essential extracurricular activity. Large lump-sum payments will not normally be made.

5. Bursary for Students in Defined Vulnerable Groups

A separate bursary may be available to students who meet one of the nationally defined vulnerable-group criteria and who have an assessed financial need. This can provide **up to £1,200 for a full-year programme of 30 weeks or more**, but £1,200 is not automatic: the amount must reflect the student's actual participation costs.

The defined groups are students who are:

- in care;
- care leavers;
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves, or themselves and someone dependent on them who lives with them; or
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right.

BCX must verify the relevant evidence and assess actual need before making a claim or award. A student who meets a vulnerable-group definition but has no unmet participation costs may receive no bursary payment.

6. How awards will be made

- BCX will decide the form and value of support according to the identified need and the evidence provided.
- Where practical, BCX may purchase items or services directly rather than asking a student to pay first.
- Any cash or bank-transfer payment will be linked to an agreed education-related cost and appropriate evidence will be retained.
- Reusable equipment purchased from the fund may remain the property of the College and may need to be returned at the end of the programme.
- Awards may be adjusted during the year if circumstances or participation costs change.

7. Attendance, engagement and conditions

BCX may link ongoing bursary support to reasonable, clearly communicated expectations such as attendance at required sessions, appropriate engagement and the correct use or return of funded equipment. Any decision to withhold or amend support will take account of the student's individual circumstances and will not be applied mechanically where there is a legitimate reason for absence or difficulty.

8. Applications, decisions and review

- Students should apply as early as possible once they know they will be studying at BCX. Applications can also be made later in the year if circumstances change.
- The student must complete and sign the application/declaration required by BCX and provide the requested evidence.
- Applications will be assessed confidentially by the BCX team. The student will be told the outcome and the support that has been agreed.
- If a student or parent/carer believes relevant information has not been considered, they may ask BCX to review the decision. Formal complaints will be handled through the Bodmin College complaints procedure.

Need help or want to apply?

Speak to Mr Goodlad or Mrs Evans, or email bcx@bodmin.celtrust.org. We encourage students to ask for help if money is making it harder to take part in their programme.