



Ascent Autism Specialist College

The Autism Specialists

Bursary Fund Policy

June 2025

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Reviewer:	Family Liaison Officer
Co-Reviewer:	Deputy CEO
Updated:	June 2025
Next Review:	June 2026
Committee:	Finance and Business Resources
Approved by the Ascent Governing Body/Board of Trustees:	

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

1	Financial Administration
2	Complaints
3	Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination
4	Data Protection

Change History Record			
Current Version	Previous Version	Summary of changes made	Section Heading & Page Number
(date)	(date)	Description of changes	Page changed
June 2025	June 2024	Date changes from 2024-2025 to reflect academic year 2025-2026	3, 4
		Finance Officer amended to Finance Assistant	3, 4
		'(PIP) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA)' changed to read '(PIP) as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA)'	4, 7, 11
		Legal context / References and Further Resources: Updated to reflect current guidance dated 2025-2026	6
		References to Education and Skills Funding Agency updated to Department for Education	7

		Age 16-19 (but under 19 on 31 st August 2024) updated to reflect 2025	7,8,11
		Added box to section C Appendix 3 'Ascent College are in receipt of documentation confirming my residency status'	10
		Removed box on application form (appendix 3) requesting bank details	13

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Introduction

Financial support is available for students, who meet eligibility criteria, aged 16-25 and engaging with full time learning at Ascent College.

Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Remarkable Autism Ltd will operate vulnerable 16-19 and discretionary 16-25 bursary funds for the 2025-26 academic year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Family Liaison Officer;

- Share details of both Vulnerable (16-19) and Discretionary (16-25) bursary with students and parents/ carers including details of eligibility criteria and application ([Appendix 1](#))
- Take receipt of complete application forms ([Appendix 2](#)) and confirm supporting documents
- Share completed applications with Deputy CEO for decision
- Inform student and/or parent outcome of application

Deputy CEO;

- Share outcome of application with Family Liaison Officer
- Notify payments made to Finance & Business Resources Committee

Finance Assistant;

- Make payments as per outcome of application

Eligibility

Vulnerable Bursary (age 16-19) an award of up to £1,200 an academic year for those in most need of financial support. A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2025 to be eligible for the 2025-2026 academic year. Students must meet one of the below eligibility criteria;

- In Care
- Care Leaver
- In receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and some who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

Discretionary Bursary (age 16-25)

Where household income is less than £27,000 applications will be considered. Individual awards will not exceed a total value of £500 in any academic year.

How to apply

Applications are valid for the academic year in which they are made, and students should apply each year.

Application forms are available from the Family Liaison Officer

Appropriate evidence, to support the claim, must be submitted with the application form. Subject to the criteria being applied against, evidence will include-

- An official letter referring to the benefit to which the young person is currently entitled
- Written confirmation from the local authority of the young person's current or previous looked after status
- Details of household income e.g. P60, benefit letters, letter from employer confirming salary (list not exhaustive)

Conditions of award

Students should have an attendance record of 90%+ and no unauthorised absences for payment to be made. Those who fail to meet the criteria will have their funding reviewed and be kept informed of what action is required by them for funding to continue.

Applicants will be informed that awards must be used to help young people pay for the costs related to participation of their course e.g.

- Transport to Ascent College costs
- Books and equipment, including protective clothing
- Additional course costs

Recipients of Bursary awards will be required to inform Remarkable Autism Ltd of any changes in their financial circumstances.

Payment

Where possible, bursary will be paid 'in kind' e.g. a transport pass or portable IT equipment. Where items supplied 'in kind' can be used again i.e. IT equipment or books they should be returned at the end of the course. Details will be shared in a letter to student/ family and a return signature of agreement will be requested prior to issue of item(s).

Payments will only be made to third parties i.e. parents if there is a valid reason and the Deputy CEO is satisfied funding will be facilitated on the student's behalf for their benefit only.

Details of any payment will be agreed by the Deputy CEO and shared, via Family Liaison Officer, with student and/ or family as appropriate.

Appeals

Appeals relating to awards should be made to the Head of Business Resources in the first instance. Further and final appeals should be made to the Chief Executive Officer. There is no further right of appeal.

Data

Remarkable Autism Ltd will retain copies of any documents the student has signed to give formal agreement to their conditions for payment.

Remarkable Autism Ltd will retain hard or scanned copies of documentation, including application, for 6 years.

Legal Context

Policy written in consultation with 'Department for Education 16-19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026'

Policy Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our Company policies. We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes for students, service users, staff and parents.

References and Further Resources

GOV.UK (2025) *Guidance 16-19 Bursary Fund guide 2025 to 2026 academic year*. Available at [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#) (29 May 2025)

Appendix 1 - Letter template/ FAQ's

[Date]

Dear Students & Parents/ Carers

Student Bursary

Financial support is available for students who attend Ascent College and meet eligibility criteria.

Vulnerable Student Bursary age 16-19 (but under 19 on 31st Aug 2025) an award of up to £1,200 per academic year for those who meet at least one of the below eligibility criteria:

- In Care
- Care Leaver
- In receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and some who is dependent on you and living with you (i.e. a child or partner).
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in your own right.

Discretionary Bursary age 16-25 and where household income is less than £27,000 applications for discretionary bursary will be considered. Applicants can apply for specific support related to their course (i.e. Equipment, travel, paying for trips etc.)

Applications for bursary are co-ordinated through Remarkable Autism Ltd. In order to process applications, we require evidence that supports your claim. This will include information about your financial circumstances including any benefits you and/ or your family are in receipt of. Such information is held securely for 6 years and kept for Department for Education auditing purposes. Your information will never be shared with anyone else without your consent.

If you have previously been awarded bursary you will be required to apply again; applications are valid only for the academic year in which they are made.

Please find attached guidance sheet, which may answer any questions you have. If you have further queries, or wish to discuss your individual circumstances, please contact me directly and I will be happy to help.

You can request an application form via clairebyrne@wargarvehouse.com or call 01925 224 899.

Yours sincerely,

Family Liaison Officer

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Students/ Parents/ Carers

1. What is Vulnerable Bursary?

Vulnerable Bursary is a payment of up to £1,200 for students age 16-19 (but under 19 on 31st Aug 2025) and attending Ascent who meet at least one of the following criteria;

- In Care
- Care Leaver
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit (UC) because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and some who is dependent on you and living with you (i.e. a child or partner).
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in your own right

2. What is discretionary bursary?

Where household income is less than £27,000 applications for discretionary bursary will be considered. Applicants can apply for specific support related to their course (i.e. buying equipment, paying for trips etc.) Any individual awards will not exceed a total value of £500 in any academic year.

3. Who can apply for a bursary at Remarkable Autism Ltd?

Vulnerable Bursary age 16-19 (under 19 on 31st Aug 2025)

Discretionary Bursary age 16-25

4. How do I apply?

Remarkable Autism Ltd process all applications; please contact our Family Liaison Officer for an application form.

5. When should I apply?

You should make an application as soon as possible. You can, however, make an application at any time during the academic year and not just at the start of your course.

6. How will bursary be paid?

Where possible, Remarkable Autism Ltd will make payments 'in kind' this means items will be purchased on your behalf. Alternatively, an award may be paid directly into your bank account. If this happens, you will need to share receipts of how you have spent the award. Whichever way you are paid Remarkable Autism Ltd should provide evidence that you are getting the amount you have been promised.

7. I do not have a bank account; does this mean I cannot get a bursary?

If someone manages your finances for you, evidence of this should be provided with your application.

8. Can Remarkable Autism Ltd tell me what to spend my bursary on?

Yes, your bursary is to help you pay for things you need to stay in education.

9. Can Remarkable Autism Ltd stop my payment if I do not attend or do not follow the rules?

Yes, Remarkable Autism Ltd will set conditions on your bursary, these are rules you must stick to for example, maintaining attendance at 90% and above. If the conditions of your award are not adhered to, Remarkable Autism Ltd can stop your payments.

10. What happens if I cannot attend college because of illness or an authorised absence?

If you are ill, or have been allowed authorised absence, Remarkable Autism Ltd will let you know if your bursary award will be affected.

11. I got bursary last year, do I need to apply again this year?

Yes, you are required to make a new application each academic year.

12. Will everyone know I am getting bursary?

No, Remarkable Autism Ltd will make sure that you are not singled out in any way and that your application is handled confidentially. If you have any worries, please speak to our Family Liaison Officer.

Appendix 3 – Bursary Fund Application Form 2025-2026

Section A: Student Personal Details	
Surname/ Family Name	
First Name	
Date of Birth	
Home Address	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	

Section B: Course Details		
I attend Ascent College full time	YES	NO
I have an EHCP	YES	NO

Section C: Learner Circumstances		
Who do you live with? <u>Please tick all that apply</u>	Mother	Father
	Foster Parents	In Care/ Looked After
	Grandparents	Parent's Spouse/ Partner
	Carer	Siblings (please state how many)
Have you always lived in the UK? (please tick)	Yes (proceed to section D)	No (please contact Remarkable Autism Ltd before proceeding to section D)
Ascent College are in receipt of documentation confirming my residency status	YES	NO

Please consider which bursary you are applying for and complete only section D or E as appropriate.

Section D: age 16-19 (but under 19 on 31 st Aug 2025)	
Vulnerable Bursary please tick the criteria that best describes your circumstances	
• Aged 16-19 but under the age of 19 on 31 August 2025	
• In Care	
• Care Leaver	
• In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and some who is dependent on you and living with you (i.e. a child or partner).	
• In receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in your own.	
You are required to provide evidence of eligibility (e.g. benefit letters) please list here the documents you attach to your application:	

Section E: age 16-25	
Discretionary Bursary please tick and confirm you meet eligibility criteria	
• My household income is less than £27,000	
You are required to provide evidence of eligibility (e.g. benefit letters) please list here the documents you attach to your application:	

Section F: Learner Income	
Please provide details of student income (£)	
Benefits	Employment
Savings	Other

Section G: Using Funds Awarded		
Please provide details of how any funds awarded would be used. The information you provide will support the assessment of your application, please be as specific as possible. You can tick more than one category as appropriate.		
Category	Details	Excepted cost (£)
Travel to/ from college		
Equipment/ materials/ specialist clothing to support studies		
Educational visits		
Other cost associated with course		

Section H: Declaration by parents or carer

It is important that you read the following statement carefully. We will not consider this application unless it is signed and dated.

- *The information provided on this form is accurate*
- *I confirm that the applicant has the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom*
- *I will inform you immediately of any change in my personal circumstances as they occur*
- *I understand that if I provide false or incomplete information, I will have to repay any money given to the applicant to help their study*

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

Section I: Declaration by student

It is important that you read the following statement carefully. We will not consider this application unless it is signed and dated by the student (where possible)

- *The information provided on this form is accurate*
- *I confirm I have the legal right to be a resident in the United Kingdom*
- *I will inform you immediately of any change in my own or my family's personal circumstances as they occur*
- *I understand that if I provide false or incomplete information, I will have to repay any money given to me.*

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

For Office Use Only

	Signature	Date
Application form received (student name; date of birth)		
Form checked for full completion		
Evidence provided – please list:		
Confirmation of legal right to residency in the UK? YES / NO		
Evidence checked		
Requested further information / documents (please list): Received YES / NO		
Eligibility criteria (please tick as appropriate): <input type="checkbox"/> Discretionary bursary <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable bursary		
Application approved? YES / NO Reason for rejection:		
Decision letter sent to student / parent/carer (or email)		
Appeal Date appeal request received Appeal hearing date Persons present at hearing Appeal decision Notification sent to applicant		
Award arrangements: <input type="checkbox"/> Payment to student bank account Amount £..... Frequency (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Award 'in kind' details		
Any other comments		