

Aldridge Foundation Next Steps Bursary - guidance for applicants

This document contains important information about the Next Steps Bursary programme and detailed guidance on how to complete the application form. Please read this document carefully before completing your [online form here](#) .

1. About the Next Steps Bursary programme

What is a Next Steps Bursary?

A Next Steps Bursary consists of a financial award* alongside additional support, including mentoring, workshops, experiences to develop skills (and boost your cv) and internships /work experience opportunities.

**This financial award is a donation and not a loan that needs to be paid back.*

Who can apply for a Next Steps Bursary?

Current Y13 students attending the family of Aldridge schools and colleges who are looking to take their next steps in to further or higher education or employment.

Why are we offering bursaries?

Our overall purpose is to ensure that young people who have high aspirations to continue their skills development and take the next steps towards, or in, their successful career, can overcome any barriers and challenges to do so. The Next Steps Bursaries will be awarded to young people to help them take the next steps on their individual pathway into the world of work. In addition to financial assistance, successful applicants will also become part of a community of Aldridge Foundation Scholars and receive tailored support which can be equally, if not more valuable e.g. mentoring or internships.

How much can I apply for?

The award value of the majority of bursaries will be from £500 - £1000 for a one-year award, to a multi-year bursary from £1,500 per year*

The value and number of years covered by a bursary will be dependent on use of funds, personal circumstances and length of the course (*up to a maximum of 3 years).

For example:

- an applicant could be awarded a one-off bursary to contribute to relocation costs to take up a paid apprenticeship elsewhere in the UK, or for specialist equipment required to start their own business.
- an applicant could be awarded a multi-year bursary to contribute to living costs and course resources for a 3-year higher education course.

Applicants must give details of what the funds will be used for and whether they have already secured funding for their next steps from any other parties.

Where applicants are awarded a multi-year bursary, the bursary will be confirmed annually and paid in annual instalments to ensure that awardees deliver on commitments as stated in the terms and conditions (to be agreed with each successful applicant).

What can I use the bursary for?

Bursaries can be used for one or more of the following:

- further and higher education fees
- professional qualification course and exam fees or membership to a professional body for networking and career learning purposes
- contribution to travel, accommodation and subsistence to support your next steps
- contribution to course study resources/specialist equipment
- mentorships and work-experience/internships/other employability schemes
- attendance at events/conferences/training courses
- access extra- curricular activities to develop essential life skills
- access opportunities to boost employability or enterprise skills
- taking a language course to support employability
- funding travel/accommodation for an overseas work placement, volunteering or research trip (not for general gap years)

You can apply for one or more of the above reasons, giving details in your application form.

Other reasons for applying for a bursary will be considered if reasonable and appropriate – feel free to email nextsteps@aldridgefoundation.com if you're unsure.

What is the application process?

Applications for this funding round must be submitted using the online form by **MIDNIGHT ON FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026**.

A Shortlist Panel will then review all applications and create a shortlist considering financial need, social, economic and/or family circumstances as well as a set of additional criteria.

Applicants will be notified by **END OF FEBRUARY 2026** to let them know whether they have been shortlisted.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview (virtual or face to face) with the Bursary Award Selection Panel in **MARCH / APRIL 2026**.

Successful applicants will be notified by the **END OF MAY 2026**.

Bursaries will be awarded following completion and signing of agreements (including payment schedule, reporting schedule and additional commitments of the applicant to the Aldridge Foundation and vice versa).

Need help completing the application form?

If, after reading the guidance notes, you need help completing the application form, please speak to a teacher, past or present, who should be able to advise you and provide you with support. If you require further guidance, you can also email the Aldridge Foundation team on nextsteps@aldridgefoundation.com

2. Guidance for completing your application

We recommend that you answer the questions on the TEMPLATE word document and then ask a teacher to review it before you copy and paste your answers in to the online form – this will allow you to have an overview of all questions and take your time to prepare your answers in more than one session if required.

Please have this document with you as you answer the questions on the application form as for some questions, where we felt it would be useful, we have provided some additional tips and advice.

Section 1 - Eligibility information

In order to be eligible to apply for a bursary, you must be:

- a current Y13 student attending the Aldridge family of schools and colleges

We will verify your details with the Aldridge school that you attend.

If you do not meet the above criteria, please do not continue with this application.

Section 2 – Your personal details

The personal details provided here should be of the student who is applying for the bursary – even if someone else is helping you complete the form; these details need to be yours.

Please note: the application form cannot automatically tell whether you've missed a digit off your telephone number, or if there is a typo in your email address – please triple check that the contact details you provide are correct, otherwise we won't be able to get in touch with you to let you know whether or not your application has been successful.

Guidance on specific Q's within this section:

Q5 – Please provide a personal email address, rather than your school email address to ensure that we can remain in contact with you regarding your bursary application if / when you leave school.

Q6 – Your telephone number is only used where we need to contact you about your bursary application.

Q9 – Please use the following format: yyyy – yyyy (*e.g. if you joined an Aldridge school in 2018 as a year 7 student and are due to finish Y13 next Summer, you should put 2018 – 2024*).

Section 3 – Additional information

The questions in this section allow us to find out a little more about each applicant's personal circumstances and the answers provided may help us to ensure that bursaries are awarded to the young people who need them most.

Please note: the application review panel will also use other criteria to help them to decide who to award bursaries to, so don't worry too much about whether you answer Yes or No to these questions.

Guidance on specific Q's within this section:

Q10 – If you're not sure whether you are, or have ever been, entitled to receive Free School Meals, please ask your Form Tutor or parent / carer.

Q11 – For the purpose of this question 'family' is your immediate family i.e., your parent/carer and older siblings. 'I am not planning to go to university' means that you have chosen to follow a different pathway and decided not to go to university.

Q13 – Generally, low-income refers to an annual household income of £25,000 or less.

Q14 – A looked after child is a child (up to the age of 18) living in care e.g. with a foster family.

Q15 – This is an optional Q. Please use the space provided to give more details on any of your answers in this section or provide additional information that you think it would be useful for us to know and that you are comfortable sharing with us. Any additional information that you choose to provide will only be processed for the purpose of assessing your bursary application.

Section 4 - About you

Use this this section to show us your personality – we want to know what you enjoy and what interests and motivates you, both in and out of school. There are no wrong or right answers here. Take a moment to think about each prompt on the application form and feel free to tell us about anything else that is important to you but isn't on the list.

Guidance on specific Q's within this section:

Q16 – Where possible please tell us how/why the things you're talking about link to your next steps, for example: you may have started volunteering with a youth club, coaching a young football team, because you know that a) it will look good on your application for the sports coaching course you want to do and b) so that you can develop your confidence and employability skills which will help you further down the line when you set up as a freelance sports coach.

Q17 – A reminder of the Aldridge Attributes:

- Passion
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Determination
- Problem-solving
- Risk-taking

Q18 – Tell us what your dreams or goals for the future are – even if you don't necessarily know how you'll get there yet. For example, is there a specific career you have in mind? Is there a certain issue that you see in your community that you are passionate about tackling? Is there a group of people that you want to help?

Q20 – This question is optional. You’ve already shared lots of information with us but this is an opportunity, if you’d like, to share any additional information about yourself or your circumstances that hasn’t fit into your previous answers. For example, how the bursary will help you to overcome certain barriers to learning or what, if any, additional support you might need if you’re invited to interview.

Section 5 – How do you intend to use the funds if you are successful?

This section is all about your next steps into further education or the world of work – we are looking for evidence that you’ve fully thought through your plans and have a good idea of the amount of money you’d need to help you get there.

Guidance on specific Q’s within this section:

Q21 - please provide the following details, providing as much detail as possible:

- Why you need the funds and how you will spend them *(be as specific as possible – e.g. if you need the funds for specialist equipment, tell us what equipment it is that you need and how having that equipment will make a difference to you. If you’re able to provide actual costs e.g. for a training course or piece of equipment, you can include those here)*
- Whether you have already raised some of the funds / have applied for funds elsewhere *(for example, you might have applied for other bursaries or scholarships or saved up money from a part time job)*
- What additional support you might like, in addition to funding e.g. mentoring or internships

Please note: Bursaries can be used for one or more of the following:

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- professional qualification course and exam fees or membership to a professional body for networking and career learning purposes
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- contribution to course study resources/specialist equipment
- mentorships and work-experience/internships/other employability schemes
- attendance at events/conferences/training courses
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- taking a language course to support employability
- funding travel/accommodation for an overseas work placement, volunteering or research trip (not general gap years)

You can apply for one or more of the above reasons, giving details in your application form.

Please note: Other reasons for applying for a bursary will be considered if reasonable and appropriate. If you’re not sure, feel free to email nextsteps@alldridgefoundation.com

Q22 – We understand that you won’t have received your offers yet and that if you are planning to go on to further or higher education, you may have applied to multiple institutions. Please let us know your first choice. *If this question does not apply to you, please leave it blank.*

Section 6 – Reference

Q23 – Q26 Please check that your referee is happy for you to pass on their contact details before you submit the application form. Ideally, we would like an email address and a telephone number

(this can be their personal or work telephone number) however if you do not have a telephone number, you can leave **Q25** blank and ask your referee to send us their telephone number directly, via email.

Please note: the application form cannot automatically tell whether you've missed a digit off the telephone number, or if there is a typo in the email address – please triple check that the contact details you provide are correct, otherwise we won't be able to get in touch with your referee. Without a reference, your application will not be considered.

Section 7 – Data protection

The Aldridge Foundation takes the protection of your data very seriously. The information you provide on your application form will be stored by the Aldridge Foundation and used for processing and verifying your application, administering successful applications and to evaluate the success of the programme. To find out more about what this means, what we do with your data, how we store it, and your rights, please view our privacy policy here: www.aldridgefoundation.com/privacy-policy/

If your application is unsuccessful, we will erase your data, unless you have given us permission to contact you by email about other opportunities, in which case we will retain your name, school and email address only.

If your application is successful, we will securely hold all data that you have submitted via this form for the term of your bursary. Following that, for our records, we will hold your name, contact details and information regarding your bursary.

Section 8 – Other opportunities

We'd love to stay connected with you regardless of whether or not your Next Steps bursary application is successful in this round – we promise not to fill up your inbox! You'll receive the occasional newsletter from the Aldridge Foundation and be the first to know about any opportunities, events, intern/job opportunities or resources to help you continue developing your skills as you follow your chosen path into the world of work. If that sounds good, click 'Opt in'.

If you'd rather not hear from us (aside from in regard to the bursary programme) just click 'Opt out'.

Section 9 – Declaration

Please read the declaration carefully before submitting your application form. If you are under 18 years old, we will need you to provide contact details for a parent / carer, so that we can share a copy of your application form with them and ask them to agree to the conditions outlined too.

Section 10 – Parent / carer consent for under 18's

See above.

Please note: this section of the form should only be completed if you are under 18.

Section 11 – Important information

Please read the information in this section, as well as the details of the 'application process' contained within this document, carefully.