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16 TO 19 BURSARY FUND – GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20

What is the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund?

The 16-19 Bursary Funds are paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to Schools so they can provide financial help to students whose access to education might be inhibited by financial consideration. A bursary is money that may be typically used to pay for things such as books, equipment, free school meals, transport, field trips.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund has 2 elements:

Vulnerable Bursary for vulnerable young people: Please see below for details of eligibility.

These students will be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 per year.

Discretionary Bursary: These awards are targeted towards those young people who face financial barriers to participation in education, such as the costs of transport, meals, educational visits, books and equipment. The awards are aimed to fit the needs and circumstances of individual students and are at the discretion of the person appointed by the Principal to manage the School's bursary funds.

Who is eligible to receive the bursary?

Age

To be eligible to receive a 16 to 19 Bursary in the 2019/20 academic year the student must:

- Be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31st August 2019; or
- Be aged 19 or over at 31st August 2019 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); or
- Be aged 19 or over at 31st August 2019 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18.

The last two groups are only eligible for discretionary bursary.

Residency

- The student must meet the residency criteria in ESFA 2019/20 funding regulations. See detailed guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806069/16_to_19_funding_guidance_Regulations_2019_to_2020_Final.pdf
- Accompanied asylum seeking children - as long as they have not had their application for asylum refused, the student may receive in-kind student support



such as books, equipment or a travel pass. Cash will not be paid directly under any circumstance unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children – If they are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, then they will be treated as looked after child and be eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group), where it is identified that they have a financial need.

In addition, they must be eligible in one of the following categories:

Priority 1 - Vulnerable Bursary

The following students may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200:

- They are in, or have recently left, local authority care;
- They are receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them (such as child or partner);
- They are receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

They may qualify for the full amount, or a part thereof, depending on their individual circumstances. Funding for this bursary is held centrally by the ESFA. Students who qualify for this bursary might experience a short delay while the School applies to draw down the funding.

Discretionary Bursary

Priority 2

A proportion of the funds allocated to the School will be distributed amongst the students who face the greatest financial hardship. These students are likely to be those who are eligible for free school meals and whose household income is below £16,190 (per government Free School Meal eligibility criteria).

Priority 3

Further applications will be considered on an individual basis and where the household income is between £16,190 and £20,595

Priority 4

Further applications will be considered on an individual basis and where the household income is between £20,595 and £25,000 (the old threshold for Maintenance Grants).



Priority 5

It is intended that the fund could also support students who suffer a change in circumstances causing hardship during the academic year. Students should contact the Head of Sixth Form in the first instance.

The provision of financial support will be monitored by the School and if the School deems that the financial support is not supporting academic progress than alternative support may be put in place following discussions with parents/guardians and student.

How much is the bursary payment/How will it be paid?

Students in one of the defined vulnerable groups may receive a payment of up to £1,200 for the academic year, payable in regular instalments. If a student is on a study programme which lasts less 30 weeks in an academic year, then the £1,200 should be pro-rated to the number of weeks of study.

If IT/specialist equipment or bus passes required, then the School will purchase this and the cost deducted from the student's overall award.

Where a carer has responsibility for the young person's finances, meetings should be set up with them to decide how payments should be made.

Additionally, all students who qualify for a vulnerable bursary should be offered budgeting training to help ensure his or her support delivers the maximum benefit.

The majority of discretionary bursary allocation payments will be 'in kind', based on their needs, which may include but are not limited to:

- Essential books;
- Bus pass;
- IT/specialist equipment;
- School trips;
- Clothing to meet the dress code of the sixth form;
- Travel to open days or university interviews.

Dependent upon individual circumstances, the Bursary Fund may pay the full cost or only a proportion, with the balance being paid by the student.

Any student who is in receipt of Free School Meals will continue to be entitled to Free School Meals under the bursary scheme.

Where cash payments are being made to students, payments will be made directly to students via BACS transfer.

Justification will be required for any direct cash payments.

Additionally, where cash payments are made to students to reimburse expenditure, students must provide copies of purchase receipts as proof of purchase. These will be held on file. Any unspent money should be returned to the School.

In exceptional circumstances the school will consider alternative arrangements.



Where a School purchases books and equipment for a student, the student is expected to return books and equipment to the School at the end of the student study programme so that they may be used again by another student where appropriate.

Qualifying conditions?

The following conditions apply to the receipt of bursary payments:

All payments (both in kind and cash) will be subject to meeting the attendance and behaviour requirements of the School.

- Qualifying Period – Satisfy a qualifying period of study, i.e. at least six weeks;
- Attendance – a minimum of 95% attendance (subject to exceptional circumstances). The Bursary payment will be reduced or even removed if attendance falls below 95%;
- Behaviour – No cause for concern and no staff perusing a level of the behaviour policy;

The discretionary allowance may be withdrawn if any of the above is not satisfactory at the discretion of The Sixth Form Bursary Panel.

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

The following list gives examples of some of the occasions when permission for absence may be granted on a limited basis providing written notification is provided in advance:

- Illness and medical/dental appointment;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

The following reasons for absence would not usually be considered acceptable:

- Driving Theory Test
- Holidays taken during the school term
- Part or full time work which is not part of your programme of study
- Leisure activities that are not part of your programme of study
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings or looking after other family members (excl registered young carers)



- Driving lessons
- Missing the bus
- Waking up late

Is there a deadline to apply for the bursary?

- Vulnerable Bursary – there is no deadline. However, we will be able to offer assistance and arrange regular payments if you apply for the funding early in the year.
- Discretionary Bursary – We encourage students to submit their applications at the start of the September term, however the closing date for application is Friday 18th October. The discretionary bursary is a limited sum of money allocated to the School. Once our allocation has been allocated to students, no further applications for support can be considered. All applications will be dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis. We will retain a proportion of the funding as a contingency for students in Priority 5 category above.

How do I apply?

If you believe you are eligible for the bursary, please complete the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Application Form. This can be obtained from the Head of Sixth Form.

If you need help in completing the form, please contact the Head of Sixth Form.

A new application form must be submitted each year for consideration. There is no guarantee that funding will be available for future years, even if you are eligible for the current year.

All applications will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Do I need to provide evidence or supporting documents?

The supporting documents needed are outlined in the application form. You will also need to bring your original birth certificate or a current passport to the Sixth Form (after the application has been approved).

Do I need to sign a declaration?

At the end of the application form, students and their parent/carer must sign a declaration. Students and their families should be aware that if false or incomplete information is submitted, the matter may be referred to the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the police, with the possibility of facing prosecution. The Sixth Form will seek to recover any payments the student is not eligible for. We must be notified in writing of any changes to the information provided, which may affect the eligibility of the bursary. If the student leaves the Sixth Form or fails to abide by the Sixth Form's attendance and behaviour policies we may ask for the award to be returned or withhold payments.



What will happen after the application form has been submitted?

The application form and supporting documents will be checked. They will be stored securely and will only be used for the purpose of assessing their eligibility for the Bursary Fund. In line with the ESFA guidance, the documentation will be retained for 6 years.

The person appointed by the Principal to manage the School's bursary funds will then consider each application.

Details of all successful applications will be passed to the Finance Department, together with level, timing and conditions of the bursary awarded.

Do I have the right to appeal?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your application, you have the right to appeal against the decision. You should follow the School's normal complaints procedure.

What should I do if my circumstances change?

If there are changes in circumstances which may affect eligibility for the Bursary Fund, applicants or parents/carers must notify the College without delay. If false or incomplete information is given, you will have to repay the award.

How do I get further information?

For further information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2019-to-2020-academic-year>

The terms of this scheme are reviewed on an annual basis.

Please note the information above may be subject to change following guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.