



16 - 19 Bursary Fund Guidelines for Providing Financial Support to Eligible Students

The key purpose of these guidelines is to help ensure that all students in the Sixth Form are able to access the full range of educational opportunities on offer and that economic deprivation does not prevent any young person realising their full potential as determined by prior attainment.

Purpose

- This fund will be distributed in a manner that provides eligible young people with financial support or support "in kind" (for example, provision of additional textbooks) which directly enables them to access Sixth Form provision in the West Dacorum Partnership for Learning.
- The school will use appropriate discretion and knowledge of each individual student to ensure that funds are carefully targeted and that "best value" is always realised.
- Allocation of support will be dependent on eligible students fulfilling specified criteria concerning attendance and success rates.
- The fund will not be used to fund any activity which is not directly linked to the student's education and will not be used to subsidise other social benefits such as child care allowance.

Guidelines

The Bursary Fund has 2 elements, Level A and Level B:

Level A : Young people in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of income support and disabled students in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1200 a year.

Level B: The school will use discretion to make awards in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of identified students. These awards will always be targeted to students facing financial barriers to participation such as the costs of transport, meals, books and educational equipment.

The school is free to determine the scale of discretionary bursaries and the frequency of payments for all awards. It is vital that the School is able to verify that "best value" is being obtained and as such will frequently look to make awards "in kind". This might include purchase of specific items of equipment such as an artist's set or the purchase of a bus pass or providing a subsidy to the cost of an additional educational trip closely linked with a specific course.

Eligibility

A student must be aged under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. In general, bursaries will only be paid to young people who have reached the statutory school leaving age.

Students receiving support under the transitional arrangements for those who have previously received EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance).

- The most vulnerable young people will be eligible for a Bursary at Level A of up to £1200 per annum. The school will need appropriate evidence of all eligible students in this category. This typically might include a letter setting out the benefits to which the young person is entitled and written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority or appropriate care service.
- Students who are eligible for support under Level B discretionary bursaries will likely include those students entitled to free school meals and those where there is evidence of families receiving additional forms of income support or on a low household income, under the threshold stated on the latest claim form.
- In all cases, the Bursary Manager and Head of Sixth Form will have complete discretion in recommending students for individual financial support. Such recommendations will take into account changing family or other personal circumstances and will be responsive to all needs including those, which may only be temporary.

Allocation of Funds

- Students will be asked to apply for either level A or B funding on an appropriate application form (see below). This form will be confidential and it is anticipated that many students will be invited to apply for financial support because of the school's knowledge of their personal circumstances.
- Within 5 working days of receiving an application, the school will inform the student of the exact level of support they can expect over the academic year. This proposed rapid turnaround is to allow each student to make an informed decision in good time. The statement of intended support provided to the student will also include explicit reference to any portion of support that might be discretionary. In addition, the statement will clearly outline all expectations on the student, for example, attendance and punctuality rates and expected success descriptors, including the requirement to meet any coursework or assignment deadlines.
- Any distribution of funding must be authorised by the Bursary Manager and Head of Sixth Form.
- In most cases, financial support will be provided by the school directly by purchasing the equipment or service needed, for example, by providing a bus pass or ticket to an educational conference, in order to attain 'best value'.
- If reimbursement is required, payment will be made by bank transfer if possible, or otherwise cheque or cash to the young person.
- In most circumstances, the school will require receipts where funding has been provided for a specific purchase. For example, for the purchase of a textbook or item of equipment.
- The allocation of Bursary Funds will be monitored by the Governors' Resources Committee applying the same "best value" criteria used for all financial monitoring of the school's activities. The Governors will also require the Headteacher to ensure that all centrally received Bursary Funds are dispersed to support eligible young people on roll and are not diverted to other needs.
- As with all aspects of the school's provision, any young person has a right to challenge any decision about funding levels via the school's documented complaints procedure.