



16-19 BURSARY POLICY 2019-2020

A key priority for the Government is to close the gap in attainment between those from less well-off and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16 to 19 education or training.

The 16 to 19 Bursary is designed to support young people aged 16-19 to continue in education. The fund is designed to remove barriers to participation. It is not designed to be a cash incentive to participate in education or training. It is intended that these funds should target those who are experiencing severe financial hardship. All beneficiaries of this fund will need to meet eligibility criteria and conditions as laid out by Arthur Mellows Village College (the College). Failure to do so will result in bursaries not being awarded or withdrawn. As a point of principle bursary funds should not be used to displace other types of support available to young people eg. childcare costs should not be covered that can be covered via Care to Learn or Transport costs that are met by the Local Authority.

The College is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has received a Bursary Fund Allocation for 2019/20. The aim of this policy is to distribute the total of the fund as fairly as possible between learners in accordance with the guidance issued by the ESFA. The allocation from the ESFA is for the academic year 2019/20.

At the beginning of the academic year, the College will encourage young people to apply for bursaries. Deadlines will be set for applications, however this will not preclude the College from considering applications beyond this date but this will enable the College to distribute the funds as fairly as possible, having assessed the overall demand for support. The College will hold back funds to support in year applications

1. Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary in the 2019-2020 academic year, the student must be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2019 and undertaking Key Stage 5 courses.

Students must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in the *ESFA Funding Guidance. (*A person on 1 September who is settled in the UK, and has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three years preceding the 1 September.*) If you are in any doubt, please speak with the Head of Sixth Form.

Students should be participating in a provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality and funded within the relevant guidelines. (*Attendance at the College meets the criteria.*)

2. Bursaries for the Most Vulnerable Learners – High Priority Group

The College will consider a bursary of £1,200 to learners in the following categories:

- Those in care, including those placed with a foster carer by the local authority
- Care leavers
- Young People in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner

- Young people who are in receipt of 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.

The definition of a Care Leaver according to the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is:

'a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or

A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16'.

If a learner becomes entitled during the year the payments will be pro-rata to the number of whole weeks remaining in the academic year. Bursaries will be pro rata for any courses that are less than 30 weeks.

If a learner's situation changes during the course of the year then their eligibility can be re-assessed. There is a responsibility on learners to notify the College to changes in their circumstances that might affect their continued eligibility for a bursary. Young people can re-apply for a bursary if their circumstances change throughout the year or if they had a previous award withdrawn.

To receive the full amount students must have 0% unauthorised absences and overall above 90% attendance with behaviour and effort satisfactory or better.

3. Discretionary Bursaries – Medium Priority Group

To be eligible for a discretionary bursary, applicants must be entitled to a Free School Meal. The criteria for this is as follows:

A pupil whose parent/guardian receives one or more of the following benefits (as at date of this policy or the current criteria) is entitled to a Free School Meal:

- Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA(IB))
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA (IR))
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), provided you do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £16,190
- Guarantee Credit element of State Pension Credit
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Medium discretionary bursaries will be awarded as a cash sum. The value of this award will be determined each year (usually by October Half Term), dependent on the level of funding and number of valid applications). Payment will be made towards the end of each Half Term (ie six times per year), and should only be used to purchase such items as listed in Section 4 as qualifying expenditure. To receive the full amount students must have 0% unauthorised absences and overall above 90% attendance with behaviour and effort satisfactory or better.

4. At Risk Discretionary Bursaries – Low Priority Group

This type of bursary is intended to support a young person who having engaged in learning, begins to experience financial difficulties that are severe enough to put them at risk of dropping out. Bursaries will be awarded subject to the availability of funding and the level of award will be dependent on need.

To be eligible for at risk discretionary bursary the gross annual household income will be below £35,000. This will need to be verified by providing evidence of household income. Also attendance of above 90% will be expected to receive full reimbursement.

At risk discretionary bursaries will be awarded as a full or part contribution towards the cost of the following types of expenditure where young people are unable to meet those costs through any other means. Qualifying expenditure is defined as anything identified by the College as a barrier to participation. Examples of qualifying expenditure, a combination of which may be reimbursed, are as follows:

- Transport (public transport or car driver only, limited mileage for journey to/from the College and attend essential course related trips/events)
- Examination re-sit fees
- Meals at College
- Uniform as described in the College Uniform Policy and Sixth Form Dress Code (up to a maximum of 50% of amount awarded)
- Equipment and materials required in order to complete the course (this will be by way of a contribution towards the full cost, up to a maximum of £200)
- Educational visits or work related activities that are a compulsory element of the programme of study
- Other expenses approved by the College or provider that are related to supporting attendance and participation.

It is expected that the risk discretionary bursaries will be limited to a maximum of £500 for this academic year. In some cases awards may not be made until after 31 December 2019.

Once an award has been granted the bursary can be drawn down by asking the College to purchase the item or providing valid receipts for the expenditure for which the bursary was approved.

5. Discretionary Bursaries - Other Areas

The College will consider financial support in other areas relating to education and student welfare as follows:

- Transport (public transport or car driver only limited mileage for journey to/from the College and attend essential course related trips/events)
- Examination re-sit fees
- Meals at College
- Uniform as described in the College Uniform Policy and Sixth Form Dress Code (up to a maximum of 50% of amount awarded)
- Equipment and materials required in order to complete the course (this will be by way of a contribution towards the full cost, up to a maximum of £200)
- Educational visits or work related activities that are a compulsory element of the programme of study
- Other expenses approved by the College or provider that are related to supporting attendance and participation.

Payment for the above expenses will be considered if you fall into either of the three priority groups (high, medium and low) or if you have been eligible for Free School Meals at any time during your secondary school education.

Consideration will also be given to students who have siblings also in Post 16 at the College, single parents or where their family can demonstrate that they are currently in a period of hardship and that the support will benefit the students' progress in education. In addition, the College will consider emergency support for students who face exceptional circumstances during the year which impact on their ability to participate.

Once an award has been granted the bursary can be drawn down by asking the College to purchase the item or providing valid receipts for the expenditure for which the bursary was approved. All rewarded must have 0% unauthorised absences and overall above 90% attendance with behaviour and effort satisfactory or better.

6. Application Process

All applications must be made in writing on the application form, signed and dated by the applicants. For those young people that are not living independently there should be an additional signature from the parent/carer for those under 18.

The first and main closing date for applications will be the 27 September 2019. Thereafter, applications will be considered on an ad hoc basis e.g. from those learners who enrol later, apply later or whose financial circumstances change.

Applicants will be required to provide evidence to verify their eligibility for the bursary and the applicant will need to provide relevant information to establish the household income.

Evidence of total household income will include any source of income e.g. employment, investment, benefits for both the applicant and the adults living with the applicants. Any savings of the above parties may also be taken into account. This information will be self-declared but also evidenced by P60's, wage slips, Tax Credit Awards, Universal Credit Award Statements, and self-employment accounts and letters of confirmation of benefits from the job centre.

7. Assessment

Your application will be assessed as high, medium, low priority or other areas by the College's Finance Department in accordance with this policy and ESFA guidance in conjunction with the Head of Sixth Form. The final decision lies with the Head of College.

Details of the reason and expenditure, with the amount of Bursary funding required, should be included within the application form. This will be used to make decisions on the level of award to be given.

Documentary evidence to support applications will be checked and copies retained by the College for audit purposes.

Applicants will be informed, in writing of the outcome of their application.

Those awarded the risk discretionary bursaries – Low priority and other areas group will have to provide evidence by asking the College to purchase item or produce valid documentary evidence such as receipts to enable the agreed bursary to be drawn down. This is required for audit purposes.

8. Payments

Any payments will be made by BACS towards the end of each Half Term. Each student will need to ensure they have a bank account in their own name and provide this on the application form.

When support is provided for specific goods or services (eg uniform or transport), payment will be made direct to the supplier or valid receipts will need to be provided.

Any benefits in kind are the property of the school, provider/college. If they can be re-used for other learners, young people may be required to hand them back to the College at the end of the course or programme of study.

All discretionary payments are subject to availability of funds. The level of award and level of contribution from the applicant will be subject to both need and the availability of discretionary funds. The availability of discretionary funds and the demand placed upon those funds will vary between schools, colleges and providers.

9. Participation

Payment of bursaries will be conditional upon a range of factors. This will include regular attendance, satisfactory behaviour and completion of coursework. This will be assessed on a termly basis and paid pro rata accordingly.

All young people will be expected to maintain a minimum level of attendance and will be monitored regularly. Authorised absence will be classified as attendance. Please see the criteria for bursary above.

10. Appeals

Applicants may appeal in writing against the decision to the Deputy Headteacher.

Appeals will be determined by a Senior Manager and a member of the Governing Body where applicable.

If the decision of the appeals panel fails to resolve the issue then applicants should follow the College's normal complaints procedure.

11. Data Protection

All partners under this policy agree to share data and information in order to verify a young person's eligibility and to verify the position for any young people that move between providers during the year.

The information contained within the application will be treated as confidential and only shared where necessary to progress an application.

Hard copy information associated with applications, decisions and panels will be kept to satisfy ESFA audit expectations. The College may also keep information electronically. Any personal information that is kept will be kept securely, in line with our document retention guidance.

Evidence of income will be validated and a member of staff will confirm that this has been seen on the application form. Schools, colleges and providers will not keep copies of this personal data (as per ESFA guidance).

12. Equal Opportunities

All aspects of the applications process and associated decisions will be managed with due regard to equal opportunities legislation.

Arthur Mellows Village College

May 2019