

16-19 Bursary and Discretionary Fund Policy

Date drafted: October 2018

Date adopted: October 2018

Date last reviewed: October 2023

Date to be reviewed: October 2024

Purpose of the policy

1. To ensure that the funds received annually from the EFA (Education Funding Agency) [or equivalent, if superseded] are targeted toward students that have the greatest need;
2. To ensure any remaining funds are distributed fairly to students whose household income may limit their educational chances;
3. To ensure financial sustainability through the flexible development of funds received, thereby preventing an overspend in any annual cycle of funding;
4. To ensure that any personal financial details remain secure and confidential
5. To minimise the risk of fraudulent claims

Government Bursary Fund

A finite figure is devised by the funding agency and students' bursaries are defined by the funding agency.

The Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) administers the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund for vulnerable students on behalf of Education Funding Agency.

16-19 Bursary Applications

Eligibility

To receive a bursary, the student must be aged under 19 on 31 August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study and must satisfy DFE residency criteria.

The student must satisfy the following school conditions:

- 1) The student's level of attendance to lessons must be a minimum of 85%. If students achieve 93-100% attendance then they receive the full bursary, if they achieve 85-93% then their claim is reduced by 25%, if they achieve below 85% attendance, then the bursary is not awarded.
- 2) The student must not have broken the terms of the Sixth Form Contract (Learning Agreement)
- 3) The student must comply with the following bursary contract document extract:
 - The school will check all claims for travel against the student's attendance record and he/she will not be refunded for any days he/she did not attend school for reasons other than illness. A parent/carer will contact the school on the first day of the student's absence and he/she will provide a note to explain the absence when he/she comes back in to school.
 - Claims will be withheld of home learning or assignments are not up to date, until the work is completed.
 - All claims must be submitted regularly.

Evidence requirement

Evidence of household income by way of a P60, Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit annual statement from HMRC, Receipt of Benefit Notification, Tax Credit Award Notification or Self Employed Income Notification must be provided to the school finance office along with the completed application form.

Level One: Guaranteed/Vulnerable Bursary

Most students who get support from the bursary will receive a tailored award from the discretionary bursary. Students in one or more of the groups below need more support and can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200. Institutions do not receive an allocation of funds for vulnerable bursaries. They need to draw down the funds from the Student Support Bursary Service (formerly the Learner Support Service), using the relevant claim form. The eligible groups are students who are:

- A student in care
- A care leaver
- Student in receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) in place of Income Support in their own right
- A student receiving Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

Level Two: Discretionary Fund/Hardship Fund

As an alternative to weekly payments, Lawnswood School will operate a discretionary payment system for specific educational purposes such as: books and equipment; transport, university application (UCAS fees); costs of travel to HE interviews; educational visits (including residential).

To be able to apply for this funding, students will have to prove that they meet some or all of the following criteria in the form of appropriate supporting documentation:

- That they or their parent(s) are in receipt of income support or other means tested benefits
- That they fulfil UK residency conditions
- That the total family income is less than £25,000 for the last financial tax year
- That they were eligible for free school meals last year

Students can either receive goods directly from school or be refunded for purchases made retrospectively (evidenced by a receipt). Eligibility will be determined via formal application. Each claim will be assessed separately.

Application Process and Payments

All bursary fund applications are to be made to the Sixth Form team, along with the required evidence. In year applications would be subject to funds being available.

Lawnswood School will then process the information and will advise students, in writing, of the outcome. All eligible bursary payments will be attendance and achievement related and back dated to the start of the courses the student has enrolled upon.

Payments can be made directly to the student's bank account, by BACS. Payments will be subject to the conditions laid down in the 16-19 Bursary Contract, including attendance, behaviour, completion of coursework and completion of courses enrolled upon.

Once entitlement is approved, a separate 16-19 Bursary contract will be signed by the claimant and a copy kept with the Sixth Form team.

Security and Personal Information

All applications will be made through Sixth Form. All personal information, including bank details and household earnings, will be stored securely and will remain strictly confidential.

Internal Appeals Process

Students have a right to appeal against a decision if they have evidence that the school has made a mistake and that they have behaved in accordance with the terms of the 16-19 Bursary Fund contract. Appeals should be made to the Headteacher in the first instance. If a further appeal is to be requested, this will be heard by a Governors' subcommittee of two members including a school governor and a neutral member of staff.

Fraud

Parent/Carer and student must confirm that all information provided is true and must notify Lawnswood School if any circumstances change. The bursary will be provided on the basis that certain conditions set by the school, as detailed in the bursary contract, will be adhered to. Parents and students will be required to jointly sign applications so that they understand that money may be claimed back and eligibility withdrawn should they knowingly provide information which is discovered to be false.

BURSARY CONTRACT

between Lawnswood School Sixth Form and
(name of student)

I understand that any claims I make from the Discretionary (Bursary) Fund are subject to me

- getting to school on time
- attending all my lessons
- making reasonable progress in all my subjects
- completing all home learning tasks to the best of my ability.

If I do not fulfil the conditions above, my claims may not be processed until sustained improvement has been observed.

I also understand that

- the school will check all claims for travel against my attendance record and I will not be refunded for any days I did not attend school for reasons other than illness. A parent/carer will contact the school on the first day of my absence and I will provide a note to explain my absence when I come back in to school.
- if I do not keep up to date with my home learning and/or assignments, the claims will be withheld until I catch up with work.
- I will submit all claims on a regular basis.

When I complete my courses I will

- return any books and IT equipment purchased through the Fund to the school. I understand that they are on loan and do not belong to me.

If any circumstances change that would prevent me from claiming the bursary fund, I confirm that I will notify school.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Embed confidence; fuel ambition.

20 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Bursary Application

Thank you for your recent application to the 16-19 bursary fund. You have satisfied the government eligibility criteria. Attendance, behaviour and progress are all considered when each claim is made. If attendance drops below 95% in the current academic year, payments may be reduced or disallowed.

Unfortunately, as you can see from the attached attendance report, your son/daughter has a percentage below the required level. Therefore, he/she will not be able to make claims until this level has improved. Attendance for bursary eligibility will be reviewed at the end of each half term. We will write to you again to let you know if claims would be allowed.

For your information, the bursary fund is provided to support those students needing financial assistance with the costs associated with their studies.

For example:

- Travel to and from school
- Food purchased in school (this may be in addition to free school meals)
- Equipment related to subject courses e.g. stationery, books and essential kit or materials
- Contributions towards the cost of field trips
- Costs associated with university open days
- Re-sit examination fees

Proof of purchase must be submitted with the claim for payment form. This may be weekly, or as and when purchases have been made, so please retain all receipts for this purpose. Payments will be made by Leeds City Council direct to student bank accounts and may take up to four weeks to process.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form office on extension 260 if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully

Mrs C Coop
Post 16 Leader

enc: Individual Attendance Report
Bursary guidelines for claims