

Skipton Girls' High School

16-19 Bursary Policy

Background

The DFE operates a bursary fund for those studying at publicly funded schools or colleges in England aged 16-19. Funds from this are allocated to schools, academies, and further education (FE) colleges, sixth-form colleges, training providers, specialist independent providers and local authorities. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

The bursary fund is made up of two parts - a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 a year for the most vulnerable students in the sixth form and a discretionary fund for the school to distribute. The school sets its own eligibility criteria for the discretionary bursaries and the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

Funding

The allocation for SGHS for 2016-17 has been confirmed based on projections sent to the Education Funding Agency last academic year.

Administration

- School will retain 30% of the allocation for 'in-year applications'.
- The monies allocated to the 16-19 Bursary cost centre are ring-fenced and will only be spent on bursaries.

1. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply, a student must be aged at least 16 and under 19 on 31st August in the academic year they start their course. Where a young person turns 19 during their year of study they can continue to be supported until the end of the academic year or end of the course whichever is sooner.

The fund has two elements:

- i) A **£1,200 guaranteed bursary** available to our most vulnerable students, where there are fixed eligibility criteria. These students are 'Automatically Eligible' if they fall into one of the following categories:
 - young people who are looked after (in care);
 - young people who have recently left care;
 - disabled young people in receipt of Income Support, Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) in their own name.

Eligibility under this category will be verified using the following documents:

- written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services;
- a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled.

- ii) A **Discretionary Bursary** for which students are deemed 'Eligible to Apply' if they, or their sibling(s), are in receipt of Free School Meals or the combined household income is **less than £20,817 (gross)**.

Students eligible to apply for the Discretionary Bursary will be EITHER:

Eligible for AND IN RECEIPT OF Free School Meals (based upon the level of parental income as outlined on DirectGov website);

Have a sibling(s) who is/are eligible for AND IN RECEIPT OF Free School Meals (based upon the level of parental income as outlined on DirectGov website);

OR will be

Students with a **combined household income not exceeding £20,817**.

The determination, amount and frequency of the award will be based upon individual circumstances and funds available. Bursaries should be used to help students pay for the costs related to participation, e.g.: laptop, meals whilst attending their course, transport, fieldwork/visit costs and other directly course-related costs.

All students must have their own bank account to receive an award and all payments made directly to the student will be made via BACS. In some cases, the school will purchase goods and services or credit a ParentPay account on behalf of the student rather than paying the student directly and it is the school's decision whether to do this or not.

2. The Application Process

Students who wish to apply should collect an application form from either **Student Services** or **Mrs Greenwood (Assistant Headteacher)** or download the application form from the School's website (in the 'Post-16' pages, under '16-19 Bursary'). This form, along with appropriate documentation as proof of eligibility, must be submitted to Student Services. For the discretionary bursary, students/parents must also have submitted an application to the Local Authority and been awarded Free School Meals before they submit their application **or** be able to prove their family income (via copies of P60, Tax Credit documentation, etc.). Free School Meal eligibility will be verified with the Local Authority. Students may submit an application to **Student Services** or **Mrs Greenwood** at any point during the academic year as their financial/home situation dictates but payments cannot be back-dated.

If the application is successful, parents/students will be asked to provide details of the area their daughter most needs financial assistance with (e.g. laptop, fieldwork/visit costs, transport costs, meal costs).

The Finance team will then organise either payment into the successful applicant's bank account, organise for ParentPay to be credited for items purchased through school (meals, laptops, etc.) or bus companies to be paid for bus passes directly. Following any payment, students **must** use this money to purchase items required for their studies. Receipts for these items **must** be retained for audit purposes. Any bursary awarded will be subject to attendance reviews. Payment can stop at any time if a student fails to attend school or attendance is below a satisfactory level (at the Headteacher's discretion).

Students in receipt of bursary funding are required to make the school aware of any change in financial/home situation as they arise. Parents/students are required to sign to this effect in the application form and if upon review it is found that individuals have falsified documents, submitted inaccurate information or been claiming money fraudulently the school may take legal action including recovery of the money and referral to the police.

3. The Appeals Process

All students have the right to appeal the decision not to award a bursary and must submit a letter to the school within two weeks of receiving their decision letter. The **Governor's Appeals Panel** will be made up of three governors, none of whom have previous involvement in the decision regarding the award. All decisions regarding appeals will be communicated within a week of the Appeals Panel meeting and this decision is final. However, this should not stop a student submitting a further application should they feel they have sufficient change in circumstances.

4. Complaints Procedures

Should a student/parent wish to make a formal complaint regarding the 16-19 Bursary application and decision process they should follow the School Complaints Procedure which is available on the SGHS school website.

5. 16-19 Bursary Terms and Conditions

Students must:

- Attend timetabled lessons, sessions or activities (at least 95% attendance, unless there are exceptional circumstances).
- **Have no unauthorised absence.**
- Achieve positive attitude to learning grades.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner within the school community.

Should a student not meet the conditions above, their Bursary will cease to be paid and the school may ask for repayment.

6. Data

The School is required to track data on each student who submits an application. This information will be audited by Education Funding Authority (EFA).

For audit purposes students applying for the discretionary bursary are required to identify why they require the bursary (e.g. laptop, fieldwork/visit, transport, meals, etc.). Any information regarding this (along with application forms) will be stored in a lockable cabinet/cupboard which is fire-proof to keep data safe. The data will be disposed of securely after 7 years.

7. Other information

The EFA requires information from school about use of the 16-19 Bursary funding as follows:

How many vulnerable students were allocated the 16-19 £1200 bursary and how much did they actually receive?

- How many were in each of the following categories:
 - Young people in care;
 - Care leavers ;
 - Students claiming Income Support or Universal Credit;
 - Disabled students receiving both Employment Support and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments?

- How many applied for the 'Discretionary Bursary'?
- How many were awarded the 'Discretionary Bursary' and what was the allocation?
- How much did these students actually receive?
- How much was spent on Discretionary Bursaries in total?
- For what reasons was each bursary allocated:
 - Books/equipment
 - Additional Costs
 - Transport
 - Meals
 - Exam resit fees
 - Materials
 - CRB checks for students on Child Care courses
 - Course related trips
 - UCAS/open day costs
 - Sports activities (where they directly relate to a course)
 - Professional membership fees
 - Other miscellaneous – specifying what

- The EFA will audit the 16-19 Bursary.
- It is expected that if a student changes providers that the information regarding their Bursary Award is communicated.
- It is at the discretion of each institution to design arrangements that best suits the needs and individual circumstances, including the frequency of payments.
- It is also an expectation that the payment is conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the provider. This applies to payments made to vulnerable students and those who receive a discretionary bursary alike.
- There is no 'cut-off date' stipulated by the EFA in terms of applications but schools are advised that a date is agreed by which applications are made.
- Applications last the duration of the academic year and students will need to resubmit an application each year to be awarded a bursary.
- Unaccompanied Asylum seekers and also those in the vulnerable group are eligible for the £1200 bursary. Schools can also award asylum seekers under the discretionary bursary allocation.
- Payments will be made on a regular basis. All Bursary payments will be used to support the student's education.

Policy date: October 2016
 Next review date: October 2019
 (subject to DFE updates)

Mrs L Greenwood: Assistant Headteacher