



BEWDLEY SIXTH FORM

We fly with our own wings

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16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

Adoption Date: April 2024
Person Responsible: Jill Rickards

16–19 Bursary Fund Policy

Background information

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers to participation they face so they can remain in education. The 16-19 Bursary Fund is paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to schools and colleges so that they may provide financial support to students whose access to or completion of education might be inhibited by financial constraints. Each school has been allocated a fixed sum of money for the 16-19 Bursary Fund (this will vary from school to school based on demographic information).

There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups.
- discretionary bursaries which Bewdley Sixth Form awards to students to meet individual needs. For example, transport costs, academic trips, books and equipment.

Applying for the Bursary

Arrangements for applying are straightforward and confidential. Once students enrol in Bewdley Sixth Form, they need to complete an application form which is available on the school website. A form can also be requested by emailing the Finance Office on finance@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk

There are set conditions for receiving the bursary, such as regular attendance, punctuality, good behaviour etc. These are part of the School Behaviour Policy.

Most students who get support from the bursary will receive a tailored award from the discretionary bursary.

Some students will receive more support, and will be eligible for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1200, paid in instalments over the academic year.

Vulnerable Bursary Eligibility

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary you must meet one of the following criteria:

- in care.
- care leavers.
- receiving Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

Bewdley Sixth Form must ensure students are eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups in each year they require support. The school will need proof that students are eligible. We ask for and retain copies of evidence from the student of eligibility for the benefit / payment received. Bewdley Sixth Form complies with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, when setting the criteria above. Meeting the above criteria is not a guarantee of vulnerable bursary funding and will be assessed on overall financial need.

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All students must be 16 or over, but under 19. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18. Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for the vulnerable bursary of up to £1200.

Discretionary Bursaries

Discretionary bursaries are awards made by the school to individual students. They are targeted on overcoming the individual barriers to participation in education a student faces. They can be for whatever amount is deemed necessary to do this.

It is up to the school to decide which students will receive a discretionary bursary and how much they will receive. However, the bursary will be targeted at students who cannot stay in education without financial help for items like transport, books and equipment.

Eligible applicants are identified as those who have a financial need and fall under one of the three Student Tiers of Need below:

- Tier A - Students who have successfully claimed Free School Meals* for the current academic year or whose home household income is less than £17,000.
- Tier B - Students whose home household income is less than £28,000.
- Tier C - Students whose home household income is less than £33,000.

Original sources of evidence of household income will be required by the school at the point of application. Please refer to the application form to determine the evidence required.

*Free School Meals - Existing Bewdley School students who have claimed free school meals in Year 11 can continue to do so into the Sixth Form, subject to the usual periodic re-assessment of eligibility. External students into our Sixth Form who have been eligible for free school meals at their previous school, or whose circumstances have changed and who feel that they may now be eligible can get details on how to apply from office@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk

We have a small contingency fund from the discretionary allocation which can be used to support students who experience exceptional circumstances during the academic year which impact on their ability to participate e.g. the loss of income from one parent at short notice due to redundancy. Please contact Mrs Rickards (Head of Sixth Form) or Mrs Gillett (Bursary Fund Manager) to apply for this.

Paying the Bursary to Students

The bursary was set up to remove specific barriers to participation, so it will be spent in a way that removes these barriers.

Students who are eligible for this funding should be aware that the additional financial support they receive in the form of the grant should be used to help off-set costs directly linked to their education, for example:

1. Transport.
2. Books and equipment.
3. Hardship costs.
4. Additional course costs (trips and residential).

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5. Costs of travel to higher education interviews.

Students will be reviewed termly regarding their attendance, timekeeping and general conduct throughout the year. In order for the following term's payment to be authorised, students must have zero unauthorised absences since the last review or since the start of the course (if term 1). The final decision will be at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form and is non-negotiable.

Bursary payments will be made directly to the student in receipt of the bursary, according to the following schedule:

- Bursary Amount Term 1: 50%
- Bursary Amount Term 2: 25%
- Bursary Amount Term 3: 25%

Students will also be required to inform the school of any changes in their financial circumstances. The size of bursary payment will depend upon the student tier, number of applicants and the total amount of funding available.

In Year Applications and the Contingency Fund Applications

Outside of "Window 1" (September 2024) will be from the Contingency Fund (20% of total Bursary Fund allocation). An estimate of the "residual funds" figure will be made by the Bursary Fund Panel. This means that Discretionary Bursary Group student allocations may vary according to the "residual funds" available in Windows 1 and 2 and during the year. Applications outside of Window 1 will also be pro rata based on the student enrolment date and academic year.

The contingency fund is also retained for exceptional circumstances. Student circumstances may change during the academic year, and an exceptional circumstances payment could be made at the discretion of the Bursary Fund Panel. In these circumstances a clear record of the background and allocation will be needed for audit purposes and the management of how this is fairly and consistently accessed needs careful consideration and would need to be appended to this policy.

Application Process

If a student wishes to apply for a bursary, then they should:

- Check that they believe they meet the financial eligibility criteria detailed above or contact the 16-19 Bursary Fund Administrator
- Complete the application form, answering all questions in full to avoid delay with processing their application
- Attach securely the required original evidence as indicated on the form. This will be returned to you once the application has been processed
- Students must ensure that they have a bank account in their own name. Payments cannot be made to any other named account

Fully completed forms, with all supporting evidence attached, should be returned as soon as possible but no later than 20 September 2024. Students may be contacted to discuss their particular needs. A panel will meet to consider all applications for financial support.

Once an application has been assessed the student will be notified if they have been awarded a bursary. Successful applicants will be asked to collect their evidence and to

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complete and sign a 16-19 Bursary Fund agreement form (including their own bank details) in acceptance of the terms.

Bursaries are paid termly with an Autumn term payment being made by October half term. Subsequent payments will be made at the beginning of the Spring and Summer terms respectively. Students are requested to provide receipts, where possible, to Mrs Walker (Sixth Form Mentor) for their expenditure which should relate to educational costs incurred.

Where appropriate, funds may be allocated internally to contribute towards the cost of transport or other agreed expenditure.

Late applications will be considered, but may be unsuccessful if funds are no longer available. Awards made for late applications will be made at the earliest opportunity.

Declarations

Students and/or their families will sign a declaration when they apply for either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary. We will ask for confirmation that any evidence given in support of the application is correct and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. Students and their families will be made aware that by signing the declaration they are agreeing to all the conditions and eligibility criteria of the scheme.

Students and their families will be made aware that giving false or incomplete information which results in an overpayment will mean that the school will stop any future payments, and seek repayment of anything paid so far. The matter may also be referred to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.

Retention

Successful applicants will have their application and supporting evidence stored on file for 6 years in line with the school's data retention policy. All data is processed in line with the schools GDPR & Data Protection Policy. No data is processed for any other purpose than that which is stated upon the application and data is disposed of when no longer required. Applications which do not meet the criteria will be disposed of within one calendar month after processing for secure destruction. More information is available in our GDPR and Data Retention Policies.

Appeals

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision, they should contact the Co-Head, Mrs McDougall (CMC@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk) in writing within 10 days of the decision, stating fully their reasons for the appeal. Please note that additional evidence may be required to support the appeal.

When preparing an appeal, students should include letters of support from people who understand their situation, for example, a social worker or your GP. The Co-Head's decision is final.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence throughout the process and all original documentation will be returned once the applications have been verified.

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More Information

If you need any further information, support or help with completing the application form, please contact the 16-19 Bursary Fund Administrator: email: pgi@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk

Further guidance can be obtained by looking on the website: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund