

# 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

**Learning together for success and progression**

*Approved by Academy Trust Board: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024*

Trustee Committee Responsible:	Finance and Estates Committee
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	Assistant Principal, Safeguarding and Support and Assistant Principal, Finance and Resources
Status and Review Cycle:	Annually
Current Review:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2025

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out guidelines to determine how the 16-19 Bursary Fund (hereafter referred to as The Fund) will be distributed
- Define the responsibilities for The Fund's management

The aim of the policy is to ensure, as much as possible, that The Fund is distributed fairly and consistently to remove barriers to education for the students most in need of financial support. The Fund will be allocated in line with the guidelines issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and therefore this policy will be subject to amendment if these guidelines change.

## Responsibilities

The Bursary Committee is comprised of the Assistant Principal, Safeguarding and Support, Assistant Principal, Finance and Resources, and the Bursary Co-ordinator, who are responsible for making decisions about the disbursement of The Fund.

The Bursary Co-ordinator is responsible for the day-to-day administration of The Fund, making decisions about straightforward enquiries.

The Bursary Committee will notify applicants about award decisions as soon as is practical and not later than the end of October for applications received at the start of each academic year. For applications made from October onwards, award decisions will be made within two weeks of the receipt of the application.

The Assistant Principal, Safeguarding and Support will be responsible for the decision to withhold payments if attendance, behaviour or commitment do not meet acceptable standards.

The Assistant Principal, Finance and Resources is responsible for the overall financial management of The Fund, including ensuring the annual grant income for The Fund is fully awarded to students in financial need.

## Fund Applications

All students are required to apply to The Fund via an online application portal which is available via the College website, or via Godalming Online. This online portal is hosted by PayMyStudent.

There are two distinct categories within The Fund:

- 1 Vulnerable Bursary Fund
- 2 Discretionary Bursary Fund

Vulnerable Bursaries are for students who meet the criteria of being in a defined vulnerable group and can demonstrate financial need. Such students will be given an award of up to £1,200 a year, directly into their bank accounts.

Discretionary Bursaries are for students with an annual household income of less than £30,000 per annum and focus upon the need to meet 'one off' specific course costs (such as field trips, meals, transport, equipment, textbooks, kit, or the cost of attending industry placements, university interviews and open days). Payment is made directly to the student's bank account once a valid receipt is submitted, however the Bursary Committee are able to pay the student in advance in exceptional circumstances.

Payment of all bursaries will be conditional upon students meeting College requirements for attendance, behaviour and approach to learning.

Students in receipt of a Bursary award in their first academic year do not need to re-apply for an award in the following year, but must sign and date a self-declaration form confirming that their household circumstances have not changed.

Full details of who is eligible for each of these different funds, and what evidence they need to provide, can be found in the Bursary Information Leaflets on the College website. These leaflets are updated annually to reflect any updates issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## Free School Meals

Students receiving a Vulnerable Bursary will automatically be eligible for Free School Meals at the College. Students receiving a Discretionary Bursary may or may not receive Free School Meals, which is dependent on whether they meet the Free School Meals criteria, defined in the Bursary Information Leaflets on the College's website.

Being eligible for Free School Meals means students are entitled to up to £4.50 a day of food or drink from the College catering facilities. Students use their Student ID card to 'pay' for their food, which caps at £4.50 each day.

## Payment of Awards

Payment of the Vulnerable Bursary will normally be half-termly directly into the student's bank account via BACs. Payment of the first instalment will be within two weeks of the application being approved.

Payment of the Discretionary Bursary will be determined on the merits of individual applications; they will usually be payments 'in kind' upon production of appropriate receipts, directly into the student's bank account via BACs.

The College will stop payments where students have been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays, or if there is evidence that the student intends to return) and where students have decided to withdraw from a Study Programme.

The College is permitted to use up to 5% of the allocation for administrative costs.

## Bring Your Own Device

The College operates a Bring Your Own Device policy across all students. If a student is in receipt of either a Vulnerable Bursary or a Discretionary Bursary, and is struggling with access to a personal device, they can ask for help through The Fund. The Fund has access to laptops that can be issued to students, upon the discretion of the Bursary Committee.

## Appeals

Appeals against award decisions made by the Committee should be made in writing to the Committee who will seek to respond within two weeks of the receipt of the appeal.