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# **16 – 19 Bursary Fund Policy**

## **Inc Vulnerable/Discretionary Bursaries**

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Review: September 18

# Northgate School Arts College, Academy Trust

## 16 – 19 Bursary Fund Policy

### 1. Background

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is an amount of money administered by schools and academies provided by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There are clear guidelines for application for monies from the fund. Schools and Academies are free to determine the additional criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries and these may include attendance/behaviour and attainment.

The ESFA now has responsibility to oversee the Bursary Fund and pays it to schools, academies and colleges so that they may provide, at their discretion, support to students. It is there to support students who find themselves in exceptional financial difficulty and can be used to help with the cost of transport, meals, books, equipment, uniform and trips related to their course. The Academy therefore is committed to ensuring the Fund is used to support young people taking or continuing in their education or training Post-16 and achieving their learning aims.

The Academy applies to the ESFA to receive an individual allocation of funds for the academic year. Once these funds have been awarded to eligible pupils there is no guarantee that further monies will be available to support learners who subsequently submit an application.

#### **Aims of the Fund**

1. To enable students to gain financial help to support the continuation of their education into the 6<sup>th</sup> form
2. To help close the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds

#### **Aims of this Guidance**

1. To outline the qualifying criteria for making claims from the Bursary fund
2. To clarify the evidence required to be produced when claiming for a bursary
3. To provide support for students and parents/carers to access advice and guidance from the most appropriate services to assist in their decision to claim the Bursary Fund

At Northgate School Arts College and The Bee Hive 6<sup>th</sup> Form students will be part of a programme that encourages them to experience life outside school using remote supervision. They will be going to a number of different venues such as museums, restaurants, cafes, and shopping centres. They will also at times be using public transport to reach different destinations. The programme has been designed to encourage confidence, social skills and appropriate behaviour. The 16-19 Bursary Funds may be allocated to students to support participation in these activities.

### 2. Bursaries available

There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

#### **i. Bursaries for Vulnerable Young People**

The Academy does not pay the Bursary in cash, payment will be made in-kind eg travel expenses, meals during the day, equipment or any other support that has been identified as necessary to enable the young adult to participate in education. A vulnerable bursary of **up to £1,200** a year, will be awarded (by the Student Bursary Support Service) to students who fall in one of the vulnerable groups, which has been defined by the ESFA as follows:

- Young people in care and care-leavers
- Young people (under 19) who are in receipt of Income Support in their own name
- Young people who receive a Universal Credit payment **and** Personal Independence Payment in their own name
- Young people who are disabled and receive Employment Support Allowance **and** Personal Independence Payment in their own name

## ii. Discretionary Bursaries

(These funds are limited and only become available if there is a surplus amount available after the Vulnerable Students Bursaries have been paid)

These may be awarded at the discretion of the Academy to any applicants who do not fall into the Vulnerable Students Bursary Group.

## 3. General eligibility

### Who can apply for the 16-19 Bursary?

- Students between 16 and 19 (if a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to get the bursary to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or the end of the programme of study, whichever is the sooner) and enrolled on a Post-16 course funded by the ESFA (The Bee Hive covers this)
- Bursaries will be allocated only to students who have reached the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 12 and beyond)

Please be aware that as this is a Bursary, it is declarable income and may affect any benefits you currently receive. It is advisable for you to seek advice from a benefits advisor to see how this would affect any current payments, and make the decision whether it is appropriate to apply for the Bursary Fund

Application forms need to be submitted by **31<sup>st</sup> October**.

All applicants will be notified whether they have been successful by **1<sup>st</sup> December**.

Eligible young people will need to complete a qualifying learning period of 6 weeks (with at least 85% attendance) before they are able to receive Bursary support. However any eligible young person can make an application ahead of the six weeks qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship.

For any young person eligible to receive the 16-19 Bursary it is at the school's discretion whether there is a behaviour/attendance contract attached to this support. Breaking this contract may lead to a student's support being withdrawn or temporarily stopped.

With this in mind all young people in receipt of a Bursary must meet weekly punctuality and attendance requirements of 85% (for example: 161 term days out of a possible 190).

These conditions will not be additional to those expected of any young people within the Academy.

## 4. Additional eligibility for Vulnerable Bursary

The defined vulnerable groups are;

- Young people in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children;
- Young care leavers;
- Young people receiving Income Support ([www.gov.uk/income-support](http://www.gov.uk/income-support)) (IS) or Universal Credit ([www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system)-

[and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit](#)) (UC) in place of Income Support in their own right 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 or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Please note that to qualify as eligible for a vulnerable student payment the young person does not have to live independently of their parents; they can claim ESA or UC in their own right. Parents should note that they will not be able to claim Child Benefit for them if the young person's claim, for ESA succeeds.

## 5. Additional eligibility for Discretionary Bursary

A Discretionary Bursary of up to £1,200 is available, subject to availability of remaining funds, to all young people where;

- Their **gross** annual household income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, does not exceed **£25,000 and/or**
- Where the young person qualifies for Free School Meals (FSM).

## 6. Contingency eligibility

Any young person meeting general eligibility requirements and facing financial hardship due to an exceptional reason or circumstance change can apply to access the contingency funds on an individual basis by submitting an application in writing.

## 7. Those not Eligible

Applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund are not open to young people aged under 16 or over 19 at 31<sup>st</sup> August.

## 8. Evidence

All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence. Copies of evidence shall be retained by the Academy to provide financial assurance as required. All evidence will be treated as confidential and destroyed within 1 year of the young person leaving the Academy.

Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the **Vulnerable Bursary** are:

- Statement from the Local Authority confirming the young person's current or previous looked-after status.
- Recent entitlement or statement setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled, and confirming that the recipient can be in further education or training.

Examples of acceptable supporting evidence for the Discretionary Bursary are:

- **A full T602E Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN)** for the young person's household. This document from HM Revenue & Customs details entitlement to Tax Credits and shows the total income for the year.
- Receiving **Income Support** or **Universal Credit** award letters that show evidence of income in place of Income Support in its own right.
- **P60 End of Year Certificate** for all adults in the young person's household who contribute to household costs. The certificate is a statement of earnings from an employer. It must be for the correct adult(s) and for the correct Tax Year (to 5<sup>th</sup> April). The income will be shown as Total for the Year.
- **Payslips** from the previous 3 months.

- **Self Assessment Tax Calculation (SA302).** This is the equivalent of the P60 for self-employed people. It must be for the correct adult(s) and for the correct Tax Year (to 5<sup>th</sup> April). The income will be shown as Total for the Year.
- Evidence of other benefits, pension awards etc.
- Confirmation from the Local Authority of entitlement to **Free School Meals (FSM)**.

Only once a pupil has been assessed as eligible and evidence obtained for a bursary payment, can the funds be drawn down by the Academy from the Student Bursary Support Service.

## 9. Application

Applications for a Bursary must be made using the correct Application Form and should be submitted in full by **31<sup>st</sup> October**. Applications made after this date will be considered provided sufficient funds are available. However, once the Bursary Fund has been used, it will not be possible to consider further application.

Consideration must be given to assisting any young person to make an application where they are unable to do so due to a level of learning difficulty and/or disability.

Consideration must also be given to assisting any young person in making an application where they are not able to provide supporting evidence due to difficulties with engagement or support from the parent/guardian/carer(s).

## 10. Process

All applications for a Bursary or to access the contingency fund will be assessed by the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel, consisting of the; Executive Head Teacher and members of the Academy's Leadership Team.

Once the application has been reviewed (including supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence), the young people will be notified of the outcome by 1<sup>st</sup> December for initial applications and within two weeks of subsequent applications.

Northgate School Arts College Academy Trust has made the decision not to ask parents and carers to subsidise any additional cost arising from the Post-16 programme.

Instead £150 from each student deemed eligible for either the Vulnerable Student or Discretionary Bursary will be used to enable students to fully experience the on and off-site life, living and social skills opportunities. This will ensure that all students get an equal opportunity to access every aspect of the programme.

**Therefore the maximum bursary funding available, within a given academic year, to an eligible young person will be £1,050.**

## 11. Appeals

If any young person or their parent/guardian/carer(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their application, they should write to the Executive Head Teacher outlining their reasons why. The EHT will convene a 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel, consisting of:

- Executive Head Teacher
- A member of the Governing Body

The panel will consider and respond to appeals within two weeks of receipt. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld it will be referred back to the Academy's Leadership Team with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld the appealing party will be signposted to the School's Complaints Procedure.

## **12. Confidentiality**

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during the processing, payment and storage. If it is necessary to obtain additional information to reach a decision, the young person and/or their parent/guardian/carer(s) will be told the reasons why this is necessary prior to sharing any information further.

## **13. Change of young person's financial circumstances**

Any young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform the Academy if their financial circumstances, or those of the parent/guardian/carer(s) change (eg increase in household income, Free School Meals being withdrawn for a sibling). This does not automatically mean any future Bursary payments will be stopped but would result in a convening of the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to determine whether the payments continue or be stopped and the funds redistributed.

## **14. Young person transferring**

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers *out* of the Academy to another education/training provider in-year, the Academy will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary payments to enable the young person to complete their learning aims.

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary transfers *in to* the Academy from another education/training provider in-year, the Academy will liaise with that provider to ensure continuity of Bursary support to enable the young person to complete their learning aims.

## **15. Young person withdrawing**

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary withdraws from the Academy, and does not transfer to another education/training provider, Bursary support made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled support to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

## **16. Supporting documents**

In addition to this policy being openly shared with all the young people and their parent/guardian/carer(s), the following document will be used in the 16-19 Bursary Process:

1. 16–19 Bursary Fund Application

## **17. Further Information**

Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found on the following GOV.Uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>