

Brine Leas School

An Academy

BL6 BURSARY FUND POLICY 2017/2018

1. BACKGROUND

In March 2011, the Government announced a new 16-19 Bursary Fund scheme to provide financial assistance to those young people who face a financial barrier to continuing in education or training post-16.

The Bursary Fund has been allocated by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), the funding agency for 16-19 education and training. This policy sets out the arrangements for how Brine Leas School will prioritise and administer the Bursary Fund in 2017/2018.

Brine Leas School is committed to ensuring the Fund is used to support financially disadvantaged young people taking up or continuing in their education or training post-16 and achieving their learning aim(s). The main aim of the Fund is to support participation in education by helping students overcome the individual barriers to participation they face, for example help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment. For general information/enquiries, please contact the Brine Leas Sixth Form Administrators Office in the first instance.

2. BURSARIES AVAILABLE

There are two types of Bursary available: -

i. Vulnerable Bursary (Priority 1)

A Vulnerable Bursary is available to all young people who meet the general eligibility criteria as set out in this policy and who have been identified as being most in need, as set out in this policy.

ii. Discretionary Bursary (Priorities 2 and 3)

A Discretionary Bursary is available to all young people who meet the general and additional eligibility criteria as set out in this policy.

iii. Additional Discretionary Bursary (Priority 4)

There may, at the School's discretion, be funds available for young people who meet the general and additional eligibility criteria as set out in this policy.

3. BURSARY AMOUNTS

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is a limited fund determined by the EFA. For 2017/2018, Brine Leas Sixth Form will retain 20% of the 16-19 Bursary Fund to use as a hardship contingency fund to respond to exceptional or circumstantial in-year change. The contingency fund will be reviewed in April 2018 and any remaining funds may be distributed to eligible young people. Exact amounts for Priority 2, 3 and 4 will be confirmed once all applications have been submitted for approval.

Additional 'in kind' payments may be made throughout the academic year, depending on the funds available, to cover field trips and other course-related costs including text books and specific equipment, and for attendance to university interviews and open days when public transport is used. However, students must return books and equipment at the end of their study programme to be used by other students where appropriate.

- The Vulnerable Bursary (Priority 1) amount payable will be £1200. This is a minimum amount payable during the academic year.
- The Discretionary Bursary (Priority 2) amount is up to £1,000 subject to availability of funds and the number of qualifying applications.
- The Discretionary Bursary (Priority 3) amount is up to £800 subject to availability of remaining funds and the number of qualifying applications.
- The Additional Discretionary Bursary (Priority 4) amount is up to £400 and may be available, depending on the funds available, at the School's discretion.

4. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to receive a Bursary, the student must be a resident of England and must be aged:

- 16 or over but under 19 at 31st August 2017, or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2017 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2017 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- meet the residency criteria in EFA 2017 to 2018 academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
- be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be either
 - funded directly by EFA or by EFA via a local authority
 - otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 or the Learning and Skills Act 2000

5. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY FOR VULNERABLE BURSARY (Priority 1)

A Vulnerable Bursary of £1,200 is available to all young people in vulnerable groups defined as:

- in care
 - a young person who is looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child')
- care leavers
 - a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
 - a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

- getting Income Support (IS), or Universal Credit (UC) in place of Income Support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children who do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority in accordance with the government guidance as outlined in the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2017 to 2018 academic year are also eligible to receive the vulnerable bursary.

6. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY FOR DISCRETIONARY BURSARY (Priority 2, Priority 3 and Priority 4)

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education. Brine Leas Sixth Form will receive funding from the EFA and this will be managed according to the eligibility requirements outlined below.

Priority 2 - a Discretionary Bursary of up to £1,000 is available, subject to availability of funds, to all young people who were in receipt of Free School Meals when they were in Y11. Confirmation will be obtained from the local authority and the student will continue to receive Free School Meals during their studies (£2.41 per day).

Priority 3 - an additional Discretionary Bursary of up to £800 is available, subject to availability of funds, to all young people where:

- their gross annual household income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs, does not exceed £16,190 and
- where the young person's parent/guardian/carer(s) are in receipt of one of the following:-
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Under no circumstances will any cash payments be made to an asylum seeker who is not an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC)
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit (which will be phased in nationally, by the Government, by 2017)
 - At the school's discretion, a child who is privately fostered or under a Special Guardianship Order, in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child.

Priority 4 - There may, at the School's discretion, be up to £400 available to families with a gross annual household income of between £16,190 and £22,000, subject to Priorities 1-3 being met by EFA allocation given for Discretionary Bursaries.

7. CONTINGENCY ELIGIBILITY

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

Any young person identified as a Young Carer, i.e. a young person whose health, wellbeing, development or education may be impacted upon as a result of living with a parent or sibling with mental illness, physical disability, physical illness, entrenched substance misuse or learning disability can also apply to access the contingency funds. For example, whether the person lives in a household where they are the main carer, they are a young parent, or they are from a single parent family with multiple siblings. All cases will be treated confidentially and assessed independently; the final decision lies with The Panel.

However, in exceptional circumstances Brine Leas may use their discretion to pay bursaries to younger students who are following level 3 courses. This does not include students who are attending college as part of their key stage 4 programme.

8. EVIDENCE

All applications to access the 16-19 Bursary Fund must be supported by appropriate evidence and must be submitted by 30th September 2017; applications received after this date will be considered but will not be backdated. All evidence, copies of which will be retained on file in accordance with the EFA guidelines, will be treated as confidential by Brine Leas Sixth Form.

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Vulnerable Bursary (Priority 1)** will be either:

- For students in receipt of qualifying benefits, a letter from DWP which states the benefit the young person is entitled to (they must be entitled to the benefits in their own right). The evidence must confirm that the young person can be in further education or training as some young people in receipt of benefits are not allowed to participate.
- For students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previously looked after status from the relevant local authority. This is the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services. This could be a letter or an email, as long as it is clearly from the local authority.

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Discretionary Bursary (Priority 2)** will be:

- Confirmation from the Local Authority of entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM).

Acceptable supporting evidence for the **Discretionary Bursary (Priority 3 and Priority 4)** must include (A) and (B) and (C) if applicable:

- A. **P60 End of Year Certificate** for **all** adults in the young person's household who contribute to household income. This 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 April 2017). The income will be shown as Total for year.
- B. **Other Benefits, where relevant.** Evidence of receipt of benefits will be requested in support of applications, i.e. Income Support, Income Based Job-Seekers

Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support allowance, Guarantee element of State Pension Credit, Working Tax Credits (TC602) or Universal Credit (which will be phased in nationally, by the Government, by 2017), Child Maintenance payments and any other benefits.

- C. **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 April 2017). The income will be shown as Total for year.
- D. If a resident of Wales, Financial support received from the **Welsh Education Maintenance Allowance.**
- E. Annual investment statements of income gained from investments, including ISAS.

Please note, all evidence must correspond with the young person's place of residence.

9. THE IMPACT OF BURSARIES ON DWP BENEFITS

Receipt of bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

However, if the student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) and Employment Support Allowance or in receipt of Universal Credit, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child, such as child benefit.

Bursaries must not be made as regular payments for living costs, as they would then be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

10. PAYMENTS

Subject to meeting the conditional requirements, payments will be made in five equal instalments, in arrears, throughout the academic year. Payments will be made by BACS in the name of the young person. The young person must have a valid account in their name unless there are exceptional reasons which mean an appointee has been named to manage the affairs of the young person.

'In kind' payments may be made throughout the academic year, depending upon the funds available, to cover courses that incur higher costs and/or to cover the costs of the purchase of books, equipment, field trips, course related costs, UCAS application costs, transport costs to university open days and interviews (in line with public transport rates).

11. QUALIFYING CONDITION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible young people will need to complete a qualifying learning period of 6 weeks before they are able to receive Bursary payments.

However, any eligible young person can make an application ahead of the six week qualifying period and in a case of extreme hardship, consideration will also be given for payment in advance of the six week period. Any pressing needs will bring forward the payment of the Bursary, i.e. a visit or need for computer access.

All young people in receipt of a Bursary must meet a punctuality and attendance requirements of 95% (excluding authorised absences, except in exceptional medical circumstances) within the specified time period and conform to the acceptable level of behaviour as outlined within the sixth form learner agreement to ensure continued support.

In addition, all young people in receipt of a Bursary must behave appropriately and submit work of an appropriate level and to required deadlines. If the young person does not meet these conditions, the school reserves the right to withdraw or suspend Bursary payments.

These conditions will not be additional to those expected of any young person within the School.

12. APPLICATION

Applications for a Bursary must be made using the correct Application Form and should be submitted in full by 30 September 2017. Applications made after this date will be considered if sufficient funds are available but will not be backdated. However, once the Bursary Fund has been used, it will not be possible to consider further applications.

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 their parent/guardian/carer(s).

13. DECLARATION

If false or incomplete information is submitted, or if a young person does not inform Brine Leas Sixth Form about any part of their income that is relevant, the school reserves the right to refer the matter to the Department for Education or the police. The young person could face prosecution and Brine Leas Sixth Form will seek to recover any payments the young person is not eligible for.

14. PROCESS

All applications for a Bursary or to access the contingency fund will be assessed by a 16-19 Bursary Application Panel, consisting of:

- Head of Sixth Form
- Business Manager
- BL6 Student Progress Co-ordinator

The Panel will review the application, supporting evidence and any other personal circumstantial evidence and young people will be notified of the outcome within ten working days of receipt. The Headteacher will not be included in this decision.

15. **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 Headteacher outlining their reasons why. The Headteacher will convene a 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel. In the absence of the Headteacher this role can be delegated to a Deputy Headteacher providing they have no previous involvement in the decision making process.

The Panel will consider and respond to appeals within ten working days of receipt. If the appeal is upheld, or partly upheld, it will be referred back to the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel with recommendations. If the appeal is not upheld an independent panel will be convened as per the complaints policy.

16. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Applications and supporting evidence will be confidential to the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel and in the event of an appeal, the 16-19 Bursary Appeals Panel. The applications and supporting evidence will remain confidential during 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.

17. **CHANGE OF YOUNG PERSON'S FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Any young person in receipt of a Bursary has a duty to inform Brine Leas Sixth Form if their financial circumstances change, or those of their parent/guardian/carer(s) change (e.g. increase in household income that would affect the young person's entitlement to Free School Meals).

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.

18. **YOUNG PERSON WITHDRAWING**

Where a young person in receipt of a Bursary withdraws from Brine Leas Sixth Form, Bursary payments made prior to the date of withdrawal will not be recovered but any scheduled payments to be made after the date of withdrawal will not be made.

19. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further national information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide-2017-to-2018-academic-year>

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