



POLICY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 16-19 BURSARY FUND

PURPOSE

To provide the principles by which all young people in post 16 education across the Learn to Live Federation will have equality of access to financial support through the 16-19 Bursary Fund. This guidance should be read in conjunction with national EFA Guidance (see useful links below).

It should be noted that Bursary Funding is not an automatic entitlement. The aims and ethos of the scheme are to remove financial barriers to staying in education. It should be used to meet the costs of staying in education and providing equipment which is essential to study. These may include the costs of transport, learning materials and equipment eg Chef's whites.

Funds do not form part of delegated school funding from the Local Authority, they are distributed to the schools from the Learner Support Service and the Education Funding Agency.

TYPES OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE

1. **Vulnerable Bursary – Eligibility criteria for this group is very narrow.**
Young people in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of Income Support and young people in receipt of **both** Employment Support Allowance and also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1200 a year.
2. **Discretionary Bursary – targeted towards Young People facing financial barriers to remaining in education.** Schools have discretion to set their own eligibility criteria.

Vulnerable Bursary

The most vulnerable Young People will be eligible for a bursary of up to £1200 for the full academic year. The payment method used for this bursary will be via 'in kind' payments at the discretion of the school and will be arranged to best meet the individual learners' needs and circumstances. In line with the EFA guidance, Bursary awards will only be given to meet participation related costs and will not be granted for holiday or weekend activities.

Equipment purchased should be returned to the school at the end of the period of study unless they are personal in nature such as clothing or specifically adapted equipment.

The federation is responsible for identifying Young People who are eligible for this payment. Written confirmation of the young person's looked after status or evidence of receipt of the above benefits will be needed to support the payment of the Guaranteed Award.

There are exceptional cases where a young person is eligible for a vulnerable group Bursary but their financial needs are entirely catered for or there are no relevant costs eg in a specialist residential provision where all costs are covered. In these cases if a student still wishes to claim a Vulnerable Bursary the Learn to Live Federation has the discretion to award a reduced bursary or no bursary at all.

Discretionary Awards

In administering the discretionary element of the fund the school will adhere to the following principles. Due to the limits based on budgets, in order to have the greatest impact on learners, Discretionary Awards will be targeted at those facing the greatest financial hardship. The following priority groups will be used to manage applications:

Priority One: Learners in receipt of Free School Meals.

Priority Two: Learners who may not be in receipt of Free School Meals but may be from a low income family who may receive one of the following state benefits:

- Income Support.
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related).
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit.
- The **maximum** level of Working Tax Credit.
- Child Tax Credit if it is the only benefit received, and where annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue does not exceed £16,190.

Evidence of one of these benefits may be required to support applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Applications will also be accepted from learners who can demonstrate financial hardship. Evidence to support such applications should be addressed to the Executive Head and will be treated in strictest confidence.

Satisfying these eligibility criteria can not guarantee funding to any learner and the school will need to consider other factors including the purpose for which the funding support is requested and the budget available. In the first instance Discretionary awards will be allocated to help learners meet costs in relation to transport to and from school with any remaining funds being used for other essential items related to their individual course of study such as equipment, trips and meals whilst attending school.

ADMINISTERING THE FUND - ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPLICATION AND APPEAL

Opening and Closing Points for Applications to the Bursary Fund: Families will be alerted to the existence of the 16-19 Bursary Fund as part of the review process in the year preceding their Post 16 education. The Childrens' Services Co-ordinator and class teacher will liaise with families to support them in the submission of any application.

Application forms will be available from the school office, the school website and will also be distributed to Post 16 students at the start of the academic year.

Post 16 Transport Applications: The Learn to Live Federation has a Service Level Agreement in place with DCC Transport Department which allows students to apply to the 16-19 Bursary for payment of their transport costs via their transport application system. DCC Transport assess eligibility on the basis of **Free School Meals eligibility** criteria and invoice the Federation directly on behalf of eligible pupils. This usually takes place in the Summer Term. Schools in the Federation may also agree to fund transport costs for pupils who are not on a low income but are still eligible via the CBF1 form which is submitted to the Transport Department.

Decision Making and Appeals Process: Applications will be heard by the Senior Leadership Team. Appeals will be heard by the Governors Executive Committee. Complaints will be dealt with in line with normal school procedure.

How Decisions will be communicated to Young People and their Families: Students and their families will receive information about their application by letter no later than one month following the application being made. All documentary evidence will also be copied and returned by this date. Copies to be held securely on file.

Payment Mechanisms: In accordance with EFA best practice guidelines, assistance will normally be 'in kind' and will be given as and when appropriate. Payments will only be made directly to families in circumstances where costs have already been incurred on agreed items and appropriate evidence can be produced.

Policy on Fraud: Any incidents of suspected fraud will be reported to the police.

Administrative Procedures: The school will have administrative procedures that record bursary applications and awards (including number, value, purpose and whether awarded or not and brief justification) so that all EFA audit and reporting requirements are satisfied.

WITHHOLDING FUNDS AND BUDGETING

The school will retain 10% of the discretionary fund to act as a contingency to meet the needs of learners who may face financial hardship during the academic year. This may be for learners who move into the 'vulnerable' group during the academic year, changes in learners' circumstances, or learners who start mid-year.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

Schools are entitled to deduct 5 % of the total discretionary funding allocation to cover the costs of administering the scheme. In view of the large amount of administration required to run the scheme the Learn to Live Federation have taken the decision to deduct this sum.

Useful Links

Bursary Fund Guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guide>

Q and A for Young People and Parents

<https://www.gov.uk/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>