

## QUEEN ELIZABETH HIGH SCHOOL

### 16-19 Bursary Policy 2020/21



#### Background

Queen Elizabeth High School 16-19 bursary fund is designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation that they may face. This policy is based on the latest [government guidance](#) and outlines the steps we plan to take to ensure funds go to those who genuinely need them.

The Department for Education (DfE) has revised the methodology used to calculate discretionary bursary allocations to schools to better match financial disadvantage and student needs across the country. The new methodology for calculating discretionary bursary allocations for schools, being used from the 2020 to 2021 academic year, has two elements – financial disadvantage and student costs to support travel. The majority of QEHS's allocation is currently based on the travel element.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with Northumberland County Council's guidance on [Free School Meals](#) and [Post-16 Transport Policy](#). Students are strongly encouraged to apply for free meals or travel if they are eligible.

#### Eligibility

- Students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2020 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.
- Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision.

#### Types of bursary

There are two types of 16 to 19 bursary:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year.
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules.

#### Bursaries for young people in defined vulnerable groups

Students who meet the criteria below, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate.

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit 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

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more if they need that amount of support. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will be paid a pro-rata amount. We will also take into account the number of hours per week of study.

In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are already met, they have no relevant costs or do not need the maximum award. For example:

- a student in the care of the local authority whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority.
- a student who is financially supported by their partner.

In these circumstances we can refuse the student's application or limit the amount of the award.

### **Discretionary bursaries**

Discretionary bursary awards are intended to help students with the cost of travel, essential books, equipment or specialist clothing. These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

Discretionary bursaries applications will be considered from students who:

- are entitled to free school meals (FSM). The school will need to be satisfied that the application is genuine following the standard procedures that are currently in operation for application for FSM.
- have household income of less than £25,000.

The school will require written evidence that the above criteria are met which will be retained as these funds are subject to audit.

### **Allocation**

Decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive are based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student depending on, for example, their household income, their travel costs and the requirements of their study programme, as well as any other information that is supplied on the application. No student will automatically be awarded a set amount of funding without an assessment of the level of need they have.

Once it is established who will be supported, the available funds will be divided as follows:

- up to 5% of the fund will be held back to cover administrative costs.
- 75% of available funding will be allocated for initial applications. The remaining 25% will be held back for applicants who join later on in the year or whose personal circumstances change, or to cover costs which arise later in the year such as travel to university open days.
- students that apply will be assessed individually based on their actual financial need.
- priority will be given to travel costs and essential course costs above other types of expenditure.

## **Payment**

Vulnerable bursaries will be paid to the student's bank account as a half termly payment.

The majority of discretionary bursary payments will be made 'in kind' (e.g. by the school purchasing books/equipment), with the preference being that school pays for purchases, although refunds will be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

## **Conditions**

Payments are conditional on students meeting the school's expectations in relation to their standards of attendance and behaviour. To be eligible for the support a student must:

- Have submitted a fully completed application form with supporting written evidence for eligibility, and any receipts for expenditure.
- Have an attendance record for the preceding half term that records no unauthorised absence, and only authorised absence of no more than one week in compliance with the 16-19 Bursary Fund Learning Agreement.
- Report any changes in their circumstances to the sixth form pastoral team as soon as possible.

Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their payment withheld.

We will consider the impact on attendance that might be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances.

We 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).

## **Application Process**

Students must apply for the bursary each year. Application forms are available on the school website or from the sixth form pastoral team. Students are encouraged to discuss their application with Mr Brown (Pastoral Leader) or Mr Wilson (Pastoral Mentor).

The deadline for initial applications is **Wednesday 23 September 2020** to make sure enough time is allocated to assess the overall level of demand and make discretionary

awards on a fair basis. We also encourage applications from students throughout the year if circumstances change, or for additional items of expenditure such as university open days.

Students will be sent a letter in early October to let them know whether their application is successful or not. If the application is successful, we will advise how much of the funding requested has been allocated, and how this will be paid. For unsuccessful applications, we will advise the reason they haven't been successful.

Students have the right to appeal by submitting an appeal in writing within 21 days of receiving confirmation of an award or a rejection. The letter should set out the reasons for the appeal, which must prove that the student has been wrongly assessed as falling outside the eligibility criteria, plus any further evidence to support the appeal. It should be sent to the Chief Financial Officer. The decision of the appeal is final and will be given in writing within 14 days of the decision.

### **Complaints**

In the event of any complaint, then a student, parent or carer should use the school's complaints procedure.

### **Review**

The Bursary Policy will be reviewed annually based on government guidance and the school's bursary funding allocation.