



Thirsk School and Sixth Form College

16–19 Bursary Fund Policy Statement 2016-17

Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund aims to help students participate in and benefit from a place in 16-19 education and training where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds. This funding replaces both the Education Maintenance Allowance and the discretionary Learner Support Funding for September 2011 onward. Thirsk School and Sixth Form College has adopted this in line with Local Authority expectations.

There are two types of funding support available, the Vulnerable Student Bursary and the Discretionary Bursary, details of which are given later in this document. The Vulnerable Student Bursary is for students who are care leavers or who have significant disabilities that fit the criteria set by the local authority.

The Discretionary Bursary is intended to help young people who face the greatest financial barriers towards participating in education. It is intended to **enable** a learner to continue with his or her education and should not be viewed as an incentive to attract young people into learning. Generally, awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course related costs such as books, equipment, travel, field trips, visits and other costs associated with living and learning.

Thirsk School and Sixth Form College will seek to ensure that the funds available are: -

- Distributed fairly through a process which is transparent and easily understood Information about the process for application and consideration is available from the School Finance Office or from the Sixth Form Pastoral Team.
- Given to as many students who are eligible as possible through effective advertisement of the scheme.
- Assessed and allocated according to each individual's needs, taking into account the financial circumstances of the applicant and the intended use of the award.
- Used to widen access to, and participation in, sixth form education.

Guidance concerning 16-19 Bursary Funding is issued by the 'Education Funding Agency' and is also available on the 'Department for Education' website. The links below give a broad overview of the Fund on the whole and may offer further clarification on your questions:

16-19 Bursary Fund: your questions answered – Advice for young people (Issued April 2013)

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/1/16-19%20bursary%20fund%20-%20yourquestions%20answered%202013%2014%20final.PDF>

16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2013/14 (Issued April 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193000/EFA-00044-2013.pdf

Please note: there is a limited amount of funding which means that it will not be possible to support every student to the same extent each year. The total funding gained by the College is determined by the Local Authority.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a 16-19 Bursary in the 2016/17 academic year, the young person **must be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2016**. Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year, or to the end of their programme of study, whichever is sooner. The applicants should also fall into one of the two groups outlined:

1. Defined vulnerable groups

The following students will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1,200 per year, if agreed standards of behaviour and attendance are met:

- Young people who are looked after children in the care of the Local Authority or foster parents
- Care leavers
- Young people who receive Income Support or Universal Credit
- Disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.

2. Discretionary awards for other young people

These awards will be targeted towards those young people who face the greatest financial barriers to participation in sixth form studies. Priority will be given to those young people from the families with the lowest household income. Thirsk School & Sixth Form College would welcome applicants where household income is below £27,000.

Receipt of the Free School Meals funding as confirmed by The Education Office, Harrogate will be deemed adequate evidence for this category of support.

Please note: Receipt of vulnerable student bursaries and discretionary bursaries are conditional on the student meeting agreed standards relating to acceptable attendance and behaviour. These standards are outlined later in this document and align with those standards expected of **ALL** students attending Thirsk Sixth Form College. This information is available from the Sixth Form Secretary.

Application Process

- **Step 1:** Completed **Financial Assessment forms** should be returned to Miss Leopold for confirmation of eligibility. The form should be supported with the Working Tax Credit Award Notice marked '2016-17' which shows household income. This document must be for full year and not partial awards (FULL AWARD NOTICE). The Financial Assessment Form is available from Miss Leopold or to download from the school website. Once confirmation of *financial eligibility* is received, it is checked by the College.
- **Step 2:** Applicants will be advised as to the outcome of their applications with a letter confirming their successful application or a letter outlining the reasons for rejection.

How are bursary payments made?

- Successful applicants will need to bring receipts for their purchases. If the half-termly attendance and conduct targets are met, the applicant will be reimbursed directly into their own bank account. Payments will not be made to a third party bank account.
- Alternatively, speak to Miss Leopold as payments for educational visits and dinner money can be paid directly by the Bursary. If there are purchases that all Bursary students will benefit from, these can be made by school and then distributed to the students.
- Unsuccessful applicants will have the right of appeal to the Head of Sixth Form, Thirsk School and Sixth Form College.
- **All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence**

EXAMPLES OF ALL FORMS ARE ATTACHED TO THE BACK OF THIS POLICY

Awards Process

Bursary awards are made for specified course related costs and/or other costs viewed as presenting a barrier to the individual learner's participation in education. The amount of each award will be assessed and disbursed on an individual, case by case basis as detailed in the individual's application form.

The School may offer bursaries in the form of non-cash "in kind" payments where appropriate, such as travel vouchers or meal vouchers, attendance on course related school trips, stationery etc. Any equipment purchased by the school for use by an individual learner remains the property of the school and must be returned upon completion of or withdrawal from the course.

The school may also offer an award in the form of a short-term loan to help a learner bridge a temporary financial hardship where this is deemed appropriate and agreed by the learner. In this case, the school will draw up an agreement with the learner clearly stating the use of and the conditions surrounding the reimbursement arrangements which the learner should sign indicating he or she understands the conditions of the loan. The learner should be able to provide evidence that the award has been used as intended.

In line with the "something for something" ethos, receipt of bursary payments are conditional upon a student meeting attendance and behaviour standards which are agreed in advance and set out below: -

Award of the bursary will take place at the end of each half term provided the following criteria are met: -

- i. Attendance for that half term is over 90%**
- ii. Attendance at lessons is 100% for those days the student attends or explanation received.**
- iii. Attitude and effort are deemed acceptable by college staff.**

Attendance and behaviour requirements generally align with the conduct standards expected of all students who are part of the Thirsk Sixth Form College community and can be found in the student handbook 'Surviving Your Studies in the Sixth Form'. Bursary applicants will be expected to sign an agreement that they will adhere to the criteria stated above. Where the learner does

not meet the agreed attendance or behaviour standards, which will be monitored on a half-termly basis, the school will make every effort to advise the learner and help resolve any issues but retains the right to rescind or suspend bursary payment(s).

Appeals Process

Should learners disagree with the outcome of either their application for a bursary award or, where a payment has been withheld due to attendance/behaviour, they have the right to appeal the decision.

All appeals will be considered by the Head of Sixth Form. Your letter of appeal should include your name and form and the reasons for your appeal. Any additional information you wish to provide that you feel is relevant to your application can be attached. Written confirmation of the outcome of the appeal will be sent out within 10 days of the Appeal being considered.

If you are still not satisfied following this appeal, a further appeal can be made to the Head Teacher of the School in line with the standard complaints procedure as advertised in the school policy.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account the views of the school, young people and their parents and guidance from the Department for Education and the Young People's Learning Agency.