



# 16–19 Bursary Scheme Guidance Notes 2020 / 2021

The 16-19 Bursary Fund was introduced by the Government to help 16-19 experiencing the greatest financial hardship to continue with education. The scheme replaced the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

## Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a 16 – 19 Bursary in the 2020 -2021 academic year, a student must be aged under 19 on 31 August 2020 in the academic year in which they start their programme of study and must satisfy the residency criteria set out in the ESFA Funding Guidance. The scheme will be linked to maintaining acceptable levels of attendance, behaviour and effort as set out in the Sixth Form Student Agreement which and will be constantly monitored.

If you are awarded a bursary this will not affect any entitlement to any DWP income related benefits. However if a student is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independent 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.

Sponne School will allocate bursary funds in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Completion and submission of the School's 16-19 Bursary Application Form will be required. The information provided in your application form will enable the school to identify individual financial need and appropriately allocate the available funds. These guidance notes should help you to complete the application form accurately.

Please note that the completed application form should be handed into Mrs Freer, Sixth Form Administrator, along with the required documentary evidence by no later than 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

However, the School does accept new applications throughout the year, should a financial need arise. The School will also consider further assistance for any successful applicant due to the onset of an unexpected or large expense (such as a school trip) or a change in circumstances home leading to financial hardship.

If a student leaves, the school 16-19 bursary payments will cease.

## Types of Bursary:

There are 2 types of bursary – the Vulnerable Bursary and the Discretionary Bursary. Please tick the box on the application form that applies to your circumstances.

## Vulnerable Bursary Fund (Level 1, High Priority)

Students in one or more of the following categories may be eligible for the highest level of support of £1,200 a year depending on the level of financial need:

- In care
- Care leavers

- Receiving Income Support <https://www.gov.uk/income-support> (IS), or Universal Credit <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/overview> (UC) 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 (DLA) or Personal Independence payments <https://www.gov.uk/pip/overview> as Employment and Support Allowance <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/overview> (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right

With your application, you will be requested to provide written proof of your eligibility status.

- The ESFA states that Institutions may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. Institutions can refuse a student's application on this basis. Similarly, students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate and not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.

All other bursaries will be discretionary and will be allocated by the School dependant on the level of your household's income and matched to the financial needs identified by you on the application form. Discretionary Bursaries will be awarded as follows:

### **Discretionary Bursary Fund (Level 2, Medium Priority)**

The Discretionary Bursary (Level 2) will support students from households with the lowest incomes. For guidance, this would normally be students:

- **Tier 1** – Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- **Tier 2** - In a family with an income of less than £16,190 who are not able to claim FSM due to Working Tax Credit/Universal Credit or Pupil Premium (PP)/Ever 6

Information on entitlement to free school meals can be found on the Northamptonshire County Council website.

### **Discretionary Individual Hardship Payments (Level 3, Low Priority)**

Where it can be evidenced that a student faces identifiable financial barriers to education, but is not eligible to receive a vulnerable Bursary (Level 1) or Discretionary Bursary (Level 2), a student may apply for an Individual Hardship Payment (Level 3) for a specific educational purpose eg materials, school trips, textbooks, educational trips and transport. Up to a maximum of £300 per year (likely to be paid as instalments or a claim basis).

For guidance, this would normally be students:

- Whose families receive income related benefits or where earned family income is between £16,190 and £25,000 per annum

In some circumstances, we are able to consider bursary applications from students whose families receive income related benefits, or where earned family income is between £25,001 and £30,000 per annum. It is anticipated, however, that funds for this purpose will be limited and will only be made available after all Level 2 Discretionary bursaries have been allocated. Each application will be assessed according to individual financial need.

It should be noted that funds under this scheme are limited, and will only be made available after Level 1 and Level 2 bursaries are fully allocated. Individual Hardship Payments may be used for the following:

- Books / equipment / materials
- Examination re-sit fees
- UCAS application fees / travel to open days
- Educational visits / field trips which are course related

In most cases no money will be given directly to students. Payment for goods and services will be made by the School on behalf of the student.

Exceptional financial circumstances: if this applies a covering letter should be included outlining the circumstances. Any supporting evidence of income must be also be supplied. Applicants with exceptional circumstances will be viewed sympathetically where financial need can be evidenced.

### **Attendance Policy**

Student payments are intended to cover costs resulting from attendance at Sponne Sixth Form.

Students will need to have 95% attendance to receive their payment. The onus is on the student to check their email and be proactive if they feel a register mark is incorrect, they must please see their subject teachers in the first instance. If there are special circumstances surrounding low attendance then these must be made known to Head of Sixth Form so they can be taken into account when assessing the payment.

By attending a lesson, a student undertakes to engage in that lesson and show appropriate behaviour that allows them and others to learn. Failure to engage or behave appropriately will affect progress towards learning goals and may also affect eligibility for payment.

### **Eligibility and Payment Policy**

Eligibility and payment amounts are dependent upon the number of applications received. Thresholds may be adjusted in the event of a high/reduced number of applicants who meet the criteria and consequently monetary payments may increase or decrease mid-term to adjust to the number accepted onto the Bursary Scheme. Our assessment will consist **only** of your household income (with consideration of whether you have exemption from Council Tax and your housing benefit status).

### **Payment Method**

Payments will be made either by bank transfer to the students account or any other method deemed appropriate. The payment method is at the discretion of the School and may be amended at any time at the discretion of the School.

Wherever possible awards will be made via internal transfer within the School to contribute towards costs of the following:

- School Trips
- Free School Meals – successful applicants will receive a daily allocation on their student account. The allocation is to be used daily and is not carried forward to the next day

## **GUIDANCE TO COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM:**

### **Section 1: PERSONAL DETAILS**

Please enter your personal details. This section identifies whether you satisfy the age and residency criteria and whether your chosen programme of study qualifies you to receive the bursary. To be eligible to receive the bursary:

- You will need to be aged 16 or over and under 19 on 31 August 2020
- You will need to satisfy the ESFA's residency criteria
- You will need to be participating on a course that leads to a qualification (up to level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is pursuant to Section 98 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This will most likely be the case for Sponne Sixth Form students

### **Section 2: BACKGROUND**

This section helps identify whether you qualify to receive the highest level of bursary, known as the Vulnerable Bursary (Level 1). You will need to submit documentary evidence with your application form.

If you are claiming a Vulnerable Bursary please go straight to Sections 6 and 7.

### **Section 3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

This section identifies the students most in need of financial support from the discretionary bursary fund by assessing the total level of household income. It is important that we have full details of any benefits and income (earned and unearned) received by the household.

**Question 1 – Benefits.** Please tell us what benefits are received by the household and submit evidence such as the most recent benefit notification, or HMRC Tax Credit Notification Award (tax year 2019-2020) (renewal notices will not be accepted)

**Question 2 – Earnings from employment or self-employment (earned income).** Please tell us about any earned income from employment, self-employment and work in your household. We will need to have a copy of a recent P60 (tax year 2019-2020) and payslip or an HMRC approved notice.

**Question 3 – Other household income.** For any unearned income in your household, such as shares, bonds and investments, rental income, pensions, we will need to see a recent bank statement.

**Question 4 – Free School Meals.** To be eligible for Free School Meals students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 with an annual household income less than £16,190. If you are in receipt of free school meals (FSM), then please submit your notification from Northamptonshire County Council

**Question 5 – Dependants.** We also need to know how many dependants (in full time education under the age of 19) there are in your household. This will give us an idea of the financial demands placed on the household income.

### **Section 4: EDUCATION NEEDS**

This section helps us to identify the specific costs you face in continuing your education, so that we can assess the level of support needed. The purpose of the bursary is to help you overcome these financial barriers, so it is important that you give us as much detail as possible. We will also ask for evidence of these costs, where applicable. Please tick which costs are applicable to you and the amount. If you have a cost that is not in the list, please give full details under 'other'.

## **Section 5: OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Please use this section to tell us about anything else that you feel is important to do with your household's current financial situation. This will give us a better picture of the particular financial circumstances that you may be dealing with.

## **Section 6: STUDENT BANK DETAILS**

Level 1 & Level 2 Bursary payments will be made either by cheque or directly into student's bank accounts, termly, on the following dates

- December 2020
- February 2021
- June / July 2021

providing the Student's attendance, behaviour towards studies and completion of coursework in the previous half term has been assessed and deemed satisfactory by Head of Sixth Form.

Individual Hardship Payments will be paid as required to the appropriate party on behalf of the student, as required through the year.

## **Section 7: DECLARATION**

By signing this declaration you are confirming that the information you have provided is true and accurate and you will notify the School of any changes of circumstances during the academic year.

You are also agreed to maintain agreed levels of attendance, behaviour and effort and will be asked to sign the Sixth Form Agreement.

The declaration also states that the School will seek to recover any monies paid where information submitted has proved to be false or changes in circumstances have not been notified.

You and a parent will need to sign and date the form, even if you are over 18 years old.

## **EMERGENCY FUNDS**

The school does hold 'a small emergency fund' for exceptional circumstances and late emerging vulnerable learners.

## **SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

All applications will be made through the Sixth Form Team. All personal information, including evidence of household incomes will be stored securely and will remain strictly confidential. Our privacy policy can be found on the school website.

## **APPEALS**

Students have the right to appeal against a decision that the School makes, if they believe it to be wrong and have the evidence to support it. In the first instance, appeals should be made, in writing, to the Sixth Form Team who will review the evidence with the student. Most appeals are resolved this way. However, if the matter remains unresolved, the appeal will be referred to the School Business Manager or Head teacher who will meet with the student. Students may bring a family member or friend with them to either of these meetings to support them through this process if they wish. The outcome of the appeal will be

communicated to the student in writing within 5 working days of the appeal meeting and their decision will be final.

## **FRAUD**

The parent and student must both sign the application form to confirm that all information given is correct. The School must be notified immediately if any of these circumstances change. Failure to do so or providing false information will result in the Bursary or Hardship payment being withdrawn and any monies which were paid, but to which the student was not entitled, being recovered.

## **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

Copies of the Guidance Notes can be found on the School website pages or can be supplied by the Post 16 Administrator on request.

All applications must be made to the Post 16 Administrator by 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020, with the required evidence. The School will advise students of the outcome, in writing after the October half term or the early part of November 2020.

For clarification of any terms/eligibility criteria used in the Bursary process please see a member of the Sixth Form Team or use the "16 to 19 Bursary Guide" from the government website <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>