



16-19 Bursary Fund Policy

Approved: Autumn 2017

This policy is effective for all Year 12 and 13 students from 1st September 2017
All school policies are reviewed by Governors annually

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- A discretionary bursary that institutions may award to meet individual needs. For example, transport, meals, books and equipment.

To be eligible for either bursary students must:

- be aged over 16 but under 19 on 31st August 2017
- be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2017 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2017 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- meet the residency criteria set out in the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 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 ESFA or by ESFA 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
 - a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre recognises its responsibilities to make this provision available to its students and this policy outlines:

- Who is eligible to receive the bursaries
- How to apply for either bursary at Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre.

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre recognises that offering support to disadvantaged students requires sensitivity and respect for all those concerned. Information relating to applications will be treated with strict confidentiality and records will be kept for auditing purposes.

This document is based on advice provided by the ESFA (March 2017) and sets out how Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre will administer and distribute funds.

Vulnerable Bursaries

Students in one or more of the groups outlined may need more support and can apply for a vulnerability bursary of up to £1,200. Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre does not receive an allocation of funds for vulnerability bursaries, these need to be applied for from the Student Support Bursary Service (SSBS) when we have identified students who meet the vulnerable bursary criteria.

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In care
- Care leavers
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in place of Income Support in their own right
- In receipt of Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right

Please note that to qualify as eligible for a vulnerable student payment the young person does not have to live independently of their parents; they can claim Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right. Parents should note that they will not be able to claim Child Benefit for them if the young person's claim for Employment Support Allowance succeeds. Further information about these benefits can be found on www.gov.uk

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form may pay a vulnerable student more than £1,200 if they assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over the £1,200 must be paid from their discretionary bursary allocation or from their own fund. Equally, we may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need and so are not eligible on that basis.

Students who are in this category need to inform the Head of Sixth Form and provide documentary evidence of benefits claimed. The School will then liaise with the ESFA to release the funding in order to pay the bursary to the student.

Discretionary Bursaries

Discretionary bursaries are awards made by institutions to individual students. They aim to overcome the individual barriers to participation a student may face, to help keep them in education; they can be for whatever amount is deemed necessary to do this. Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre will publish a statement setting out how we will use the bursary fund on our school website. The statement will be published early enough for students to be able to use the information when deciding which post-16 institution to attend. The eligibility criteria will be clear and available to students and to ESFA. The statement will clearly set out what type of help is offered at our centre.

Eligibility for Discretionary Bursaries

Cheltenham Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre can decide which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they will receive.

The sum of money that we have been given by the ESFA to distribute is finite and the money is shared amongst all applicants who meet our eligibility criteria. Some funds are retained to provide support for students whose circumstances change and whom make mid-year applications for a bursary. We will not make blanket or flat rate payments to all students.

Applications and Assessment

The School will make every effort to ensure that all those students entitled to bursaries receive support. All students coming into the Sixth Form will receive information about bursaries. Students will have to complete an application form to apply for a bursary.

Students eligible to receive a bursary must be aged over 16 and under 19 years of age on the 31st of August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. If a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to get the bursary to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner. Students must also meet residency criteria i.e. be a UK resident or have leave to study/live in the UK. Further details on these criteria are available from the Department for Education – Bursary Fund Guidance 2017/18.

Students will be asked to provide evidence of their household income e.g. notice of benefit received from the Department of Work and Pensions. The evidence must be an original document not a photocopied one. A photocopy of the original document must also be attached to the application form. All original documents will be returned to the applicant or parents/carers of the applicant. All documentation will be held securely and is subject to the Data Protection Act. Those who are applying for a bursary to help with transport costs will need to provide documentary evidence of their travel costs.

All applications should be received by the Head of Sixth Form in accordance to the time line set out on the application form. No application will be assessed until the hand in deadline is reached. All applicants will receive a letter informing whether a bursary will be paid to them.

If circumstances change students can make applications later in the academic year. If funds allow then a bursary may be awarded. In this case payment of claims can be backdated for up to 28 days.

Students will be entitled to appeal against any decision taken by the School. The appeals process is outlined below.

Payments

Students will receive their bursary on a quarterly basis in Terms 2, 3, 4 and 5 during the first week of each term. Their total bursary will be split by 4 and paid accordingly.

If students leave school before the end of the academic year they will only receive payments for the time that they attend the sixth form. Students eligible to apply for bursaries joining courses later in the academic year will receive a pro-rata allocation, if funds allow.

Students will be paid by cheque. Students will have to collect their cheques from the Finance Department within the Business Centre at the school and sign to indicate collection. Cheques will be made out to the student not the parent/carer.

Appeals

Students are entitled to appeal against decisions made in relation to their application for a bursary. They should first raise their concerns with the Head of Sixth Form, and if such a meeting fails to resolve any differences they should write to the Headteacher.

Fraud

Fraudulent applications for bursary allocations will be referred to the Police. Students found to make fraudulent claims will be required to refund all payments received.

Under Department for Education guidance Cheltenham Bournside School & Sixth Form Centre could 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) and where students have made a decision to withdraw from a study programme. Institutions can also take money back from students if they have not spent it for the reasons it was awarded to them.