

16-19 BURSARY FUND PROCEDURE

Students will need to approach the Director of 6th Form, in confidence, for advice about the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Even if a student meets the criteria, the school cannot guarantee that they will get a 'Mandatory' bursary: it depends on the state of that year's allocated fixed budget and how many students meet the requirements for access

The parameters which determine eligibility for the 16-19 Bursary are set by the Department of Education.

13.1 Vulnerable Bursaries

All students who meet the vulnerability criteria could receive up to £1,200 annual bursary (either in full or pro-rata) dependent on their needs (travel over two miles, equipment etc.) but it also requires them to meet school expectations (see above) for continuing payment. The criteria are: Personally in receipt of Income Support, universal credit; care leaver; in care; disabled student in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. The school will need documented proof that a student is eligible (e.g. a letter from the local authority, Department of Work and Pensions etc.). Any award is made direct to the student.

13.2 Discretionary Bursaries

If a student needs financial help to stay in education they can apply for a Discretionary, limited bursary. Eligibility: family income, family benefits, receipt of free school meals now or in the past. The bursary reserves will be used to benefit those most in need and it is at the school's discretion as to who merits part of this allocation.

Evidence is required of family or other income (P60, tax credits, benefits, 3 months of payslips or bank statements). This is not required if a letter regarding free school meals is provided instead as this is evidence of meeting the criteria.

13.3 Discretionary Payments

The school may make one-off payments to help with trip costs, educational materials and transport costs for students to whom the school concurs that financial hardship is having a material impact on the student's educational opportunities. Receipts will be required to allow discretionary payments to be made.

NB: Fraudulent claims are required to be reported to the Department for Education or the police.

Mandatory bursaries will only be paid if the school has sufficient allocated funds to pay them.

Discretionary bursaries to which the school is committed would not be withdrawn until the end of an academic year in order to fund an eligible mandatory bursary.

13.4 Application (Tier 1 and Tier 2):

Parents will need to provide proof of entitlement to the benefits as part of application as soon as possible. Application forms are available from the Director of 6th Form at the school. Applications would be considered for eligibility in order of receipt. The bursary will be withdrawn if the student ceases to qualify.

13.5 Application (Tier 3):

Parents will need to write to the Director of 6th Form in the first instance putting forward a case for consideration. This will then go to a Bursary Committee for deliberation.

If an application is unsuccessful, parents have the right to appeal to the Headteacher.

13.6 School requirements for each payment to be made (Tier 1 and Tier 2)

A claimant for any tier must meet school expectations, including attendance (over 90%) and punctuality (no more than 4 a month). Should any issues regarding meeting school expectations occur after receipt of this benefit the school will pursue recourse accordingly.

In deciding whether an absence should be authorised or not, the school will take account of three general principles:

- the presumption is that any absence or late arrival for registration should be considered to be unauthorised, unless there is a valid reason otherwise. In other words, where there is an absence there is no requirement for the school or college proactively to justify its decision not to authorise the absence; late arrival 4 times in a calendar month would lead to the bursary not being paid for that month
- if the claimed reason for absence could have been foreseen, then the student should have applied for authorised absence in advance. So, for example, it might be acceptable for a student to miss school for a funeral if this was applied for in advance; but it would not be acceptable to miss classes without prior notification and then to claim that the absence should be authorised.
- where the claimed reason for absence could not reasonably have been foreseen, schools and colleges should consider whether the absence was really unavoidable. An absence which could not have been notified in advance should be notified to the school or college on the day in question. The student concerned must phone main reception. Unless, exceptionally, there is a good reason why this could not be done, the absence should not be authorised without such notification. In operating these principles, the school will try to ensure that decision making processes are transparent, and that there is equitable application of rules across all their bursary students. As his responsibility crosses all four houses, the Pastoral Deputy Head should be the first point of contact to a tutor trying to decide if an absence can be authorised or not.

In general isolated periods of genuine sickness need not preclude payment of bursary. However, bursary will not be paid if a student has an absence in a payment period and at that time their overall absence in the sessions since the start of the year is 10% or more. This does not mean that the school is necessarily disputing that the student's sickness is genuine. Rather, it derives from the foundation idea that the bursary is intended to cover the costs incurred through attendance in education, and so should not be paid if the student is not attending for a significant period. Also, the

school will turn down applications for authorised sickness absence if we have reason to doubt the validity of the cause of absence.

Clearly an emerging pattern of non-attendance due to sickness without explanation would be unacceptable. The Director of 6th Form is responsible, assisting the students' tutors to make fair judgements consistent across houses. It is to the Director of 6th Form that any appeal would need to be made, in writing, should the school determine that a payment should be forfeit.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of 6th Form to make all staff aware of bursary qualified students, and staff will be directed to highlight or denote them in their own subject records. Subject staff must take a register for each lesson. Where a bursary qualified student is absent and the teacher suspects they may have registered the Head of House must be made aware of this.

Absence from a lesson has the same status as unauthorised absence from tutor registration in its effect on bursary payment. If it discovered that a student has been absent from a lesson after the bursary payment has already been made, a payment in a subsequent period will be withheld in order to make good the overpayment. This also applies if a student misses any other required activity at St George's School. This includes, but is not limited to, chapels, assemblies, Friday 5 sessions, supervised study, detentions, mentoring, tutor time, core PE, and so on. It would also apply if a student is absent from a fire alert and had not signed out as required. It is the role of the Director of 6th Form to liaise with staff teaching St George's students within the consortium, and make sure that bursary payments are adjusted accordingly if a class has been missed without authorisation.

Student progress is assessed periodically at S. George's by means of progress reports.

Where student effort is unsatisfactory (defined by a report with two effort grades of 3 or worse or one effort grade of 4), the next bursary payment will not be made. Appeals in such cases can be made to the Director of 6th Form. Beyond that point complaints should follow the normal school complaints procedure.

13.7 Confidentiality

The process of application and payments will remain confidential as far as is possible, although the need to involve staff in checking attendance, verifying illness, and corroborating progress, means this is not entirely possible.

The above commitment will be cash limited based on the available funds allocated by the YPLA on an annual basis. The school reserves the right to amend bursary payments mid-year should student circumstances improve. The school may respond to limited available funds by targeting support to those assessed as most in need of help.

13.8 Payment (Tier 1 and Tier 2)

Payment of bursaries is made by BACS transfer to the students own bank account in arrears around the middle of the month following the qualifying month. This is to allow information to be gathered and absences authorised, if appropriate, so that robust payment decisions can be made. Payment is direct to the student.

Payment can be backdated to include the month when a valid application was received.

13.9 Payment (Tier 3)

These will be one off payments and will not necessarily be payable directly to the student but could be made on behalf of the student. It will be at the discretion of the Finance Office as to how payment is made.

13.10 Administration

The school will make a deduction of 5% the monies received from the YPLA to fund bursaries in order to cover admin costs. Students and parents must understand that while the school sees timely processing of applications as important to assist students in need with equal access to education, administering this process is one of a number of school priorities, and the school may not be able to work faster than other government agencies in processing.

13.11 Equalities

Arrangements for administration of the Bursary scheme will be mindful of the public sector equality duty laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Arrangements will not discriminate against students on the basis of any protected characteristic as set out in the legislation: any element which inadvertently leads to such discrimination will be waived.