



# Codsall Community High School

## Sixth Form Bursary Policy 2023-2024

### **Purpose of the Fund**

The purpose of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is to provide financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Codsall Community High School is able to award vulnerable student and discretionary bursaries based on the needs of individual students and within the guidelines and funding awarded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy has been developed in collaboration with other South Staffordshire schools to ensure that all students are treated in a fair and consistent way. Institutions must ensure that students are eligible for the discretionary bursary in each year they require support.

*There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:*

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year, depending on your circumstances and benefits.
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books, specialist clothing (such as protective overalls) and equipment. These items that the student would need to pay for to participate in the programme.

*Key points for the 2023 to 2024 academic year*

The Department for Education (DfE) made additional bursary funding available to institutions delivering industry placements in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. DfE will also be providing additional funding in the 2023 to 2024 academic year. This funding helps ensure institutions are able to meet potential increased demand from students who may need to travel further to access

their placement and/or incur additional participation costs, such as for equipment or clothing. Institutions must ensure the additional bursary funding is used in line with the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund rules.

Institutions must ensure they assess the needs of individual students when awarding bursary funding. ESFA audit and assurance work and ongoing monitoring/feedback activity by DfE has found a considerable number of institutions are making flat rate payments to students without any consideration of individual student needs. The bursary fund is designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation that they face and ensure the funds go to those who genuinely need them.

The Department for Education (DfE) has revised the methodology used to calculate discretionary bursary allocations to better match financial disadvantage and student needs across the country. The Government response to the consultation about the change can be read on GOV.UK. The revised methodology is being used from the 2021 to 2022 academic year onwards.

### **Emergency meal support**

In individual cases of severe hardship, meal support could be provided on the days the student attends their study programme. This has been retained for academic year 2023 to 2024.

### **Allocation**

The school is able to access funding from the EFA to support students who are eligible for a vulnerable student bursary. The school is able to offer discretionary bursaries through funding allocated to us from the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The funding is held and distributed from the school budget. Codsall High will manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within their budget.

### **Criteria for Allocation**

The money will only be allocated to students on an individual basis against the criteria set out below. All students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2023 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in the 2023 to 2024 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).

## **Criteria 1 - Vulnerable Student Bursary**

Students who meet the criteria, and who have a financial need, can apply for a bursary for vulnerable groups. The defined groups reflect that these students may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate. Institutions must ensure students are eligible for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups in each year they require support.

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

To reflect the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit, we made amendments to the wording of one of the defined vulnerable group categories for the 2018 to 2019 academic year. We are continuing to review the descriptions of the defined vulnerable groups to ensure they accurately reflect the purpose of the scheme.

The bursary for vulnerable groups can pay up to £1,200 per year to a student participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more. Students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks will be paid a pro-rata amount.

Codsall High may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of 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. Codsall 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.

Equally, Codsall may pay a bursary to a vulnerable group student of more than £1,200 if we assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over £1,200 will be paid from the discretionary bursary allocation or from our own funds.

The bursary award is £1,200 a year. However, this is pro-rata if the student's course is for less than 30 weeks and it can be a higher amount if the school considers this necessary to enable the young person to continue in education.

Any bursary award will be subject to students meeting all the targets and objectives set out in their Sixth Form Learning Agreement (including satisfactory attendance and standard of behaviour) and providing documentary evidence to the Bursary Panel. Meetings will take place with a member of the admin/student support team on a regular basis.

## **Criteria 2 – Discretionary Bursary**

Codsall Community High School makes discretionary bursary awards to students to help them overcome the individual barriers to participation they face. This means to help with the cost of travel, to buy essential books, equipment or specialist clothing (such as protective overalls, for example). These are items the student would otherwise need to pay for in order to participate.

The bursary fund is not intended to provide learning support - services that institutions give to students - for example, counselling or mentoring, or to support extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme.

The bursary panel decide which students receive a discretionary bursary. Codsall must ensure that students are eligible for the discretionary bursary in each year they require support. The bursary panel will decide what is an acceptable award based on the uniform policy for 6<sup>th</sup> form students. This includes a set amount towards items such as football boots, etc rather than the whole amount funded where eligible. The bursary panels decision will be final.

All decisions about which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much bursary they receive must be 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, the distance they need to travel to the institution and the requirements of their study programme. Institutions must not make blanket or flat rate payments to all students or to students in particular income bands without considering the actual needs of each student.

Codsall High will manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within their budget.

The defined discretionary groups of students may include:

- not eligible for a Vulnerable Student Bursary (Criteria 1)
- would meet the criteria for eligibility for free school meals (i.e. parents in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross combined income of no more than £24,000), Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit).
- have a total family income of less than £24,000 (evidenced by receipt of benefit and/or P60, Tax Credit Award Notice or 3-6 months' worth of bank statements as evidence of self-employment income)

- other exceptional circumstances, e.g. where a young person is providing care to a sick or disabled relative and they are not receiving a Carer's Allowance.

Any bursary award will be subject to students meeting all the targets and objectives set out in their Sixth Form Learning Agreement (including satisfactory attendance and standard of behaviour) and providing documentary evidence to the Bursary Panel.

### **Administration**

The Bursary Fund Policy 2023-24 has been written in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) within the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Guide 2020-21. Please refer to this document for more information. It is available on the Gov.UK website or the Business Manager can provide a copy.

10% of the Bursary Fund allocation will be retained for emergencies until April of each year. 5% of the total Bursary Fund will be retained to assist with administration costs.

### **Universal Credit**

Universal Credit (UC) is being rolled out across the country and will gradually replace Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance as well as other benefits. Institutions will increasingly see students claiming bursaries for defined vulnerable groups based on receiving UC.

UC award notifications do not include any information on the benefits they replace. For this reason, the description of the bursaries for vulnerable group category that relates to receipt of UC or Income Support is that a student must be receiving UC in their own right because they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.

We are continuing to review the descriptions of the defined vulnerable groups to reflect the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit and ensure they accurately reflect the purpose of the scheme.

Bursary funds awarded to a student should not form part of the UC assessment undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). How DWP treat any funding for education depends on whether the student is undertaking advanced full time education. It is unlikely that 16 to 18 year olds will be in advanced full time education as they are generally on study programmes at level 3 or below.

We do encourage institutions to provide support from the bursary fund by making payments in kind where possible. Institutions must not make bursary fund payments as regular payments for living costs. This is out of scope of the bursary fund and any such payments would be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.

## **When and how to apply**

Applications will be accepted any time during the academic year and will be made pro rata from the date of application to the year-end date. Applications should be forwarded to the Bursary Fund Panel c/o Sixth Form Office, together with documentary evidence/receipts.

## **Payments**

Payment for the Vulnerable Student Bursary (Criteria 1) will be made by BACS transfer to the student's own bank account on a termly basis (3 times per year). Payments will not be paid into another person's account unless there are exceptional circumstances where the student is unable to administer their own account. In-kind bursaries payments may also be made, e.g. travel passes, meals, course materials; the value of which will be deducted from the total bursary awarded.

Payment for the Discretionary Bursary (Criteria 2) will be agreed on an individual basis. It may be made 'in kind' (e.g. a school coach pass or meals through the school kitchen) Payments will be made by BACS transfer into the student's own bank account. Receipts must be handed to the admin office/sixth form or emailed to [finance@sslp.uk](mailto:finance@sslp.uk), in order to have the amount reimbursed. If you are unsure what the bursary would reimburse, please speak to admin or sixth form for clarification prior to purchasing.

## **Bursary Panel**

The Bursary Panel is made up of:-

Mrs Emma Mayor - Head of Sixth Form

Mrs A Straw – Admin Manager

Miss H France – Senior Finance Support Officer

Mr N Eveson – Director of Business & Finance

The final decision will be made by the Director of Business and Finance, appeals can be made to the Executive Head Teacher.

## **Confidentiality**

We will handle applications confidentiality and will make sure that students are not singled out (please talk to us if you are worried about this). Copies of information given in evidence to support applications will be retained by the school for audit purposes and will be kept confidentially.

## **Fraud**

If students and/or parents/carers provide false or incomplete information or we are not told about part of the household income that is relevant the matter may be referred to the Department for Education, the Department for Works and Pensions or the Police. The student and parents/carers could face prosecution and the school will recover any payments the student is not eligible for.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head of Post 16 will be responsible for ensuring students meet targets and objectives as per their Learning Agreement, this includes attendance targets. Failure to do so can result in the funding being withdrawn. The Director of Business and Finance, will be responsible for maintaining records in accordance with the requirements of the EFA and reporting to the EFA as appropriate. The 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body.

## **Appeals**

Applicants should be aware that funding available for discretionary bursaries (Criteria 2) is limited. All applications received will be considered by the Bursary Panel. The Bursary Panel reserve the right to award funding as it sees appropriate. The decision made by the Bursary Panel on the level of funding awarded is final. The Governors Appeals Committee will receive and determine only upon any appeals where funding is refused. Appeals should be addressed to the Clerk of the Governors c/o the school.

## **Appendices**

*Letter to students*

*Application form – Vulnerable Student Bursary (Criteria 1)*

*Application form – Discretionary Bursary (Criteria 2)*

*Examples of Discretionary Bursaries (Criteria 2)*

*Costings of items*