



St. Mary's Catholic High School

An 11 to 18 Specialist Mathematics and Computing College

16-19 Bursary Policy

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The following policy document has been compiled to outline the 16-19 Bursary administration process at St Mary's Catholic High School. It has been written in line with the recommendations and guidelines provided by the YPLA. Following the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), the school will endeavour to target the new fund to help those students in greatest need.

What is the 16-19 Bursary?

The 16-19 Bursary is a new scheme to help the most vulnerable young people continue in full-time education.

The scheme is made up of two parts:

- There are guaranteed bursaries of £1,200 a year for the most vulnerable. The most vulnerable are classified as:
 - young people in care;
 - young people living independently after leaving Local Authority care;
 - young people in receipt of Income Support;
 - disabled young people in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).
- Schools, colleges and training providers will then be able to award mainstream bursaries to any student who faces genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and training to help with costs such as transport, food or equipment.

The receipt of a bursary is conditional on a student meeting agreed standards set by the school. Students should complete the Application Form and submit relevant evidence.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a bursary the young person must be aged under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Young people must satisfy the residency criteria in the document *YPLA Funding Guidance 2011/12: Funding Regulations*. They must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). That provision must also be:

- funded by the YPLA; or
- funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund; or
- Otherwise publicly funded and lead 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.

Bursary Administration

All young people in the identified vulnerable groups (above) will receive their payments from the school, via cheque, on a half termly basis. Evidence will be required as follows:

- either a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled or;
- written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority.

The amount of mainstream bursary paid to an individual will be decided once an assessment of total student need has been carried out. This will ensure that the school remains in budget and does not under or over spend. The mainstream bursary will be paid to students whose parents/carers are claiming an income-based benefit i.e.

- Income Support,
- Jobseeker's Allowance or
- Employment and Support Allowance

which must be certified by the Department for Work and Pensions or HMRC. Photocopied evidence will not be acceptable. The mainstream bursary allocations will also be paid via cheque on a half termly basis if the student adheres to the school's conditions (below).

The 2011/12 deadline for applications is set at 14th October 2011 and must be adhered to. In-year applications will be considered by the Assistant Head: Business and Finance Division – again full and proper evidence will be required.

Students receiving transitional EMA amounts of £30 **will not** be eligible to access the bursary fund in 2011/12.

The school will retain a small contingency to cover any in-year emergencies. This fund will also cover any 'in-kind' support such as books or equipment which should be returned at the end of the course. Any student facing genuine financial difficulties will be eligible to apply – again an application must be completed and evidence provided.

Bursaries will not be used for any purpose designed to give competitive advantage over other providers such as provision of benefits or gadgets.

School Conditions

1. Attendance

- All students must be registered on a full-time course of study.
- The decision to authorise payments will be based on a student's attendance and acceptable behaviour over a half term period. Any unauthorised absences will stop payment. All directed time, including study periods, will be taken into consideration.
- The school may authorise an absence if it is considered acceptable – see below.
- If a student shows an unacceptable pattern of absence (and even if such absences are authorised by parents/guardians) half termly payment may be stopped. The school will inform students of any payments stopped for this reason.

Authorised Absences

- Medical Appointment – which cannot be arranged outside school hours. Evidence to be provided.
- A need to look after a family member or another person for whom the learner has caring responsibilities. Where this occurrence becomes more regular, they would have to liaise with their Tutor and see whether alternative arrangements could be arranged.
- A religious observance.
- A visit to University or career-related interview.
- A work experience placement which is an essential part of a learning programme – and where the student does not receive a wage.
- Participation in a significant extra-curricular activity such as drama, music, sport or volunteering. Authorised absence will only be granted where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement e.g. a regional or national event. Authorised absences under this criterion will be granted sparingly where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed there is a need to explore solutions with the learner.
- Attendance at a probation meeting.
- Attendance at a Funeral.
- Severe disruptions of transport e.g. strike.
- A driving test.
- A provider representatives' meeting e.g. Governors Meeting.
- National Union of Students official business.
- Territorial Army or cadet events.
- Study visits abroad that are an integral part of the learner's learning programme, last for no longer than four weeks, and are set out in the Learner's Agreement.

Unauthorised Absences

- Holidays
- Part or full-time work which is not part of the learner's programme of study
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons
- Routine medical appointments

Any student with extenuating circumstances which they feel prohibits/affects their attendance should liaise with either the Director or Assistant Director of Key Stage 5.

2. Assessment

All students are expected to work to their ability and the school currently undergoes assessment to monitor all student performance. Students are provided with their ALPS predictors during the assessment process which provides an expectation of what a student should be working towards.

Students will be assessed on their overall commitment to their studies, completion of homework and coursework. If effort is being shown, or a positive attitude is

demonstrated then this will be taken into consideration when making the judgement on a student's entitlement to the bursary. However, there is a definite expectation that a student on a course of study will sit an examination at the end of the course.

Not only should a student be in line with their studies but attendance is also crucial when authorising payments.

Any cases where exceptional circumstances may have influenced a student's ability to complete their studies will be considered by either the Director or Assistant Director of Key Stage 5.

Appeals Process

Parents/Students may appeal against an unsuccessful bursary application. All appeals should be made in writing and passed to the Director of Key Stage 5 for consideration. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily then this will be given to the Headteacher for further consideration.

It must be remembered that the school as the Provider has the responsibility and power to handle all appeals. Clarification and consultation will take place between the Governing Body and the YPLA if necessary. This action in no way prejudices the rights of the appellant to seek independent representation and advice.

Parents/Students can appeal against stopped payments in the same manner.

Fraudulent Claims

By signing the application form students and parents are confirming that the information provided is true. Parents/students should notify the school immediately if circumstances change. The Bursary will be provided on the basis of certain conditions (as above). Money will be claimed back if information given is known to be false.

Paperwork

The process necessitates the need to keep accurate and up-to-date records for auditable purposes. The YPLA will carry out a mid-year review of spending (spring 2012) and will recover monies not expected to be spent.

All paperwork will be kept for a minimum of six years.

Administrators of the system will follow the procedural guidance written in school which will be reviewed regularly to ensure that good practice is achieved.

This Policy is subject to annual review – September 2012.