IFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

16-19 BURSARY POLICY 21-22

1. Introduction

Ifield Community College administers a bursary fund to support students who are aged between 16 & 19 and who are facing financial difficulties which mean they are experiencing barriers remaining in education. Bursary application processes will be carried out ensuring that confidentiality is fully maintained at all times.

Eligible students could receive financial support which can be used for, or contribute to, the purchasing of materials/equipment for their course, books, meals, and/or travel vouchers. Each application is dealt with on an individual basis, ensuring the specific needs of each student are addressed. Two types of bursaries are available – the guaranteed 'vulnerable' bursary, and the discretionary bursary.
ALL DISCRETIONARY BURSARY PAYMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.

2. Eligibility (all bursaries)

To be eligible to receive a bursary the young person must be aged 16 or over at 1st September and be under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study (when started whilst 16-18), they can continue to be supported through the discretionary bursary only to the end of their current programme of study as long as their eligibility continues, and will not be funded for any new programmes. In exceptional circumstances bursaries may be awarded to younger students where they are following an accelerated programme and are only enrolled at ICC. Students aged over 19 will not be eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary.

Discretionary bursaries will also remain available to students aged 19 and over if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Young people must satisfy the residency criteria as set out in the ESFA funding regulations for post 16 provision (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision). Asylum seekers are generally not entitled to bursary as they are not entitled to public funds. Unaccompanied asylum seekers who are under the care of the Local Authority will be treated as Looked After Children and will be entitled to vulnerable bursary funding up to the age of 18 when their immigration status will be considered.

They must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (Ofsted) and is funded by the ESFA or the European Social Fund or otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14-19. Provision may also be part of a 16-19 traineeship programme.

3. Guaranteed Bursary (Vulnerable Young Adult)

Students who are in one or more of the groups below may be able to apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1200 based on individual assessment of actual financial need to participate in their programme of learning (pro-rata for courses lasting less than 30 weeks a year):

- Students in care (looked after by the LA on a voluntary basis or under a care order). Students placed with foster carers by the local authority are classed as looked after. Privately fostered students are not classed as loo after and not eligible for the vulnerable bursary.
- Care leavers (young person aged 16 and 17 – or 18 if looked after prior to becoming 18 - who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively, beginning after the age of 14 and ending after the age of 16/young person)
- Students who are supporting themselves (or a dependent) and are themselves (not their parents) in receipt of Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC)
- Students who are themselves (not their parents) in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or Personal Independence Payments, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right.

Note: Vulnerable bursaries are not available for students aged 19 or over.

Students placed with a foster carer by the local authority are classed as looked after. Regular payments for living costs are out of scope for bursary funding.

The College is responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for this payment and will seek evidence to support each claim, and will retain appropriate evidence where necessary for audit purposes. Where eligibility criteria are met, and a financial need is confirmed, the college will apply to the ESFA for vulnerable bursary funding on behalf of the student. Students need to follow the application process so that their application can be considered. Bursary fund payment will not be made for regular living costs.

Supporting evidence will be:

- Copy of letter setting out the benefit the student is entitled to (must be in young person's name). This must confirm that the student can participate in further education as some young people are not allowed to. When evidencing Universal Credit, further evidence will be requested such as a tenancy agreement or utility bills in student's own name. UC claimants should be able to print off details for their award form their online account, or provide a screen shot.

- Written confirmation from Local Authority of the young person's current or previous looked after status

4. Discretionary Bursary

The discretionary bursary is allocated directly to a student by the college based on a young person meeting eligibility criteria, and provides support to students who suffer from financial hardship that could hinder their ability to continue in further education. The bursary may be used to assist in the provision of items that a student would need to pay for in order to participate in their course such as books, course materials, or travel vouchers. It cannot be used for regular payments for living costs,

or for learning support costs such as counselling, mentoring or non-essential extracurricular activities.

Students may apply for a discretionary Bursary if the family is in receipt of one or more of the following (evidence of benefits received must be sent with the application):

- Income Support(IS) or Universal credit (UC)
- Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Child Tax Credit with annual Inland Revenue assessed income:
    - Priority 1 – below £16,190
    - Priority 2 – between £16,190 and 21,000
    - Priority 3 – between £21,000 and £25,000
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Wider family circumstances (i.e. single parent family, number of children supported by the family, young carer responsibilities etc)

Students will be individually assessed to identify their specific financial need, and funding .

Students in receipt of Free School Meals prior to entering 6th form

A bursary may be awarded to eligible young people aged 16-19 who were in receipt of free school meals when in year 11, demonstrate a current financial need, and who meet the conditions relating to attendance, behaviour and progress.

Supporting Evidence will be:

- Confirmation from Local Authority of your entitlement to Free School Meals

Any change in financial circumstances that will affect the young person's entitlement to Free School Meals must be notified to the college and the Local Authority authorising the free school meal entitlement.

5. Payments

Bursary Awards will be made on a half termly basis following a review of attendance, behaviour and progress. Where possible, payment in kind will be made or items will be purchased by the college rather than any cash transactions paid. Cash/cheque/BACs payments will only be made to students producing receipts for the learning materials required. In certain circumstances advanced funds may be available to purchase equipment and resources

PLEASE NOTE: RECEIPTS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ALL ITEMS PURCHASED FROM THE BURSARY FOR AUDIT PURPOSES.

6. Process for Application

Applications for a Bursary award should be made using the application form (available from the 6th form progress leader or from reception).

All applications should be submitted to the 6th form Progress Leader or Pastoral Manager and will need to be supported by appropriate evidence of eligibility.

Details of all successful applications will be processed together with level, timing and condition of the bursary award.

Applicants will be notified in writing whether their application has been successful within ten working days. If a young person feels aggrieved about how their application has been handled they should follow the College's normal complaints procedure, addressing their grievance in writing within 7 days of receipt of their outcome notification to the College's Business Manager.

7. Qualifying Conditions

Once eligibility has been established the young person will be expected to comply with the following conditions in order to qualify for payment.

- Attendance – No unauthorised absences – Regular and punctual attendance
- Behaviour – No cause for concern – Full and punctual completion of work
- Progress – evidence that progress in being made
- Receipts for all expenditure – students will need to provide receipts for all purchases made from the bursary fund

Payments will automatically be reviewed after 4 weeks of absence.

The discretionary allowance may be withdrawn if attendance or behaviour is not satisfactory at any time.

8. Retained Contingency

As part of their discretionary bursary funding, the College will also retain a hardship fund to cover the cost of bursaries which may be awarded throughout the academic year due to changes in the financial or domestic circumstances of individual students or in cases of exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the school.