

# **AXE VALLEY ACADEMY**

## **POLICY**



### **16-19 Bursary Fund Policy**

*Updated: November 2017*

## **Purpose of the Policy**

To provide the principles by which all young people in post 16 education in Axe Valley Academy will have equality of access to financial support through the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

## **Types of Support Available**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements:

1. **Guaranteed award for vulnerable Learners:** Young People in Care, Care Leavers, Young People in receipt of Income Support and Disabled Young People in receipt of Employment Support allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will be eligible to receive a bursary of £1200 a year.
2. **Discretionary Awards** targeted towards Young People facing financial barriers to participation, such as the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

## **Guaranteed Awards**

The most vulnerable Young People will be eligible for a bursary of at least £1200 (pro rata for courses lasting less than 30 weeks a year).

The payment method used for this bursary is at the discretion of Axe Valley Academy but will be arranged to best meet the individual learners need and circumstances. For example, via 'in kind' payments, regular transfers into student's personal bank account or a combination of both. This will be agreed with the learner.

Axe Valley Academy administering the bursary are responsible for identifying Young People who are eligible for this payment. Written confirmation of the young person's looked after status or evidence of receipt of the above benefits will be needed to support the payment of a Guaranteed Award.

## **Discretionary Awards**

Discretionary Awards will be targeted at those students who are facing the greatest financial hardship. The following priority groups will be used to manage applications:

**Priority Group 1:** Learners in receipt of Free School Meals

**Priority Group 2:** Learners who may not be in receipt of Free School Meals but who are from a low income family who receive one of the following state benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit
- The **maximum** level of Working Tax Credit (WTC)
- Child Tax Credit if it is the **only** benefit received and where annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, does not exceed £16,190.

Evidence of one of these benefits will be required to support applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

**Priority Group 3:** Learners who have a family income below £30,000 p/a. Evidence of the family income eg. P60 will be required to support applications to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Satisfying these eligibility criteria cannot guarantee funding to any learner, and Axe Valley Academy will consider other factors including the purpose for which funding support is requested and the budget available. Discretionary Awards must only be used to help learners meet costs related to participation in their individual course of study, for example transport, books, equipment, materials, essential trips, meals whilst attending their course etc.

#### **Priority Group 4:**

All learners are entitled to make an application for funds based on their needs throughout the year. These funds will only be used to pay for Academy related equipment or trips. All applications will be considered once Priority Group 1, 2 and 3 students have been considered.

*Please refer to the current list of essential costs that students may incur when following each particular course of study. See Appendix 2.*

#### **Administering the Fund**

- **Opening and closing points for applications to the Bursary Fund**

All students will need to apply for the Fund at the beginning of the year or mid-way point, through the application form that is available from the Sixth Form Office and the website. All applications should be handed into the Sixth Form Office by the end of the second week of term in September and all applicants will need to re-apply by the February half term. Any change of circumstances could allow a new application at February half term.

- **Clear decision making and appeals processes**

Once applications and evidence are received the decision to provide funds from the Bursary Fund will be made by the Bursary Fund Panel. The decisions will be made by October half term and the end of March. There is an appeals process which can be followed – please see the Appendix 1 for details of the Appeals process.

Priority Group 1 Learners will need to provide their evidence of Free School Meals allocation alongside their application.

Priority Group 2 Learners will need to provide evidence of the benefits, allowances or tax credits the family receives alongside their application.

Priority Group 3 Learners will need to provide evidence of the family income alongside their application.

Priority Group 4 Learners will need to provide evidence of the family income alongside their application

- **How decisions will be communicated to Young People and their families**

Decisions will be communicated in writing to each student and their family.

- **Payment mechanisms**

The application form outlines the need to indicate what the money is required for and therefore the payments made will depend on what the money is used for. For example, if the money is to be used for books the school may buy the books on the students' behalf, if the money is to be used for transport bus passes the pass might be purchased by the school on their behalf. Where money needs to be given it will be paid by BACS and will be arranged on an individual basis.

- **Attendance and behaviour conditions (if applicable)**

Attendance to lessons and conduct at Axe Valley Academy will form part of the decision making process.

- **Bonus Payments**

At the end of the academic year (July) there may be some Bursary Fund money that could be paid to students as a bonus payment. In this instance we shall write to students outlining the amount we will pay. The bonus payments will be paid out based on the following criteria:

- Complete homework, class work and coursework to agreed deadlines. We understand that in unusual circumstances a deadline may have to be renegotiated. It is your responsibility to agree a new deadline IN ADVANCE of the due date for the work with the relevant member of staff.
- Meet any targets/learning goals set by Axe Valley Academy.
- Work with an appropriate level of effort and commitment.

- **Policy on Fraud**

The Fraud Policy is available on the school website

Axe Valley Academy will record bursary applications and awards (including the number, value, purpose, whether awarded or not and brief justification) so that all audit and reporting requirements are satisfied.

### **Withholding of Funds and Budgeting**

Axe Valley Academy will retain an appropriate contingency fund to meet the needs for learners who may face financial hardship during the academic year.

This may be for learners who move into the "vulnerable" group during the academic year, changes in learners' circumstances or learners who start mid-year.

A budget will be set annually for each element of the fund – Guaranteed Awards, Discretionary Awards, Contingency Fund and administration.

## APPENDIX 1

### APPEALS PROCESS

- If you wish to exercise your right to appeal you should contact the **Head of Sixth Form** who will direct you to the appropriate **Appeal Panel**.
- Your appeal must be **lodged in writing within 10 working days** of the Bursary Fund decision.
- The following information should be included in the letter:
  - The full reason for the appeal
  - Any documentation you wish to present as evidence
- An appeal will normally be dealt with within 10 working days. In the event that your case is not straightforward we may contact your tutor or subject teacher for further information, which may take extra time.
- The appeal will be handled in the school by someone on the Senior Leadership Team.
- At the appeal you will have the opportunity to present your case and have an adviser present such as a parent or guardian who if you wished could put the case on your behalf.
- The Appeal Panel's decision is final and binding on all parties.
- If your appeal is successful we will outline how much of the Bursary Fund you will be eligible for.