

## Beths Grammar School - 16-19 Bursary Scheme



This Policy Statement covers the academic year September 2023 to July 2024

### What is the 16-19 Bursary Scheme?

The Government allocates funds to educational institutions to give to students who need financial help to stay in education. Beths Grammar School has been given a fixed budget which it will use to help those students overcome their individual financial challenges.

The Bursary is an annual award, paid to students in instalments and is subject to the completion of a Bursary Application Form and provision of documentary evidence.

No student will automatically be awarded funding without an assessment of the level of financial need they have.

There are two types of bursaries (students can only apply for one only and not both)

- **Vulnerable Bursary** – An award of up to £1,200 per year for those students defined as a vulnerable group (definition below).
- **Discretionary Bursary** - made at the discretion of the school and dependent on household income. Financial assistance will be provided for a specific educational purpose (e.g. books, equipment, uniform, transport, field trips, University interviews, Open Days).

We must ensure that funding reaches those students who are most in need of financial support. Bursary cannot be used for:

- supporting general household income or a student's general living costs
- 'block' payment for books, equipment etc.,
- rewarding attendance or achievement
- supporting extra-curricular activities where these are not essential to the students' study programme
- providing learning support e.g., counselling, mentoring or extra tutoring

### Am I eligible?

- You must be aged 16 or over but under 19 as at 31 August 2023 to be eligible for help from the bursary fund in this 2023-2024 academic year.
- If you are aged 19 or over, you are only eligible to receive a Discretionary Bursary if you are continuing a study programme you began aged 16 to 18 OR have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- You must meet the residency criteria as set out in ESFA Funding Regulations. This information can be found via the following link:-  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision>  
Generally, accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups ('in care' group) where they have a financial need

## **Which Group?**

### **Vulnerable Group Bursary**

You are eligible if you are in one of the following categories:

- You are in Local Authority care
- You have recently left Local Authority care (a 'care leaver')
- You are receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit in your own right because you are financially supporting yourself or financially supporting yourself and someone who is dependent on you and living with you (e.g. a child or partner)
- You are receiving **both** Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in your own right **and** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in your own right

It is important to note, however, that students who meet the criteria for bursaries for vulnerable groups are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from other sources.

### **Discretionary Bursary**

- You are eligible if you are facing financial challenges in participating in your education e.g. meeting the costs of books, equipment etc.
- Household income will be used to help establish the amount of support that will be awarded.
- Other factors will also be considered, such as travel distance to/from school, the number of dependent children in the household, as well as your actual course and its requirements.
- Awards will vary from student to student

## **Application Process**

- A student can apply for a bursary any time during the academic year. However, most funds are assigned during the autumn term and the initial payment will be made in October 2023. Any applications received after the allocation of funds will be dependent on the amount of funds remaining.
- **Fully completed, signed** applications (together with **all** relevant supporting documentation) must be handed into Student Reception
- To allow the prompt calculation of bursary awards and the subsequent initial payment in October 2023, all applications must be received by **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023**
- Students must (re)apply for a bursary each academic year.

### **What forms and supporting documentary evidence will I need to provide?**

- 2023-2024 Bursary Application Form. **Fully completed, signed**, and submitted with **all** relevant supporting documentation (see below)
- Vulnerable Bursary Group
  - written Local Authority confirmation as to your current or previous care status OR
  - your DWP letter setting out the benefit(s) to which you are entitled. For students in receipt of Universal Credit, other documents may be required (e.g. tenancy agreement)
- Discretionary Bursary

Examples of evidence that may be requested to assess eligibility and determine household income include (but are not limited to):

- Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN) for 2023-2024 Tax Year
- Copies of last 3 months statements for Universal Credit
- P60 for the 2022-2023 Tax year
- Self-employment Accounts
- Wage slips
- DWP Benefits Letter
- Child Benefit Award Notice
- Bank Account Statements

### **Allocation of Bursary Funds**

As the level of bursary funding provided to Bets is a fixed amount from the Government, the fund needs to be administered as effectively as possible. We must be able to show we comply with the Government's funding regulations at any audit.

All initial applications received by the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 deadline will be assessed at the same time and the bursary amount awarded to each student will be based on individual financial needs and the number of eligible applications received.

A small amount of the budget will be held back for any students who find their circumstances have significantly changed within the academic year.

Funds can be allocated in exceptional and urgent circumstances to students who do not meet the income threshold criteria. If you are having problems attending school due to financial circumstances, then please ensure you discuss your situation with Mr Jones, Deputy Head (Sixth Form).

### **Do I need my own Bank Account?**

- Yes. Funds will be paid into a student's own bank account via BACS transfer. Students can open a basic bank account at age 16.

### **How often will I receive funds?**

- An interim payment will be made in October 2023, followed by subsequent payments (dates yet to be determined for the 2023-2024 academic year)

### **Are there conditions attached to payments?**

- Payment will be not be made if standards of attendance, punctuality and behaviour are not met. These conditions are detailed in and form part of our Bursary Application Form.
- Payments will cease if a student has been absent for a period of 4 continuous weeks or more (excluding holidays)
- Payments will cease if a student has decided to withdraw from their study programme.
- Monies will be claimed back from a student if it has not been spent for the reasons it was awarded. However, we will consider the impact of such an action on the individual student before taking a final decision to do so.
- Payment will cease and any funds that have been paid incorrectly will be recovered if it is found that any information given was false or incomplete. This might also result in a referral to the police with the possibility of the student and/or their family facing prosecution.

### **Can I appeal if my application is unsuccessful?**

- If your application is unsuccessful, the reasons will be explained to you (e.g. incomplete application, insufficient documentary evidence, above threshold for financial assistance).
- If you wish to challenge a decision, you can request that your application be referred to Mr Jones, Deputy Head (Sixth Form) and SLT member for Sixth Form
- If, following informal discussions, you wish to make a formal complaint, please following the guidance set out in the school's Complaints Policy (accessed via the school website).

### **Who do I contact if I have queries?**

- Please contact the Sixth Form Team (sixthform@beths.bexley.sch.uk)
- Further Government Guidance via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>

### **Confidentiality of Information**

Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about students and parents and other individuals is collected, stored, and processed in accordance with Data Protection Law and the School's GDPR Policy.

*September 2023*