



King James's School Federation

POLICY STATEMENT

# 16-19 BURSARY FUND POLICY STATEMENT

Policy last reviewed (date)	May 2024
Ratified by Governors (date)	May 2024
Next policy review due (date)	May 2025
Due for review by Governors (date)	May 2025
Staff Lead	Director of Sixth Form

## MISSION STATEMENT:

This policy will support the school by being reflective of the Governors' direction and School's development plan. It will be used in an efficient and effective manner by helping students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds.

Significant revisions since the last review:

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### Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund exists to help students continue with and complete their course where they would otherwise be prohibited from doing so on financial grounds.
- 1.2 The Bursary is intended to help with the hardship needs of individual students. Its intent is to ‘enable’ a learner to continue with his or her education and should not be viewed as an incentive to attract young people into learning. Generally, awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course-related costs such as clothing, books, equipment, transport, field trips, visits and other costs associated with living and learning. King James’s School will seek to ensure that the funds available are:
  - Distributed fairly through a process that is transparent and easily understood. Information about the process for application and consideration is available from the Sixth Form Pastoral Officer.
  - Assessed and allocated to each individual’s need, taking into account the financial circumstances of the applicant and the intended use of the award.
  - Used to widen access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- 1.3 16-19 Bursary Funding and the guidance concerning the administrative arrangements, priority groups for support and monitoring arrangements are issued by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This gives a broad overview of the Fund and instructs schools on the appropriate use of the funding.
- 1.4 A student must be aged 16 over but under 19 on 31 August to be eligible for help from the bursary fund. 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 Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 1.5 Please note: there is a limited amount of funding which means that it will not be possible to support every application and priority will be given to those students from the families with the lowest household income and/or highest demonstrated need.

## Section 2: Principles

The 16-18 Bursary Fund has three elements:

### Priority groups – Vulnerable Bursary

2.1 The following students will be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 per year (paid directly to the student at a weekly amount), if agreed standards of behaviour and attendance are met. King James's access to a school 'mobile device scheme' is also available. You may be able to get a bursary if at least one of the following applies:

- you are in or you recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you are financially supporting yourself
- you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

The amount you may get depends on the costs you have and what you need for your course. This might include money for books, equipment or travel costs to school or college.

2.2 Attendance and behaviour standards are as attached. These align with that expected of all students attending King James's School.

2.3 King James's may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary, 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. King James's can refuse a student's application on this basis. 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.

### Discretionary Bursaries

A student could get a discretionary bursary if they need financial help but do not qualify for a bursary for students in vulnerable groups.

### Weekly Discretionary

2.4 These awards will be targeted towards young people facing individual financial barriers to participation in Sixth Form studies. After awards to students in the priority group (see 2.1) weekly discretionary awards will be given to those young people from the families with the lowest household income. Only students from a low gross household income can apply for a Weekly Discretionary payment. Agreed standards of behaviour and attendance should be met. Reimbursement will be made directly to the student's bank account.

### Itemised/Discretionary claims

2.5 These are targeted to students whose family means fall into the above categories or have a family income that entitles them to receipt of one of the benefits listed on the eligibility form. They may be eligible to claim for items associated with their education, as a single payment where they are facing financial barriers to participation in Sixth Form studies. (see 1.2). The application process remains the same. For all itemised claims receipts will be required and reimbursement will be made directly to the student's bank account. Examples of receipts include retail receipts, bus/train tickets, Amazon/on-line retailer receipts etc.

- 2.6 Students from the Priority Group or Weekly Discretionary Group may also apply for additional assistance from the discretionary Bursary Fund. However, receipt of Priority Group or Weekly Discretionary payments will be taken into consideration in assessing any further awards. Only students who can prove financial need will be eligible for any additional discretionary claims.
- 2.7 The assessment of these discretionary claims will be based on student need with priority given to essential education items only. Due to limited bursary funds, we are unable to guarantee that all claims will be supported. In some cases, partial financial support may be given if appropriate.
- 2.8 In all decisions involving which students receive discretionary payments under 2.4 and/or 2.5, and how much bursary they receive will be based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. These will vary from student to student and will depend on factors such as, their household income, distance needed to travel to school and transport costs, specific requirements of their study programme and the number of dependent children in the household.
- 2.9 The school reserves the right to request the return of any books or equipment purchased by a student with bursary money at the end of their study programme.

### Section 3: Application Process

- 3.1 In order for a student to be eligible for funding, the student must have the legal right to be resident in the United Kingdom at the start of their study programme. Students will be required to produce their passport, or other qualifying document, as proof of eligibility
- 3.2 **Step 1:** Completed financial assessment forms and application forms should be returned to the Sixth Form Pastoral Support Officer. King James's must obtain proof that students are eligible for either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary. Details of evidence for vulnerable bursary applications are detailed in the above link. Discretionary bursary applications must be evidenced by receipt of up to date and relevant income documentation, (relevant documents are listed in the application form). This could include notice or evidence of self-employment income. Applicants must clearly state their individual financial circumstances and corresponding need. King James's will retain copies of any evidence for audit purpose.
- 3.3 **Step 2:** Applicants will be advised as to the outcome of their applications. Students in the priority groups will receive direct payments. Successful applicants will either have the books, equipment or other costs provided by the school or direct payment will be made to the applicant. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and will have the right of appeal. The amount of each award will be assessed and disbursed on an individual, case by case basis. Receipts or proof of purchase must be submitted to enable reimbursement.

All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

### Section 4: Awards Process

- 4.1 Bursary awards are made for specified course-related costs and/or other costs viewed as presenting a barrier to the individual learner's participation in education. The amount of each award will be assessed and disbursed on an individual, case-by-case basis as detailed in the individual's application form.
- 4.2 The school may offer bursaries in the form of non-cash "in kind" payments where appropriate, such as travel vouchers or meal vouchers, attendance on course-related school trips etc. Any equipment purchased

by the school for use by an individual learner remains the property of the school and must be returned upon completion of or withdrawal from the course.

- 4.3 Receipt of bursary payments is conditional upon a student meeting attendance and behaviour standards that are agreed in advance. Attendance and behaviour requirements generally align with the conduct standards expected of all students. Where the learner does not meet the agreed attendance or behaviour standards, which will be monitored on a weekly basis, the school will make every effort to advise the learner and help resolve any issues but retains the right to rescind or suspend bursary payment(s).

## **Section 5: Administration Costs**

- 5.1 In accordance with EFA guidelines, King James's School Bursary Fund administration costs are covered by 5 per cent of our total discretionary allocation.

## **Section 6: Appeal Process**

- 6.1 Should learners disagree with the outcome of their application for a bursary award, they may consider an appeal. All appeals will be considered by the Director of Sixth Form. Your letter of appeal should include your name and form and the reasons for your appeal. Any additional information you wish to provide that you feel is relevant to your application can be attached. Written confirmation of the outcome of the appeal will be sent out within 10 days of the appeal being considered.
- 6.2 Any appeals against non-payment of weekly awards should follow the process as stated in the attached Attendance Requirements document.

## **Section 7: Review of Policy**

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account the views of the school, young people and their parents and guidance from the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency.

## KING JAMES'S SCHOOL

### 16-19 Bursary Fund

#### Attendance and Behaviour Requirements

Confirmation of Bursary Fund payment is based on attendance, behaviour and learner effort. The full attendance requirements are outlined below. Behaviour in and out of class should be that expected of all students at King James's. If we become aware of any issues relating to behaviour, effort or attitude these will be taken into account and may jeopardise payments.

#### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

A student will be paid only where they have attended all the sessions for which they are required to register; this includes timetabled lessons, private study, Enrichment, required form time and any appointments with pastoral staff. If the student has failed to attend, payment will be withheld.

However, in some circumstances school will deem absence to be authorised and payment will not be affected. Absences will be considered to be unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. In other words, where there is an absence and the student wishes to claim this as authorised, it is up to the student to notify the school in line with this policy.

If the reason for absence could have been foreseen, then the student should have applied for authorised absence in advance. Students must apply at least five days in advance using the online Absence Request Form. So, for example, it might be acceptable for a student to have authorised absence for a hospital appointment or university open day if this was applied for in advance; but it would not be acceptable to miss classes without prior notification and then to claim that the absence should be authorised.

Where the claimed reason for absence could not reasonably have been foreseen, the school will consider whether the absence was unavoidable. An absence which could not have been notified in advance should be notified by completing the online student absence form before 8:30am on the day in question; unless, exceptionally, there is a good reason why this could not be done.

#### **Absences which can be foreseen**

Absences will only be authorised in advance if the reason given for the absence is considered justifiable. The following are examples of reasons for absence which would usually be considered to be acceptable:

- A medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside school hours. This must be supported by an appointment card or other evidence e.g. letter or text message.
- To look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. Authorised absences for this reason will be granted sparingly; where frequent absence becomes necessary solutions will be explored personally with the student.
- A religious holiday
- A visit to a university or college open days (weekend open days should be booked where possible)
- Career-related or university or college interviews
- Participating 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 (for example, taking part in a regional or national event), or for some other one-off event. Authorised absences for this reason will

be granted sparingly; where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed, solutions will be explored personally with the student.

- Attendance at a probation meeting
- Attendance at a funeral of immediate family or close friend.
- Severe disruption to a student's mode of transport (for example, where a student commutes by rail and a rail strike means there is no practical way of getting to school).
- A driving test.
- Moving house (1 day).
- Evidence of court attendance.
- Family bereavement (conditions will be explored personally with the student).
- Wedding of immediate family member (1 day).
- Educational visits approved by the school.
- Staff training days.
- Study leave.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and the school will take account of: the inherent reasonableness of any case; the number of absences taken by any one individual; repetitions of the same reason; and whether the excuse is backed up with evidence.

The following reasons for absence would not generally be acceptable:

- A student is absent from a session if they have not obtained authorisation for absence
- A holiday taken during term-time
- A social event during term-time
- Part or full-time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons
- Lateness
- Routine medical/dental appointments
- Missing lessons to complete coursework/homework
- Interviews for part-time work

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

### **Absences which cannot be foreseen**

Where an absence genuinely could not be foreseen, the student should make arrangement to tell the school as soon as possible on the day in question that they will be missing classes. This should be done by completing the online student absence form. Where a student has failed to do this, the absence will be treated as unauthorised, and therefore the student will be docked payment for the week in question.

The only exception to the principle above is where the student can supply a strong reason why they failed to contact the school. This might be because an event has been particularly disturbing or unpleasant, or because there has been a genuine practical barrier.

The following are examples of reasons for absence which would tend to be acceptable, provided that the school has been notified on the day:

- An emergency involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. Sudden severe illness would be an example. However, while such cases will be treated sympathetically on a one-off-basis, they will not be acceptable as regular grounds for authorising absence.
- Transport problems, where these were not known about in advance, and where there is no alternative means to hand. It is reasonable to expect students who live in Knaresborough to walk to school, if they do not have a relevant disability. Lateness due to transport problems must be notified to the Sixth Form Pastoral Support Officer on the morning in question.
- Sickness Absence: In general, isolated periods of genuine sickness need not affect payment. However, if a student is away for more than three days in any one week one week's funding will be docked from the next payout. Also, schools are entitled to turn down applications for authorised sickness absence if they have reason to doubt the validity. Clearly an emerging pattern of non-attendance due to sickness without explanation would be unacceptable.

NB: If a student is excluded from school, then payment will be deducted from the next payout.

### **APPEALS PROCEDURE AGAINST NON-PAYMENT**

Where a decision has been taken that funds should be docked due to previous non-attendance or behaviour issues the student will be informed in writing of the reasons. The student then has the right of appeal, to be put in writing to the Director of Sixth Form. This is subject to the following principles:

- There is no necessity to explain in detail why an absence has been deemed to be unauthorised. Absences are initially deemed to be unauthorised: the burden of proof that they should be authorised lies on the student.
- The appeal will be handled within school by the Director of Sixth Form. The student will have the opportunity to present his or her case and to have an advisor present (who may state the case on the student's behalf). Legal representation is wholly inappropriate.
- The school will provide only one appeal hearing; an appeal decision is final.
- There is no mechanism for appeal against a stoppage decision to any payment.