

# The Four Stones MAT

## 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy 2022/23

### Version Control

**Policy author:** Chief Financial Officer

**Policy approved by:** FAR committee

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| Version | Date                      | Details                    |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.0     | 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2022 | Policy written for the MAT |

### 1. Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is paid by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to schools and colleges so that they may provide financial help to students whose access to or completion of education might be inhibited by financial consideration.

Students who are eligible must apply by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and must also supply the required evidence to support the application. Students who are eligible and who meet the requirements of the funding will expect to receive 3 termly payments over the course of the academic year, subject to meeting the 'Commitment Conditions'.

You must read this document carefully to ensure that you fully understand the requirements of the grant and do not miss important application deadlines which are non-negotiable. To further assist you, a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document is attached at the back of this policy and should hopefully answer any queries or concerns that you may have.

### 2. Criteria and Eligibility

5% of the total funding will be held back for administration and 10% of the total funding will be held back for applications that are received after the deadline of Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (i.e. change of circumstances & new students). It is therefore vital that those who are eligible, apply before the deadline of Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to avoid a substantially lower ratio of funding. To be considered for the first round of bursary applications this deadline must be met and is non-negotiable.

Students must be under 19 at the start of the academic year they want a bursary for and studying at school or college, or on an unpaid training course.

**(A) Vulnerable Student Bursary:** These students will receive up to £1,200 for the year based on enrolling on a full time (ESFA funded) course and meeting the 'Commitment Conditions'. Funding for students in this group is held centrally by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and will be drawn down on demand once appropriate evidence has been seen. Students who qualify for this bursary may experience a short delay while the school applies to draw down the funding.

Vulnerable bursary students are:

- Young people in local authority care
- Young people who have recently left local authority care
- Young people who receive income support (or Universal Credit) in their own name as they are financially supporting themselves and anyone who is dependent on them and living with them
- Young people who are disabled and receive both Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own name

Please note: Original sources of evidence will be required by the school at the point of application.

Of the funding delegated directly to the school, 85% will be prioritised and allocated as follows:

### **(B) Discretionary Bursary:**

**Step 1:** Eligible applicants are identified as falling under one of the three student tiers of need below:

- **Student Tier A** – Students who have successfully claimed free school meals for the current academic year.

*Evidence: original local authority free school meals letter, school transition data or original Tax Credit/ Universal Credit Award Notice annual statement from HMRC clearly showing household income.*

- **Student Tier B** – Students whose home Household income is less than £20,817

*Evidence: original Tax Credit/ Universal Credit Award Notice annual statement from HMRC clearly showing household income.*

- **Student Tier C** - Students whose home household income is less than £25,520

*Evidence: original Tax Credit/ Universal Award Notice annual statement from HMRC clearly showing household income.*

Each tier then has a specific weighting multiple for a share of this residual fund as described in Step 2 below:

**Step 2:** Size of maximum payment depends upon the student tier, number of applicants and of course the total amount of funding available.

e.g.

| Tier | Weighting Multiple | Divided by:<br>No. of eligible students |
|------|--------------------|---|
| A    | 4                  | a                                       |
| B    | 2                  | b                                       |
| C    | 1                  | c                                       |

### 3. Conditions of funding

To continue to receive a bursary a student must satisfy the following 'Commitment Conditions':

- 1) The student must have no unauthorised and unexplained absences from lessons or from school.
- 2) The student must have an attendance of at least 95% and must not be late on more than 5 occasions per term. (This can be amended with a discretionary decision where attendance is sub-95%, with a note of the context as to why we are awarding, and a conversation with parents/carers that if it doesn't improve over the next term, payment will be prevented).
- 3) The student must be up to date with all class and homework and have handed in all coursework by the published deadlines.
- 4) The student must achieve '1' or '2' for the following 'Attitude to Learning' grades: effort; classwork; homework; and organisation.

**The final decision for each Student will be at the discretion of the head of sixth form and is non-negotiable.**

Students who are eligible for this funding should be aware that the additional financial support they receive in the form of the grant should be used to help off-set costs directly linked to their education, for example;

- 1) Transport
- 2) Books and Equipment
- 3) Hardship Costs
- 4) Additional Course Costs (trips and residential visits)
- 5) Costs of travel to higher education interviews

Students in receipt of this grant funding will not be eligible or granted any further financial support from the school in help towards these costs.

Students will also be required to inform the school of changes in their financial circumstances.

### 4. In Year Applications and the Contingency Fund

Applications outside of "Window 1" (Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022) will be from the Contingency Fund (10% of total Bursary Fund Centre allocation). An estimate of the 'residual funds' figure will be made by the Bursary Fund Panel and Steps 1, 2 and 3 applied as above. This means that Discretionary Bursary Group student allocations may vary according to the "residual funds" available in Windows 1 and 2 and during the year.

Applications outside of Window 1 will also be pro rata based on the student enrolment date and academic year.

## 5. Procedure for Application

To make an application, a student should first obtain advice from the sixth form support team. Students are advised to clarify they have the correct evidence before submitting their application forms as inadequate evidence will not be accepted and the student may not then qualify for the first round of allocations, which will significantly reduce their eligibility payments.

Once the application form is complete with the evidence of eligibility attached, these should be placed in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential' for the attention of the Central Finance Office and handed in at the relevant home School Reception (Hillgrove Site at King Charles I).

The Bursary Fund Manager will then organise a meeting of the Bursary Fund Panel (bursary fund manager, head of sixth form and another member of the senior leadership team). The panel will consider each claim and make a decision in accordance with the fund guidelines. The claim forms will be sent to the finance team who will then administer the appropriate payment to each student.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence throughout the process and all original documentation will be returned once the applications have been verified.

## 6. Appeals Procedure

Appeals must be made in writing to the Bursary Fund Manager within 4 weeks of the panel decisions, explaining clearly what is being appealed and why changing these decisions is thought to be incorrect. An additional meeting of the panel may be called and additional evidence to support the appeal may be required. Please note, the school is bound by the terms and conditions of the grant and can only make awards to those who fully meet the eligibility and who can provide original evidence.

## 7. Timing and Amount of Payments

1. Students are only eligible for payments if they are legitimately enrolled and attending as defined by the criteria.

2. Applications for 2022/23 Bursary Funds may be made in the time periods below:

- **Window 1:**

For a response by Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, applications should be received by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 with original evidence attached.

- **Window 2\*:**

Applications with evidence received after the Window 1 deadline but before Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 will receive a response before Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022.

- **In Year Applications\*:**

Beyond Window 2 applications will receive a response within 10 working days of submission. The final deadline for applications is the final day of spring half term.

\* All applications outside of Window 1 will also be pro rata based on the student enrolment date and remaining part of the academic year.

3. It is expected that at least 85% of the funds for the year will be earmarked during Window 1.

Any residual funds will be allocated equally to all students who qualified for all 3 termly payments at the end of the summer term.

4. Payment Schedule:

| <b>'Commitment Conditions' review date</b> | <b>Payment Date</b>      | <b>Bursary Amount</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Term 1: 1 week after Bursary agreed        | Review Date plus 2 weeks | 50%                   |
| Term 2: End of first full week             | Review Date plus 2 weeks | 25%                   |
| Term 3: End of first full week             | Review Date plus 2 weeks | 25%                   |

## **Important Notes**

- All payments will be made via BACS\* in the name of the student.
- Regrettably, we are unable to make payments to anyone other than the student.
- Students should ensure they have a bank account in their name through which to receive funds.
- If a partial allocation is made, the payments will be related proportionately.

BACS stands for 'Bank Automated Clearing System' and means that the payment is made directly into your bank account.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Q: How much money will I receive?**

A: Unless you fall into the Vulnerable Student Group, the amount of funding you will receive will be dependent on which tier you fall into, but also how many students apply for the funding as the calculation used is split between the numbers of applicants. Only those students who fall into the Vulnerable Student Group receive up to a set annual payment of £1,200.

### **Q: I qualified for the Bursary last year – do I still need to apply?**

A: Yes – to qualify for any funding from September 2022, everyone will need to submit a new application with original HMRC evidence for this current year. You will also need to bear in mind that if you still qualify, the amount of money you receive may differ to what you received last year.

### **Q: Who has decided the income thresholds for eligibility for the different Tiers of funding?**

A: The income thresholds have been agreed based on the first threshold of the tax credit/universal credit rates published by HMRC.

### **Q: When will I get my money?**

A: Because we anticipate that your costs (i.e. text books, equipment etc.) are more when you start a course, we allocate 50% of the total grant in the first payment and split the remaining 50% into two equal payments for the Spring and Summer term (i.e. 25% each term thereafter). We aim to pay your instalments by the end of the third full week in each term.

Further guidance can be obtained by looking on the website: <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>