

WADEBRIDGE SCHOOL

National and Wadebridge Sixth Form Student Bursary Policy

Contact persons: Mrs S.Fisher (Sixth Form Administrator); Mr M.Streete (Head of Sixth Form); Mrs D Talling (Assistant Headteacher).

Introduction

Students attending Wadebridge Sixth Form have access to two complementary Bursary Funds that provide financial support to those young people who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education after Year 11.

The first of these, the 16-19 Bursary Fund, is provided by the national Government and is open to students across England. The second, the Wadebridge Sixth Form Bursary Fund is provided by the school with full support of the Governing Body and is only open to students in Cornwall studying for a Level 3 qualification.

This policy document sets out how Wadebridge School will administer and distribute these funds in order to enhance access to post-16 education. It is divided into the following sections:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Eligibility
 - 2.1: Age Restrictions
 - 2.2: Students in Receipt of EMA
 - 2.3: Assessment & Duration of Payment
 - 2.4: Guaranteed Bursary - Vulnerable Young People
 - 2.5: Discretionary Bursaries
 - 2.6: Change of Circumstances
- 3) Retained Contingency
- 4) Payment & Conditions of Payment
- 5) Appeals
- 6) Fraud
- 7) Review

1. Communication

Details of each scheme, together with advice on the application process will be made available to all post-16 students via the school website and directly to individual students during their Sixth Form enrolment process.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Age Restrictions

To be eligible to receive a bursary a young person must be aged over 16 on the 1st September in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever comes sooner.

In order for a Wadebridge Sixth Form student to qualify for a bursary, **they must complete the School's Bursary Application Form**. This should be done at enrolment, or as soon as possible

thereafter. Bursary applications received after the fourth Friday from the start of the autumn term will take effect from following Monday, unless the **School considers** there are extenuating reasons why an earlier application was not made.

2.2 Assessment and Duration of Payment

The School undertakes, wherever possible, to assess and notify students in writing of the outcome of their application within two working weeks of receipt of their application form **and** the necessary supporting documentary evidence. **Decisions about the acceptability of evidence for eligibility and assessment of need rest with the Head of Sixth Form.**

Unless there is a change of circumstances (see 2.6 below), and provided the student meets the terms of their enrolment contract and the Bursary Learning Agreement, their entitlement will last for the full academic year. A fresh application will be required at the start of each academic year, in order to ensure the School has up to date evidence of entitlement.

2.3 National Guaranteed Bursary - Vulnerable Young People

The most vulnerable young people are eligible for a guaranteed fixed bursary of £1,200 per full academic year.

This group is defined by the Government as young people who are:

- In care (e.g. living with a foster family);
- Care Leavers;
- In receipt of Income Support in their own right;
- In receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Please note: This **does not** refer to young people whose parents/carers are in receipt of Income Support.

The School requires appropriate documentary evidence to support a student's application for the Guaranteed Bursary fund. This consists of:

- A letter/statement from the Benefits Agency setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled and the period of their entitlement.
- Written confirmation from the Local Authority of the young person's current or previous looked after status.

2.4 National Discretionary Bursary

A discretionary bursary will be awarded to young people ***in receipt of free school meals***, or whose household income is below ***£16,190 per year and in receipt of a means tested benefit.***

The School receives a fixed amount of National Bursary Funding. **The level of financial support available to individual students will therefore be affected by number of applicants who successfully meet the qualifying conditions.**

Students eligible for a National Discretionary Bursary may receive a range of financial support including one or more of the following:

- The subsidy of bus transport costs for those students whose address would have qualified them for free LA travel up to the end of Year 11.
- Support with meals.

- Support with resources or activities required to complete a course e.g. field trip costs.
- Support with costs involved in moving on after completion at Wadebridge Sixth Form, e.g. interviews, University visits etc

The School reserves the right to vary the level of discretionary payments made to individual students to reflect differences in the costs they face as part of continuing their education.

The School requires appropriate documentary evidence to support a student's application for National Discretionary Bursary. This consists of:

- Inclusion in the Local Authority's weekly list of students in receipt of Free School Meals;
- An official letter or statement of current entitlement to one or more of the following means tested benefits, confirming your household income as £16,190 or below: Child Tax Credits, Working Families Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Pension Credit, Job Seekers Allowance and Employment & Support Allowance.

2.5 Wadebridge School Discretionary Bursary

A Wadebridge Sixth Form Discretionary Bursary will be awarded to young people whose household meets the following qualifying conditions:

- An ***income below £31,000 and in receipt of a means tested benefit.***
- Studying for a Level 3 Qualification
- Not in receipt of the Guaranteed National Bursary.

The School allocates a fixed amount into the Wadebridge School Bursary Fund. **The level of financial support available to individual students will therefore be affected by number of applicants who successfully meet the qualifying conditions.**

Students eligible for a Wadebridge School Discretionary Bursary may receive the following financial support:

- The subsidy of bus transport costs for those students whose address would have qualified them for free LA travel up to the end of Year 11.
- Support with exam fees.
- Support with trips relevant to the course being studied.
- Support with costs involved in moving on after completion at Wadebridge Sixth Form, e.g. interviews, University visits etc.

The School reserves the right to vary the level of the Wadebridge Sixth Form Discretionary Bursary payment made to individual students to reflect differences in family income below the upper threshold (£31,000). Where this is done, it will be on a pro rata basis in relation to the level of household income and a written record of the calculation used will be made available to the applicant.

The School requires appropriate documentary evidence to support a student's application for a Wadebridge School Discretionary Bursary. This consists of:

- An official letter or statement of current entitlement to one or more of the following means tested benefits, confirming your household income as £31,000 or below: Child Tax Credits, Working Families Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Pension Credit, Job Seekers Allowance and Employment & Support Allowance.

2.6 Changes in Circumstances

- **If your household income falls during the year.**

Students may apply for a bursary during the academic year, should their household circumstances change so that they meet the qualifying conditions set out above. In order to qualify under these circumstances a student **must complete a new School Bursary Application Form**. Where a student qualifies for bursary funding during the academic year, calculation will be made on a pro rata basis from the start of the week in which the application is received, or where the School considers there are extenuating circumstances, from the date of any earlier entitlement.

- **If you join Wadebridge Sixth Form during the academic year.**

Students joining Wadebridge Sixth Form during the academic year and wanting to apply for the 16-19 Bursary, **must complete the School's Bursary Application Form**. This should be done at enrolment, or as soon as possible thereafter. Bursary applications received more than a month after enrolment will take effect from the start of the week in which the application is received, unless the School considers there are reasonable extenuating reasons why an earlier application was not made. Applications received more than a month after enrolment will have their funding reduced on a pro-rata basis.

- **If your household income rises during the year.**

If a student's household circumstances change so that they no longer meet the qualifying conditions set out above, then **they must notify the School at the earliest opportunity**. The student's bursary entitlement will then be amended from the date of the change in circumstances and the student will be informed of this in writing. Where the student has received bursary funding to which they are no longer entitled, they will be notified of the overpayment in writing and this should be refunded to the school by cheque within two weeks. A failure to repay any overpaid money may result in the School instigating its formal debt recovery procedures.

- **If you leave Wadebridge Sixth Form during the academic year.**

If a student leaves Wadebridge Sixth Form part way through the academic year, then their entitlement to the 16-19 bursary will cease from the end of the week in which they leave the Sixth Form. The final decision on the exact date on which the student's enrolment ends will rest with the Head of Sixth Form. Where the student has received bursary funding to which they are no longer entitled, they will be notified of the overpayment in writing and this should be refunded to the school by cheque within two weeks. A failure to repay any overpaid money may result in the School instigating its formal debt recovery procedures.

3. Retained Contingency National Bursary

The School will retain a contingency to cover the cost of bursaries awarded throughout the academic year due to changes in the financial or domestic circumstances of individual students. This contingency will be reviewed at the end of the academic year and any surplus distributed to eligible students as a 'bonus' payment dependent upon attendance, behaviour and attainment. These arrangements apply to the National Bursary only and not the Wadebridge Sixth Form discretionary bursary.

4. Payments

Any payments direct to a student of the Guaranteed or Discretionary Bursary will normally be made on a half termly basis, for the period of time that the student remains on their course. ***Payments will only be made on the condition that the student fulfils the requirements of their Sixth Form Enrolment Contract and the 16-19 Bursary Learning Agreement, including those relating to attendance.***

Should any student fail to meet these requirements, the School reserves the right to withdraw their bursary entitlement for each week in which the requirements have not been met. An adjustment will then be made in the student's next half-termly bursary payment, or to the next termly transport subsidy to reflect this withdrawal of entitlement.

Payments direct to students will be made by cheque in the first instance. However, it is the intention of the School to move to a BACs payment system in which funds are transferred directly to a nominated bank account. For this reason, students wishing to apply for a bursary should open a bank account, if they have not already done so. Details of the student's bank account, including the name and address of the bank, sort code and account number should be provided in the relevant section of the application form. Any student faced with difficulties in opening a bank account should contact the Sixth Form Administrator immediately.

Any payment direct to a transport company on behalf of a student will normally be made one term in advance. Payment to a transport company is subject to the same conditions as those direct to a student (see above).

The School reserves the right to make payments in kind in relation to the National Bursary schemes e.g. the purchase of books or equipment, rather than by Cheque or BACs, where it is felt by the Head of Sixth Form that this is more appropriate.

5. Appeals

Students are entitled to appeal against decisions made in relation to their application for a bursary or the withholding of payments. Appeals should be on the basis that the School's Bursary policy, as set out in this document has not been correctly applied in their case. Students wishing to appeal should first raise their concerns with the Head of Sixth Form. If they are unhappy with the outcome of their discussions with the Head of Sixth Form, they should submit a written appeal to the Headteacher, setting out the reasons why they feel their application has been inappropriately administered. The Headteacher's adjudication is final.

6. Fraud

Fraudulent claims for bursary allocations will be referred to the Police. Students found to have made a fraudulent claim will be required to refund all payments received and will be subject to the School's Disciplinary Procedures.

7. Review

This policy is subject to review in light of changing circumstances. It is the intention of the School that any given set of administrative rules will normally apply for at least one academic year. However they may be subject to immediate change where necessary. Students in receipt of a bursary award will be notified of any changes in the administrative rules prior to their implementation. ***Wherever possible*** a period of notification of at least one term will be provided. However, the School cannot guarantee this period for notification.

Appendix:

- Wadebridge School 16-19 Bursary Application Form
- Wadebridge School 16-19 Bursary Learning Agreement.
- Wadebridge Sixth Form Enrolment Contract

Policy Reviewed and Updated: June 2014
C Wilson