

DOVE HOUSE SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST

16- 19 Bursary Policy

Policy Title		16-19 Bursary Policy			
Author / Reviewer		Governance Lead/Operations Manager			
Governor Committee		Delegated to the Headteacher			
Signed by Tom Pegler (Headteacher)					
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Aims and Principles

At Dove House School Academy Trust, we provide 16-19 bursaries for students to ensure they have access to their studies, where they would otherwise be unable to do so for financial reasons. We are committed to closing the attainment gap between students from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, ensuring that every student participates in, and benefits from, a place in 16-19 education and training.

There are two types of bursaries available and each bursary must meet the eligibility criteria. The government sets out specific criteria for the **vulnerable bursary** which entitles students to funding, whilst the eligibility criteria for the **discretionary bursary** is determined by our school. In **both** cases, the school is responsible for determining whether a student's application has been successful.

We are dedicated to:

- ❖ Distributing 16-19 bursaries via a fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- ❖ Ensuring that information regarding the application, award and administration of 16-19 bursaries is available to all.
- ❖ Widening access to, and participation in, sixth form education.
- ❖ Ensuring all students who are eligible for funding have access to it.

Eligibility

- ❖ Students who are aged 16 or over, and under 19 years old on 31 August before the academic year in question will qualify for bursaries for that academic year.

- ❖ Where a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they will continue to receive the bursary up until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or until the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner.
- ❖ Students aged 19 and over who have an EHCP plan due to their high needs and who attend a Special Post-16 Institution (SPI), are also eligible to receive a bursary from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- ❖ If any student is on an apprenticeships programme, or any waged training, they are employed rather than in education and are therefore not eligible for a bursary.
- ❖ Where a student's circumstances change, they can apply more than once. In this case, the student will be reassessed, including a one-to-one interview, to determine if there are any exceptional circumstances to consider.
- ❖ All students will be assessed individually for either bursary. Evidence must be provided to support applications – a full list of supporting evidence is outlined in our 16-19 Bursary Application Form.

Vulnerable bursaries

Dove House School Academy Trust's eligibility criteria for receiving a vulnerable bursary includes students who are:

- ❖ In care.
- ❖ Care leavers.
- ❖ Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and/or someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or a partner.
- ❖ Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right, as well as Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit in their own right.
- ❖ Students who claim ESA or Universal Credit in their own right, are able to do so whilst living in the parental home – there is no requirement to be living independently. Dove House School Academy Trust will remind parents (via the application form) that they will not be able to continue to claim Child Benefit if the student successfully applies for ESA.

At Dove House School Academy Trust, students will be on a course lasting 30 weeks or more and participating full-time and can therefore apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200.

Proof will be needed to evidence that a student is eligible for the bursary, in line with the guidance provided in our application form.

Dove House School Academy Trust is responsible for assessing whether students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary and will only submit a funding claim to the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) once sufficient evidence has been provided.

Dove House School Academy Trust may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary as they fall within one or more of the vulnerable groups, the bursary is not required as they do not have any financial need and do not need further support. If financial needs are already met and there are no other costs, Dove House School Academy Trust may decide not to allocate a bursary to the student.

Where Dove House School Academy Trust decides that a student is ineligible to receive a vulnerable bursary, the reasons for this will be explained in writing advising if:

- No bursary should be awarded, as the student has no financial needs; or
- A reduced bursary should be awarded, as the level of financial help needed is limited.

Discretionary bursaries

Dove House School Academy Trust will ensure that discretionary funding is allocated to the students who are **most in need** of financial support.

The institution's eligibility criteria for being considered for a discretionary bursary includes:

- ❖ Students who receive or have previously received free school meals.
- ❖ Students living in a low-income household, defined for our purposes as less than £16,190.
- ❖ Students who have additional responsibilities, such as being a young carer or parent.
- ❖ Students who are from a single parent family or have two or more dependent siblings in their family
- ❖ Students who are completing a placement where specialist equipment and clothes are required
- ❖ Exceptional cases, dealt with at the discretion of the Headteacher, to respond to a typical need not identified through a formula approach.

Typical items the bursary could fund are:

- ❖ Transport costs, that are not met by the statutory transport duty of the Local Authority
- ❖ Books and equipment
- ❖ Uniform or specialist clothing
- ❖ Educational trips
- ❖ Lunches

Dove House School Academy Trust will assess individual applications. This assessment will be documented and evidence to support the claims will be obtained and retained for auditing purposes.

The assessment will be based on a student's financial needs and Dove House School Academy Trust will consider any unearned income, such as shares/investments, savings and rental income.

Dove House School Academy Trust will use in-kind payments over cash payments wherever possible.

Dove House School Academy Trust will follow good practice to make payments on a regular basis (e.g. weekly or monthly) to help the student manage their finances. The schedule of payment will be advised upon approval of the application.

This also allows that if a student has a payment withheld due to failing to meet the conditions, then they will not be left without financial support for a long period.

In the exceptional circumstance where a student cannot administer their own account and manage their own funds, then the bursary will be managed by the student's parent/carer.

Dove House School Academy Trust can insist that students only spend the bursary payments that have been made to them on the support that has been identified as part of the application process e.g. if the bursary has been awarded for equipment costs, it is expected that it is only that which the money is spent on.

Dove House School Academy Trust will manage the discretionary bursary to keep payments within budget. **This may mean that some applications are unsuccessful.**

Where Dove House School Academy Trust decides that a student is ineligible for **discretionary** funding, the reasons for this will be explained in writing.

Conditions of Receiving Bursary Funding

Receipt of a vulnerable or discretionary bursary will be conditional on the student meeting the agreed standards set by Dove House School Academy Trust.

The conditions of payment will be clear and accessible to students and parents as part of the application form, as well as being thoroughly explained as part of the induction process.

Evidence that the student has seen and agreed to the conditions will be kept for audit, such as an agreement signed by the student.

The agreed standards are:

- ❖ Students in receipt of bursaries must have 85 percent attendance, unless the absence is authorised
- ❖ Students that are absent due to sickness will be expected to present a note from a qualified medical practitioner if their absence is longer than 5 days
- ❖ Vacation breaks outside timetabled school holiday times are not permitted
- ❖ Students in receipt of bursaries will be expected to abide by the Behaviour Policy of Dove House School Academy Trust

Where there are concerns regarding a student's attendance or behaviour, the school will discuss the issue with the student and consider individual exceptional circumstances before withholding any payments.

Dove House School Academy Trust will stop payments where a student has been absent for a period of four continuous weeks or more, excluding holidays or if there is evidence that the student intends to return.

Dove House School Academy Trust will also stop payments where a student withdraws themselves from a study programme.

Money may be taken back from students if it has not been spent for the reasons it was awarded to them. Before doing so, Dove House School Academy Trust will always consider the impact of this on the student.

Dove House School Academy Trust may specify that students return any books and equipment, such as a laptop, at the end of their study programme for use by other students. This will be clearly communicated to students and their parents upon confirming eligibility of the bursary.

Recycling bursaries

Dove House School Academy Trust can recycle unused funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups, e.g. if a student leaves early after only receiving part of their bursary (until 30 April 2021).

Where Dove House School Academy Trust has accrued funds, it will use them for another student, rather than claiming for the full £1,200, e.g. if a student left and £700 was unspent, Dove House School Academy Trust will only claim £500 towards another eligible student.

If Dove House School Academy Trust has enough funds to cover the costs of a full bursary (£1,200), it will submit a funding claim showing a value of zero to the SBSS and use the amount to fund the new student.

Dove House School Academy Trust can add any funding for bursaries for vulnerable groups it has claimed, but no longer needs, for eligible students for discretionary bursaries (from 1 May 2021). Funds will be allocated in this way on a case-by-case basis after assessing students' needs.

Dove House School Academy Trust can also carry forward any unspent funds to the next academic year – any carried funds **must** only be used to support students.

If Dove House School Academy Trust has no other students who are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups, they will contact the ESFA and arrange to return the funds.

Student Declarations

Students and their parent/carer will sign a declaration when they apply for either a vulnerable or discretionary bursary, confirming that any evidence given in support of the application is correct.

By signing the declaration, the student and their parent/carer are agreeing to all the conditions and eligibility criteria.

Dove House School Academy Trust will retain copies of the declaration and supporting documentation for six years, in line with DfE requirements.

Managing applications

Applications for the 16-19 bursary should be submitted by the 30th of September each academic year, to allow Dove House School Academy Trust to assess overall demands and distribute discretionary awards fairly.

Dove House School Academy Trust understands, however, that some needs may arise throughout the academic year. As such, Dove House School Academy Trust does not implement a final cut-off date for applications and reserves the right to retain some funds for discretionary award applications later in the year.

Fraud

Dove House School Academy Trust has the right to investigate any suspected instances of fraud relating to bursary fund applications.

If evidence comes to light that supplied information is misleading or fraudulent, Dove House School Academy Trust will stop any further payments and will attempt to recover any payments already provided to the student.

Where significant fraud is identified, Dove House School Academy Trust will report this to the ESFA – this includes the following:

- The amount of money is in excess of £1,200
- The particulars of the fraud are novel, unusual, systematic or complex
- There is likely to be great public interest due to the nature of the fraud or the people involved

The matter may also be referred to the police, with the possibility of the student and/or their parent/carer facing prosecution.

Exclusions

The bursary fund will not be used by Dove House School Academy Trust for any reasons which would give them a competitive advantage over other institutions, such as:

- Enrolment or administration fees imposed by Dove House School Academy Trust
- Fees for access to facilities at Dove House School Academy Trust
- Block subsidy of the canteen
- Block subsidy of transport, or support for travel for all students regardless of family income
- Block provision of equipment, material or books
- Paying bonus payments to reward attendance or achievement
- Payments to support student's general living costs

Block payments to students for attendance, irrespective of their actual financial need, will not be paid.

The bursary fund will only be used for supporting students who have a genuine financial difficulty which might prevent them from continuing in education, rather than acting as an incentive for attendance.

Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

If the complaint or appeal concerns operational processes or customer service for a vulnerable bursary funding claim, the SBSS will deal with the case. If the case is not resolved following this, it will be passed to the ESFA.

Dove House School Academy Trust will act as a first point of contact for students who have complaints and will support students as much as possible throughout the Complaints Policy.

Complaints made regarding Dove House School Academy Trust's provision of support will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in the Complaints Policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the Operations Manager.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Operations Manager and by the Governance Lead and will be approved by the Headteacher.