

George Abbot Application Help Notes and Statement of Conditions for the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Confidentiality

Any Information gathered during the application process whether via discussion or in written form will be treated in strictest confidence and your confidentiality will be maintained. The information provided will be used to assist us in processing your application and providing any support that we are able to offer based upon the information that you provide.

Overview of Support Offering

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. There are three types of financial support offered via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund:

- **Guaranteed Bursary** of up to £1,200 a year, awarded to students in defined vulnerable groups.
- **Discretionary Bursary** of up to £1,200 a year, awarded to students eligible to receive Free School Meals.
- **Additional Help Payments**, which are discretionary payments awarded to students who are not eligible for the Guaranteed or Discretionary Bursary, to meet individual needs and help with one off course related expenses, which may include for example, help with the cost of transport and meal costs if not eligible for support via Surrey County Council, books and equipment, curriculum specific field trips, attending apprenticeship and university open days and interviews, and other course specific related costs (See Additional Help Payments below).

Age Criteria

To be eligible to receive payments from the Bursary Fund in the 2019-2020 academic year a student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2019. 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 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a discretionary bursary while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the additional support to continue their participation.

Students aged 19 or over are not eligible for bursaries for vulnerable groups.

The Guaranteed Bursary

The Guaranteed Bursary provides students with financial support of up to £1,200 a year, which is paid weekly during term time direct to the student. A Guaranteed Bursary may be awarded to a student who falls within the defined vulnerable groups, who meet one of the 4 criteria below (plus the other criteria for age and residency):

- in care
- care leavers
- receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Students receiving the Guaranteed Bursary may also be eligible to receive free school meal payments.

Note: Although a student may have met one of the 4 criteria above, they will not be eligible to receive support from the scheme if they do not have any actual financial need. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

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The Discretionary Bursary and additional help payments

A Discretionary Bursary provides students with financial support of up to £1,200 a year and can be automatically awarded to George Abbot students who meet the eligibility criteria to qualify for free school meals. If the school has an up to date record of a student aged between 16 & 19 who already receives free school meals then no further evidence of family income will be required but a completed application form must still be submitted. If a student aged 16-19 does not receive free school meals but is still experiencing financial hardship, they should complete the bursary application form and we strongly recommend a renewed application for free school meals as well. As an indicator, families with an income up to £25,000 may well qualify for some financial assistance and we are aware that there may be other significant circumstances that mean help would be welcome.

Note: Although a student may have met one of the 4 criteria above, they will not be eligible to receive support from the scheme if they do not have any actual financial need. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

Additional Help Payments

In some circumstances a student who does not qualify for either type of Bursary award may apply for help with course related expenses. Students wishing to apply for an Additional Help Payment will need to complete a Bursary Application and proof of income or hardship will be asked for. Applications for additional help will be considered on an individual basis and is dependent upon available funds. Please contact Mr Brinsden for further details.

Free School Meals

An application for free school meals is made via the school but decisions regarding eligibility are undertaken by Surrey County Council. For secondary school students in 2019-20 the meal cost awarded is £2.30 for a two-course meal. The student receives the awarded amount directly via their meal account on the biometric payment system used by the school's catering provider.

A Sixth Form student may be eligible to receive free school meals if the parent that they live with is in receipt of any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Note: In order to assess household income and establish the take-home pay figure in addition to the amount of Universal Credit after all deductions have been made, it may be necessary for us to request the three most recent monthly award statements.

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Payments

For any student who is eligible to receive any type of Bursary or Additional Help payment, the actual amount of financial support available can only be confirmed once all applications have been processed in September at the start of term. The size of bursary payment awards available may vary year on year. If this is likely to cause temporary hardship or difficulty, please contact Mr Brinsden.

Where regular bursary payments are agreed, these will be made in weekly instalments (1 week in arrears) over 39 weeks during term time. The payment will be made via BACS payment directly into the student's account, therefore the student applying must have a bank account that the bursary can be paid into. Bank account details must be provided on the bursary application form.

Where possible payments will be in-kind payments rather than cash, including such things as travel passes, meal account credits, required books and equipment, etc.

Conditions of payment

- All bursary payments will be paid directly into the student's bank account.
- Eligible students must be under 19 on 31 August 2019 and enrolled on a non-fee paying full time program of study at the Sixth Form.
- All bursary payments will be directly linked to attendance, behaviour and academic performance.
 - **Attendance** – should a student's attendance drop below 95% without good reason then their bursary will be stopped until attendance is seen to improve.
 - **Punctuality** – If a student's punctuality becomes a concern and requires intervention then bursary payments may be stopped until improvements have been made.
 - **Behaviour** - If a student is involved with behaviour that requires disciplinary action then stopping their bursary for an amount of time will be a possible course of action. A bursary may also be stopped if a student fails to correct frequent low level poor behaviour that has been raised already.
 - **Academic performance** – A bursary may be stopped for a period of time if a student fails to meet minimum academic targets through their own lack of application and effort. Payments will restart when school generated or external exam board evidence is available that academic targets are being met.
- The decision to stop or restart a payment will be made by the Assistant Director of Sixth Form, communicated to the student and the finance staff will be informed to action the stop or restart a payment.

Applications

Applications can be made by completing the Bursary Fund application form. Application forms are available from Mrs Zoe Singh - Finance Officer, Elmslie Office or from the Information for Sixth Form section of the George Abbot School website. Completed application forms with the necessary proof of income if required should be returned to Mrs Zoe Singh in Elmslie Office.

Mrs Asli Bayraktar Hockley can assist with applications for Free School Meals if required.

Questions

Questions regarding eligibility for:

- **the Bursary** should be directed to Mrs Zoe Singh

George Abbot Application Help Notes and Statement of Conditions for the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

- **Free School Meals** should be directed to Mrs Asli Bayraktar Hockley
- **'Additional Help'** should be directed to Mr Brinsden

Any of the staff named above may be contacted via the school switchboard 01483 888000.

Appeals procedure

If a student wishes to appeal a decision made regarding the awarding or stopping of a bursary payment they should make their appeal in writing and address them to the Assistant Director of Sixth Form, George Abbot School, Woodruff Ave, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1XX

Monitoring of payments

Administration and allocation of bursaries will be subject to George Abbot School Academy Trust's governance and audit regimes.

The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will monitor George Abbot School Academy Trust's distribution of 16-19 bursary funds.