

## **PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE**

### **STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY & INFORMATION FOR COURSES RECEIVING GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

Date Reviewed by SMT:	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
Date Approved by Governors:	29 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
Member of Staff Responsible:	Deputy Principal (Welfare & Progression)
Next Review Date:	June 2023

#### **Aim**

The College is committed to providing financial support according to need which enables students to access qualification bearing provision, in accordance with the college's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and within the resources received from our funding body.

The following sources of financial support are currently available:

#### **1.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR 16-19 STUDENTS**

##### **1.1 The 16-19 Bursary Fund**

This is a discretionary fund granted to the college each year by our funding bodies to help students who face genuine financial barriers to accessing their college course. It is available to both full-time Sixth Form College students and 16-19 students at AHEd. It is means-tested and allocated on the basis of relative financial need. It can be in the form of a bursary or a lump sum. Students can obtain further information about eligibility and an application form from Student Services or from AHEd Reception/Café area.

Students can also receive an allocation from the bursary fund if they are over 19 but are continuing on a course they started aged 16-18 (a '19+ continuer'), or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Bursary payments can be used towards such things as clothing, books and equipment for a specific course, for transport or for educational visits.

##### **1.2 Bursaries for Students in Vulnerable Groups**

There are guaranteed government bursaries for those 16 to 19 year old full time students in care or who are care leavers; those students who are parents and claiming Universal Credit; those students who are living independently and claiming Universal Credit; and students who receive Employment Support Allowance alongside PIP or DLA in their own name. The Bursary Scheme guarantees the students in these categories a minimum level of financial support which is paid in instalments, based on attendance at College. An application form can be obtained from Student Services.

##### **1.3 Free College Meals**

Free College Meals are available to students from low income households who are aged between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2019 or who are aged 19 but continuing on a programme of study they began aged 16-18. Students apply online to the local authority. Once student eligibility is confirmed to the College, credit is uploaded each week on to student ID cards based on the previous

week's attendance, which can be redeemed at any College catering outlet on the Owens Road site. AHed students will be allocated funds to spend in local shops. Continued payments are dependent on receipts submitted for food previously purchased.

## **2.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR 19+ LEARNERS**

### **2.1 Instalments**

Payment of course fees should be made in full at the beginning of a course. However, where students are enrolling on a course costing over £100 and lasting for more than 12 weeks, they may pay their fees via an instalment plan. Students should contact the Registry Department on 01962 889547 for further information about the conditions for payment by instalments. NB: a £25 administration fee will be charged for instalment arrangements and will be added to the amount of course fees outstanding.

### **2.2 Support for Students on Further Education Courses**

2.2.1 Students may be eligible for free tuition fees through either a Legal Entitlement Level 2 or a Legal Entitlement Level 3 for certain courses if they have not already achieved a Full Level 2 (*= five GCSEs at A\*-C / 9-4 or five CSEs at Grade 1 or one A Level or two to three AS Levels or BTEC First Diploma, NVQ Level 2 or equivalent*) or Full Level 3 (*= two or more A Levels or four or more AS Levels or BTEC ONC/OND or NVQ Level 3 or an Access to HE qualification or equivalent*)

2.2.2 Students may apply for an Advanced Learner Loan for designated courses Level 3 and above. Students must use their Legal Entitlement Level 3 (see above) first, if applicable. NB Advanced Learner Loans can NOT be used for Foundation Degrees or Degrees as they attract Higher Education funding (see 3.4 below).

### **2.3 Leisure Courses**

There are no longer any subsidies available to help students on leisure courses or professional development courses. However, if a course costs more than £100 and the duration is for more than 12 weeks, students may pay by instalments (see above).

### **2.4 Support for Students on Higher Education Courses**

Students may apply for a student loan via the Student Loans Company and should access Student Finance England for initial support: [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

### **2.5 HE Support Fund**

This fund is available to students who have applied for and taken out the maximum Student Loans Company maintenance loan and all other support they are eligible for and who are in financial hardship that might impact on the student's participation in higher education. Forms are available from AHed Café Area.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN**

#### **The Childcare Support Scheme is available for:-**

- a) Adult students, aged 20 or over, who have a dependent child aged under 15 (16 if a child with disabilities) and subject to household income, may be eligible for help with childcare costs (which needs to be Ofsted registered). ). "Care to Learn" funding is available for students under the age of 20 studying at AHEd.
- b) Students in the sixth form college should see the Head of Student Welfare who can advise them about "Care to Learn" funding.

#### ***Disclaimer:***

*The Government funding outlined above is correct at the time this policy is approved. However, please note that the Government reserves the right to amend or withdraw this funding at any time.*

#### **LINKED POLICIES**

- Charging Policy and Procedures
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Financial Guidelines for Trips and Visits
- Fee Payment, Remission of Fees and Instalment Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy for Students

When this policy was reviewed, consideration was given to equality and diversity in the context of the 2010 Equality Act and any necessary updates agreed.

## **Appendix 1 - Protocol for the approval of payments from the College's Student Support Funds**

This protocol is used for sixth form college students for the payment of Bursaries for Students in Vulnerable Groups and payments from the 16-19 Bursary Fund .

### **Bursaries for Students in Vulnerable Groups**

**These students will usually receive a guaranteed amount of £1,200 per annum although financial need will also be taken in to account.**

**Payments are made weekly, based on attendance.**

- An application form will be completed by the student and returned to Student Services with the relevant documentary evidence, e.g. letter from a Social Worker confirming the status of a Looked After Child or Care Leaver.
- Applications deemed to show that the student is within one of the designated "vulnerable" groups will be approved by the Head of Student Welfare.
- A list of these students and their relevant bank account details will be passed to the Finance department by the Head of Student Welfare.
- Weekly checks of student attendance will be undertaken by the Head of Student Welfare (or their designated deputy). Payments will only be authorised to those students with a weekly attendance of 85%, although Authorised absence will not affect payment. Illness will not affect payment unless no attendance is achieved during the payment week.
- The Head of Student Welfare (or their designated deputy) will email a list showing which students are eligible for payment each week to the Finance Department. This list will be taken as evidence that attendance has been checked.
- Finance staff will set up BACS payment to the relevant student accounts, and the payments will be authorised by a member of the Senior Management Team.
- It may be necessary to make a Bonus payment to students towards the end of the academic year in order to ensure that eligible students receive the full "guaranteed" sum of £1200. The bonus payment will then be paid by BACS in the usual way.
- For students eligible for the bursary, a claim will be made each year by the Head of Student Welfare and the Director of Finance via the Student Bursary Support Service.

### **The 16-19 Bursary Fund – One-off payments**

**A one-off payment can be made for items which are essential or significantly support a student's education at College. Applications can be made for such items as travel to and from College, College organised trips and visits within the UK, equipment to participate in College activities, books, equipment and other resources essential for a student's course or printing.**

- An application form will be completed by the student and parent(s) with whom the student lives and returned to Student Services with documentary evidence of the family income.
- Forms will be assessed by the Head of Student Welfare, or their designated deputy, to ensure the financial eligibility of the student.
- If the student is deemed to be eligible for the costs applied for, the relevant details will be entered on the reverse of the form, and will be signed by the Head of Student Welfare, or their designated deputy, as the budget holders.
- The form will be passed to the Finance Department who will either journal the amount to the relevant trip or college budget, do a BACS transfer to the student bank account or, where appropriate, hold the cash for the student.
- The student will be advised of the outcome of the application by email from the Student Services department. Where it is absolutely necessary for the student to receive cash, they will be sent to the Finance Department where this can be collected.
- The Finance staff will check the student's identity card, and will gain the student's signature on the form to confirm that the money has been taken by them.
- The form will then be returned to Student Services for their records.
- Where students wish to reapply to the fund for further assistance they will complete a re-application form, and will not be required to re-submit all the financial documentation, unless the household situation has changed. Where students make a number of applications to the fund, the Head of Student Welfare, or their designated deputy, will check whether they are regularly attending and progressing well on their programme of study.
- These payments are taken from the 16-19 Bursary Fund provided by the government at the start of the academic year and ringfenced for the support of students from low income backgrounds.

Does this protocol impact on equal opportunities within the college?

No, although it is noted that if there is a delay in a student opening a Bank Account, arrangements will be made for short term weekly cash payments.