



ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
A Business and Enterprise College

**A Roman Catholic Church VA School where the
Governing Body is the employer of staff**



**Business &
Enterprise**

16 – 19 Bursary Fund Award Policy For 2016/2017

1. Introduction

The 16 – 19 Bursary Fund is a new £180 million scheme to help young people facing financial hardship to stay in full-time education. It replaces the £560 million per year Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme, which the Government has decreed was too expensive to continue funding and failed to target resources at young people who face genuine financial barriers to participation.

The new scheme became operational from September 2011 and St Nicholas Catholic High School will receive a Bursary Fund allocation of funding to cover the 2016/17 Academic Year, to be forwarded in-year from the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) via the Local Authority. This allocation is based on the number of learners within the school who were in receipt of the Level 1 (£30 per week) EMA in 2009/10 multiplied by a funding rate of £190 per learner.

2. Compulsory Bursary Fund Awards (Priority 1)

Whilst schools and other post-16 education / training providers will have some local discretion to determine how best to use their Bursary Fund allocations, the scheme guarantees bursary payments of £1,200 for 2016/17 to certain groups of students deemed most in need of financial support. These groups consist of students in care, care leavers, students in receipt of Income Support and disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. In order to differentiate these compulsory payments from other (discretionary) categories of Bursary Fund awards, the school has named them "**Priority 1**" awards.

3. Discretionary Bursary Fund Awards (Priorities 2 & 3)

The balance of the school's Bursary Fund allocation remaining, once all Priority 1 awards have been taken into account, can then be used by it to make discretionary Bursary awards to other students most in need of financial assistance to enable them to remain in full-time education. Whilst the YPLA's funding guidelines enable establishments to use 5% of their funding towards covering increased administration costs, St Nicholas Catholic High School has decided not to use any of its funding for that purpose in order to maximize the funding for distribution to students.

In order to ensure fairness and consistency with all other Sixth Form schools within Cheshire West, common eligibility criteria for discretionary awards have been mutually agreed, consisting of 2 further priority levels as follows:-

Priority 2 Students in receipt of Free School Meals will be eligible to receive a Bursary award of up to £800 for 2016/17.

Priority 3 In the event of funding remaining within the school's Bursary Fund allocation once all Priority 1 and 2 awards have been made, awards of up to £500 will be made to students of families in receipt of tax credits with an annual household income of up to £20,817.

4. Applications Process

All students joining or continuing within the school's Sixth Form at the start of September will be given a short Bursary Award application and covering explanatory letter. Eligible students will need to complete and submit their applications to Mrs K Bowdler, School Business Manager **by no later than Friday 23rd September 2016.**

The school will endeavour to assess all applications received at the earliest opportunity with Priority 1 and 2 applicants being notified of the outcome by Friday 21st October. Verifying the eligibility of all applicants is an integral feature of the assessment process. For Priority 1 applicants this will entail obtaining original documentation from applicants setting out the benefits they receive or written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care needs. Priority 2 verification can be achieved without student involvement as the Local Authority provides the school with confirmation of all students granted Free School Meals. The Priority 3 assessment process is likely to take slightly longer as proof of eligibility will be required, which will not be sought until after the extent of any remaining funding has been deduced once the initial Priority 1 and 2 award commitments are known. The type of evidence required in order to verify household income and receipt of Tax Credits will include Tax Credit Award Notices, P60s / evidence of self-employed income.

In-year Bursary award applications will be accepted, but only 10% of the initial funding allocation will be held as a contingency to cover in-year awards. The Bursary Fund scheme will need to be self-financing, but the school may be able to seek further in-year funding from the YPLA in the event of significant in-year applications being received.

5. Bursary Award Payments & Associated Conditions

All Bursary award payments will be subject to the student's satisfactory attendance, behaviour and attainment. 100% attendance will be expected unless acceptable reason(s) are provided for it falling lower. Bursary award payments will be weighted 50% on attendance and 50% on behaviour / attainment. Students will be notified of any deductions and the reason(s) behind them and have the right to appeal against them through the usual appeal channels if they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Award payments will be paid in equal instalments, half-termly in arrears. Payments will be made via cheque, made payable to the student, which will be collectable (in person) from the Finance Office from the date they become payable in accordance with the following schedule:-

| Instalment No. | Collectable From |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |