

PACT 16-19 Bursary Policy

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Rationale

The PA Community Trust (PACT) is committed to providing financial support to students aged 16-19 who face financial barriers to continuing their education. This policy outlines the eligibility criteria, application process, and distribution of the 16-19 Bursary Fund for students attending the sixth form at PACT.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the 16-19 Bursary Fund, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19 at the start of the academic year.
- Be enrolled in a full-time course at the PACT sixth form.
- Meet residency requirements as set out by the Department for Education.
- Meet the additional requirements of the specific Bursary applied for as set out below:

Types of Bursaries

There are two types of bursaries available:

a. Vulnerable Bursary

This bursary is designed to support the young people who are unlikely to be receiving financial assistance from parents or carers, so may need a greater level of support to enable them to continue to participate. Financial support of up to £1,200 per year can be sought and to be eligible the student must:

- be in or recently left local authority care
- receive Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in the student's name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in the student's name and either ESA or Universal Credit

For any application to be successful, specific supporting evidence will need to be provided alongside the application.

b. Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary Bursary Priority Group 1

When a student does not meet the criteria for the vulnerable group, they may still be eligible for support. The criterion for priority group 2 is for students to be eligible for free school meals (FSM). The school will need to be satisfied that the application is genuine following the standard procedures that are currently in operation for the application of FSM.

Students will still be required to submit an application form and identify what they are applying for support with e.g. travel costs, exercise or text books, trips etc.

A bursary of up to £600 for the academic year will be made available for pupils meeting the qualifying criteria of this group. *(actual amount assessed based on needs identified)*

Discretionary Bursary Priority Group 2

Where there is a surplus of funds after the allocation to students in Priority Groups 1, then students with household incomes of less than £20,817 may apply for a lower level of support determined by their specific needs. The following evidence will be required for students in this group:

- A copy of entitlement to means-tested state benefit or Tax Credit Award Notice
- confirming household income of less than £20,817.
- Evidence of income from self-employed a P60 or 3 to 6 months work of bank statements
- as evidence.
- 3 most recent monthly award statements of Universal Credit.

Students will still be required to submit an application form and identify what they are applying for support with e.g. travel costs, exercise or text books, trips etc.

A bursary **of up to £400 for the academic year** will be made available for pupils meeting the qualifying criteria of this group. (*actual amount assessed based on needs identified*).

Financial Hardship or other barriers:

Students whose household income exceeds £20,817 may still apply for a discretionary bursary of up to £400 (actual amount assessed based on needs identified) if they, and their family, are experiencing financial hardship or other barriers to accessing their post 16 education. Where this is the case students are to provide a letter to the Head of Sixth Form, alongside their application form, detailing their current circumstances and the barriers they are facing. Applications of this nature will be treated in confidence and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Application Process

Students must first complete the 16-19 Bursary Fund application form which can be found on our website. One of the Student services team will then arrange a time for the student to bring necessary evidence to be viewed. Once the evidence has been confirmed, the application will be reviewed by the Head of Sixth Form who will raise any further questions. A decision will be made and the Student will be notified of the outcome. If successful a further meeting will be arranged to review how support will be provided to best meet their circumstance.

Applications should be as soon as possible to ensure funds can be provided by the start of the year, applications received close to or after the start of term may experience delays to payment and amounts awarded may be pro-rat'd depending upon the time of year the application is received.

Decisions made by the Head of Sixth form, following a review of the application, will be made based on the evidence provided and the availability of funds.

Evidence

As mentioned above all applications for bursary must be supported by appropriate evidence. Acceptable forms of evidence are as follows:

Vulnerable Bursary:

| Criteria | Supporting documents needed |
|--|---|
| Young person in care or care leaver | Letter or email from care home/social worker/local authority |
| Young person in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own right | Supply one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copies of the benefits paperwork • last 3 months universal credit award notices |
| Young person in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right, AND Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right | Supply one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copies of the benefits paperwork • last 3 months universal credit award notices |

Discretionary Bursary:

Group1:

Successful application for FSM through the FSM eligibility checker.

Group2:

- A copy of entitlement to means-tested state benefit or Tax Credit Award Notice
- confirming household income of less than £20,817.
- Evidence of income from self-employed a P60 or 3 to 6 months work of bank statements as evidence.
- 3 most recent monthly award statements of Universal Credit.

Distribution of funds.

- Where possible bursary payments will be made in kind.
- Where a direct payment is necessary as part of a Bursary, these will be made in regular instalments throughout the academic year.
- Payments will be made directly to the student's or careers bank account.
- The amount and frequency of payments will be determined by the Head of Sixth form and communicated to the student in writing.

Conditions of Payment

When submitting an application for any bursary students agree that if successful they will adhere to the following:

- Only use funds for the purpose in which they were intended.
- Provide all relevant receipts as applicable
- Inform office of any change in financial situation or circumstance that may affect their eligibility to the bursary.
- Students must adhere to the Sixth forms set standards. These are:
- Attendance of at least 97%
- The Student code of conduct.
- Taking all examinations on time.
- Maintaining up to date work in all subjects, including homework and meet all subject deadlines.

Any student who fails to meet the criteria without sufficient mitigating circumstance will not receive their next bursary payment and will need to meet with a member of the Sixth Form team to discuss the reasons/barriers they may be facing.

Appeals

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their bursary application can appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the office within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The appeals panel will then review the case and make a final decision before notifying the applicant within 10 working days.

Queries

Any Queries relating to applications or any other area of bursary funding should be directed to the main office either in person or via email at Sixth@pahigh.co.uk