

18. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We recognise that there are times when individual financial circumstances mean that parents/carers may face difficulties in supporting their child with participating in curriculum based trips and visits, replacing uniform, purchasing set text books and equipment, etc.

The school seeks to maintain a limited fund to support parents/carers who find themselves in this position, often on a temporary basis. Financial assistance is primarily limited to those areas directly linked to attendance at the school and/or the curriculum, and its distribution is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Areas that can be considered include:

- Curriculum based trips and visits
- Curriculum based materials
- Locker hire
- Music lessons
- Text books
- Uniform

Areas that will not normally be considered include:

- Leisure based trips and visits, e.g. ski trips, certain theatre trips
- Discretionary clothing, e.g. leavers sweatshirts

Whilst the above information is a useful guideline **we will consider each case of a student needing financial support on an individual basis.**

Those students eligible for **Pupil Premium** may have some of this funding directed to support any of the above areas. This decision will ultimately be taken by the school as part of the wider assessment, including when appropriate parent/carer discussion on how this funding is best used to assist a child's performance at school.

Where we are aware in advance that financial assistance may be required, you may be approached, in confidence, by a member of staff to discuss a forthcoming area that may need financial input. If through discussion you are agreed that this may be helpful it will be suggested that you follow the standard request procedure below. Alternatively you may request assistance independently.

REQUEST PROCEDURE

If you would like us to consider a request for financial assistance please follow the guideline below:

Send a letter to the Headteacher containing the following information:

- your name and contact details;
- child's name and form;
- area you are requesting assistance for and the total cost involved;
- amount of financial assistance required;
- reason for request, e.g. unemployment, low earnings, etc;

- note whether your child is in receipt of Free School Meals, Pupil Premium and/or the 16-19 Bursary;
- note whether you are in receipt of state assistance and the areas this covers, e.g. housing benefit.

All requests will be treated in strict confidence and at no time will the student the request relates to be informed. This confidentiality will be maintained irrespective of whether a request is accepted or declined.

CONSIDERATION PROCESS

The Headteacher will review all requests for financial assistance.

A confidential discussion may take place with the appropriate Head of Year and/or Faculty/Subject Leader as part of this review to arrive at a decision based on the merits of each case.

The Headteacher will make a judgement on whether to accept or decline a request having considered:

- the facts of each request independently;
- other areas where financial input has been made by parents/carers, or will need to be made in the current academic year, for curriculum requirements;
- other areas where financial input has been made for non-curriculum activities;
- the available funding the school has at its disposal.

The Headteacher will then reply appropriately to the parents/carers with a decision.

A confidential record of all requests for assistance will be maintained by the Headteacher for future reference.

As the funding for financial assistance by the school is not a statutory requirement, and the funds available both limited and discretionary, the Headteacher, on behalf of the Trust and Local Governing Body, will not enter into further discussion once a decision has been made. A decision to provide or decline financial assistance is not open to appeal.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

There are a number of external bodies that provide support to fund students' involvement in activities that they may not be able to afford themselves, including non-curricular activities, e.g. music lessons, World Challenge expeditions, Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

Local funding bodies, e.g. William Harding Charitable Trust, Wendover Society, Rotary Club, have matched funded students in the past.

Local and central government often have funding initiatives that will also support disadvantaged families who may not be able to support their child's involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact external bodies direct.