

What financial help is available to sixth formers who are struggling to stay in education?

First of all, it is always worthwhile talking to a trusted teacher to find out how the school or college may be able to help.

Although financial help for school students through the education maintenance allowance (EMA) has now been scrapped, young people who were already getting EMA before January 2011 will continue to get it until the end of the 2011/12 academic year.

Anyone in their first year of post-16 study who was getting maximum EMA is eligible for £20 each week they are in education or training until the end of this academic year.

The EMA scheme has been replaced by a bursary scheme of £1200 a year for young people with disabilities, on income support, children in care and care leavers.

There is also a new fund for schools and colleges to use to support any student who may find themselves in financial difficulties. This is a discretionary fund and it is up to the educational establishment itself to decide who should get help.

Young people aged 16/17 **may** also be able to request a concessionary bus pass to pay half price fares through their school or college.

Some charities and trusts can help with equipment and costs to enable young people to continue their educational studies. Youth workers can help with applications.

For more information on young people and benefits, go to the Citizens Advice microsite www.advice4me.org.uk which contains information and advice just for young people about the problems that concern them the most.

Parents may also be entitled to help. They can get free, confidential information and advice on this from their local Citizens Advice Bureau – see www.adviceguide.org.uk for contact details.

CAB adviceline 08 444 111 444 or 0300 3300 650(mobile)

Your local CAB is in Market Square, Thame