



# FLORIDA

**Family Empowerment Scholarship  
for Students with Unique Abilities  
(FES-UA) Formerly known as the  
Gardiner Scholarship**

## **Parent / School Handbook**

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# **Florida FES-UA Program (formerly Gardiner) Handbook**

AAA Scholarship Foundation (AAA), a private non-profit organization, is an approved Florida Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO). AAA administers the Florida Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) program (formerly known as the Gardiner Scholarship) which is an annual scholarship that provides parents/guardians of children with specific disabilities the opportunity to better meet the individual needs of their eligible children.

Parents/guardians of eligible Florida children may use the accounts to purchase approved educational goods or services, as well as provide for prepaid college plans, for their eligible children. An AAA FES-UA student may NOT accept more than one state-approved scholarship for the same time period.

## **Parent/Guardian Sworn Compliance Statement**

Please remember that in applying for, and accepting, a FES-UA Program you have sworn to comply with the below statements.

1. The student is enrolled in a program that meets regular school attendance requirements as provided in s. 1003.01 (13)(b)-(d).
2. The program funds are used only for authorized purposes serving the student's educational needs, as described in s. 1002.394 (4)(b).
3. I am responsible for the education of my student by, as applicable:
  - a. Requiring the student to take an assessment in accordance with paragraph (9)(c);
  - b. Providing an annual evaluation in accordance with s. 1002.41(1)(f); or
  - c. Requiring the child to take any pre- and post-assessments selected by the provider if the child is 4 years of age and is enrolled in a program provided by an eligible Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program provider. A student with disabilities for whom a pre- and post-assessment is not appropriate is exempt from this requirement. A participating provider shall report a student's scores to the parent.
4. The student remains in good standing with the provider or school if those options are selected by me.
5. All the information provided in this application and all supporting documentation is true, correct and complete. I understand that intentional misrepresentation could result in the scholarship being denied or revoked.

In addition, I agree to and understand that:

- a) I must file an application for initial program participation with an organization by the deadline dates.
- b) I must notify the school district that the student is participating in the FES-UA if I choose to enroll the student in a home education program as provided in s. 1002.41. This notification is not in lieu of the required notification I must submit to the district when establishing a home education program pursuant to s. 1002.41(1)(a).
- c) I must enroll my child in a program from a Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program provider authorized under s. 1002.55, a school readiness provider authorized under s. 1002.88, or an eligible private school if either option is selected by me.
- d) I must annually renew participation in the program. Notwithstanding any changes to the student's IEP, a student who was previously eligible for participation in the program shall remain eligible to apply for renewal. However, for a high-risk child to continue to participate in the program in the school year after he or she reaches 6 years of age, the child's application for renewal of program participation must contain documentation that the child has a disability defined in s. 1002.394 (2)(d) other than high-risk status.
- e) I am responsible for procuring the services necessary to educate the student. If I do not procure the necessary educational services for the student and the student's account has been inactive for 2 consecutive fiscal years, the student is ineligible for additional scholarship payments until the scholarship-funding organization verifies that expenditures from the account have occurred. When the student receives a FES-UA, the district school board is not obligated to provide the student with a free appropriate public education. For purposes of s. 1003.57 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, a participating student has only those rights that apply to all other unilaterally parentally placed students, except that, when requested by the parent, school district personnel must develop an individual education plan or matrix level of services.
- f) I am responsible for the payment of all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the FES-UA in accordance with the terms agreed to between me and the providers.
- g) I may not transfer any prepaid college plan or college savings plan funds contributed pursuant to s. 1002.394 to another beneficiary while the plan contains funds contributed pursuant to this section.
- h) I may not receive a payment, refund, or rebate from an approved provider of any services under this program.
- i) I may not bill an insurance company, Medicaid, or any other agency for the same services that are paid through the FES-UA.
- j) I agree to follow the rules and responsibilities for parents as they apply to the program, as set forth in the AAA Parent & School Handbook available at [www.aaascholarships.org/florida/parents](http://www.aaascholarships.org/florida/parents).

- k) I may not sell for personal gain any products purchased by the FES-UA  
If I fail to comply with the above, I will forfeit the FES-UA Program.

### **Scholarship Eligibility**

A student is eligible for a FES-UA from AAA, if the student:

1. is a resident of Florida;
2. is 3 or 4 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which the student applies for program participation, or is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade twelve in a public school in Florida;
3. has at least one of the disabilities listed below as defined by s. 1002.394 (2)(d), Florida Statutes (an AAA Diagnosis of Disability form completed and signed by a U.S. licensed physician or Florida licensed psychologist that matches the definitions listed below is required during the application process); and,
4. is the subject of an IEP written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education, or with the applicable rules of another state or has received a diagnosis of an eligible disability from a physician licensed in the US, District of Columbia or Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a Florida licensed psychologist.

What types of disabilities qualify?

1. Autism spectrum disorder, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, published by the American Psychiatric Association
2. Down syndrome, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(13), "Down syndrome" means a disorder caused by the presence of an extra chromosome 21.
3. Cerebral palsy, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(4), "Cerebral palsy" means a group of disabling symptoms of extended duration which results from damage to the developing brain that may occur before, during, or after birth and that results in the loss or impairment of control over voluntary muscles. For the purposes of this definition, cerebral palsy does not include those symptoms or impairments resulting solely from a stroke.
4. Intellectual disability, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(21), "Intellectual disability" means significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior which manifests before the age of 18 and can reasonably be expected to continue indefinitely. For the purposes of this definition, the term: (a) "Adaptive behavior" means the effectiveness or degree with which an individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his or her age, cultural group, and community; (b) "Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning" means performance that is two or more standard deviations from the mean score on a standardized intelligence test specified in the rules of the agency.
5. Phelan-McDermid syndrome, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(28). "Phelan-McDermid syndrome" means a disorder caused by the loss of the terminal segment of the long arm of chromosome 22, which occurs near the end of the chromosome at a location designated q13.3, typically leading to developmental delay, intellectual disability, dolicocephaly, hypotonia, or absent or delayed speech.
6. Prader-Willi syndrome, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(25), "Prader-Willi syndrome" means an inherited condition typified by neonatal hypotonia with failure to thrive, hyperphagia or an excessive drive to eat which leads to obesity usually at 18 to 36 months of age, mild to moderate intellectual disability, hypogonadism, short stature, mild facial dysmorphism, and a characteristic neurobehavior.
7. Spina bifida, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(36) "Spina bifida" means, for purposes of this chapter, a person with a medical diagnosis of spina bifida cystica or myelomeningocele.
8. For a 3-5 year old, being a high-risk child, as defined in s. [393.063](#)(20)(a), "High-risk child" means, for the purposes of this chapter, a child from 3 to 5 years of age with one or more of the following characteristics: (a) A developmental delay in cognition, language, or physical development.
9. Muscular dystrophy
10. Williams syndrome
11. Dual sensory impaired, as defined by rules of the Stat Board of Education and evidenced by reports from the local school district.
12. Anaphylaxis
13. A hearing impairment, including deafness
14. A visual impairment, including blindness
15. Traumatic brain injured
16. Rare diseases which affect patient populations of fewer than 200,000 individuals in the United States, as defined by the National Organization for Rare Disorders. – Name of Rare diseases is required
17. Hospital or homebound, as defined by rules of the State Board of Education and evidenced by reports from local school districts. The term "hospital or homebound" includes a student who has a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric condition or illness, as defined by the state board in rule, and who is confined to the home or hospital for more than 6 months.
18. Speech Impairment
19. Language Impairment

20. Orthopedic Impairment
21. Other health impairment, defined in Rule 6A-6.030152 as "...having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems. This includes, but is not limited to, asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette syndrome, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and acquired brain injury."
22. Emotional or behavioral disability
23. Dyslexia
24. Dyscalculia
25. Developmental aphasia
26. Other specific learning disabilities not listed above, defined in Rule 6A-6.03018 as "...a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest in significant difficulties affecting the ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematics. ... A specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of a visual, hearing, motor, intellectual, or emotional/behavioral disability limited English proficiency or environmental, cultural, or economic factors."

**How Much is the Scholarship Worth?**

The scholarship amount will vary according to grade, county of residence and disability, and is equal to 100 percent of the funding a school district would receive for educating the student. For students renewing their Gardiner scholarships from 2020-21, the FES-UA award is the greater of the amount the student received for 2020-21 or the calculated amount for 2021-22. The average annual award for most students is around \$10,000.

**Scholarship Awarding Procedure**

Interested households must annually complete an AAA application and submit it along with the Notarized Sworn Compliance Statement (page 3 of the application).

In addition, new students and students transferring from other SFOs must submit copies of the following documents:

1. Licensed Physician/Florida-Psychologist Diagnosis of Disability Form (page 5 of application);
2. Parent/Guardian's Florida Driver's License OR Current Florida Utility Bill in the name of the parent or Guardian;
3. Student's Birth Certificate;
4. Prior School Year or Year-to-Date report card for private or public school students; annual evaluation for homeschool students;
5. Individual Education Plan (IEP), if available.

Scholarships are awarded to eligible students in the following priority order: renewing students from the previous school year; students retained on the previous school year's wait list; newly approved applicants; and late-filed applicants on a first-completed, first-awarded basis.

Eligibility is conditional until the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has cross-checked the student against the rosters for public school and the other Florida scholarship programs. The cross-checks begin in July of each year and continue as new applications are found conditionally eligible until all available program funds have been exhausted.

**Scholarship Funding**

Scholarship accounts for students who pass the cross-check will be funded by the FLDOE in four equal amounts no later than September 1<sup>st</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup>, February 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>, during the school year. The state determines the level of funding for the program each year. If sufficient funding runs out or is not available, eligible students will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Scholarship Award Values**

The award for a new student entering the program shall be based on the student's IEP / matrix level of service, grade level and county of residence. For students renewing their Gardiner scholarships from 2020-21, the FES-UA award is the greater of the amount they received for the 2020-21 school year or the calculated amount for 2021-22.

The funding for a student without an IEP or matrix level of service shall be assigned to matrix level 253 (the matrix levels range from a low of 251 to a high of 255). If a parent chooses to request and receive an IEP, IEP reevaluation (allowed once every 3 years), or matrix level of service from their school district, the amount of the child's FES-UA award shall be adjusted as needed based on the level of service assigned, and will remain at that level until and unless an IEP or matrix level reevaluation is requested.

There is also a possibility that the student's FES-UA award funding will be prorated. If a student's information is submitted by an SFO to the FLDOE by November 1<sup>st</sup>, they will be eligible for up to 100% funding for that school year. If a student's information is submitted (1<sup>st</sup> time) between November 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, they will be eligible for up to 50% funding. The funding level is zero after that.

### **Scholarship Acceptance**

Once a student is determined eligible AND has received approval for funding, the parent/guardian must:

1. Un-enroll the eligible student from Public School – if the eligible student is still enrolled in a public school, you must un-enroll him/her before using the FES-UA Program.
2. Un-enroll the eligible student from McKay or Step Up for Students – if the eligible student has a McKay or Step Up for Students scholarship, you must un-enroll him/her before using the FES-UA Program.
3. Sign and Return the Handbook Acknowledgement Form to AAA – this form is located on the last page of this Handbook. It must be signed, dated and returned to AAA before using the FES-UA Program.

Failure to meet the above requirements may result in the loss of the FES-UA Program award.

Parents/guardians of eligible students will receive the following documents in the mail directly from AAA in order to begin using the FES-UA Program:

1. Scholarship Award Letter;
2. School Commitment Form or "SCF" (required for eligible Private School payments);
3. Florida Prepaid College & Savings Plan form; (must be an eligible account for FES-UA direct contributions)
4. Pre-Authorization for FES-UA Program Purchase of Item and/or Curriculum Form;
5. Direct Payment to Service Provider/Vendor Form; and
6. Parent/Guardian Expense Reimbursement Form

Parents/guardians choosing to enroll their child into an eligible private school should first make copies of the blank School Commitment Form before having the school complete it for the first time to ensure they have sufficient copies available in case they decide to transfer to a different eligible school later in the year (see the Student Transfer Procedure on page 10) or use multiple Approved Providers/Services. This will help prevent payment delays.

### **How Can the FES-UA Program Funds be Used?**

The accounts can be used to pay for the following categories of educational expenses for the eligible student only: **(NO PRIVATE SALE PURCHASES WILL BE APPROVED)**

1. Instructional materials, including digital devices, digital periphery devices, and assistive technology for only the student (pre-approval by AAA is required);
2. Curriculum materials for only the student – teacher guides/materials will not be approved (pre-approval by AAA is

required);

3. Specialized services by approved providers or by a hospital in this state which may include, but are not limited to applied behavior analysis services, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapy; physical therapy; services from listening and spoken language specialists This category is for services provided by the provider directly to / for the student only; equipment purchases will not be approved;
4. Tuition and fees at an eligible private school. For the list of eligible schools, go to <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/privateschooldirectory/>
5. Enrollment in, or tuition or fees associated with enrollment in, a home education program;
6. Tuition or fees associated with enrollment in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the institution;
7. Tuition or fees associated with enrollment in a full-time private tutoring program authorized under s. [1002.43](#)
8. Tuition and fees for part-time tutoring services by a state-certified teacher, one who holds a bachelor's degree or graduate degree in the subject area, one who can show Mastery of the subject or a person certified by a nationally or internationally recognized research-based training program;
9. Tuition or fees associated with enrollment in a virtual program offered by a department-approved private online provider that meets the provider qualifications specified in s. [1002.45\(2\)\(a\)](#), the Florida Virtual School as a private paying student, or an approved online course offered pursuant to s. [1003.499](#) or s. [1004.0961](#);
10. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, AP exams, industry certification exams, assessments related to postsecondary education or other assessments;
11. Contributions to Florida Prepaid College Program or Florida College Savings Program; go to <https://www.myfloridaprepaid.com/faq/can-find-information-saving-college-using-funds-gardiner-scholarship/> for more information;
12. Contracted services provided by a public school or school districts;
13. Fees for specialized summer education programs;
14. Fees for specialized after-school education programs;
15. Transition services provided by job coaches;
16. Fees for an annual evaluation of educational progress by a state-certified teacher under s. [1002.41\(1\)](#), if this option is chosen for a home education student;
17. Tuition and fees associated with programs offered by Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program providers approved pursuant to s. [1002.55](#) and school readiness providers approved pursuant to s. [1002.88](#);
18. Fees for services provided at a center that is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International;
19. Fees for services provided by a therapist who is certified by the Certification Board of Music Therapists or credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board;

Once a FES-UA Program account has been established, the parents/guardians must procure the necessary educational services for the student whether or not the services to be procured are eligible to be funded by the scholarship account. If the student's account has been inactive for 2 consecutive fiscal years, the student will be ineligible for additional scholarship funding until AAA verifies that an eligible expenditure has occurred.

#### **Pre-Authorization is Required for Certain Purchases**

Pre-approval by AAA is required before purchasing the following categories of educational expenses for the eligible student only:

1. Instructional materials, including digital devices, digital periphery devices and assistive technology
2. Curriculum (does not include teacher guides and manuals)

Once processed (allow 10 business days for processing), AAA will return a copy of the form to you indicating whether the purchase was approved or denied. **Pre-authorization forms will have a 90-day expiration date from the approval date and will be discarded if not used.** You can re-submit a new pre-authorization form if the prior one was expired.

If approved, include a copy of the approved form with your request for reimbursement or direct payment to service provider form. If denied, you will be allowed one appeal by doing the following: in writing explain in further detail the necessity and educational value; you may include further support and/or a letter from a Licensed Physician or Therapist with recommendation of requested education item(s) on company letterhead (this does not mean the item(s) will be approved), then you will be given the final decision in 10 business days. You will NOT be reimbursed for your purchase with FES-UA Program funds if pre-authorization form was denied.

**Scholarship Distributions to Approved Service Providers**

Direct payment to vendors and service providers for eligible purchases from the eligible student's FES-UA Program funds by AAA is allowed. All payments are made as an ACH Debit transfer only. The parent or guardian must complete the "Direct Payment to Service Provider Form" and submit it to AAA with the supporting invoice (and approved Pre-Authorization Form if required) for approval. Service Providers may also be required to complete a Form W-9 before payment is approved. Generally, payment requests that have been submitted and approved by Tuesday of each week will be paid Friday of that same week.

**Scholarship Distributions to Parents/Guardians for Approved Expense Reimbursement**

Direct reimbursement for eligible purchases from the eligible student's FES-UA Program funds by AAA is allowed. All payments are made as an ACH Debit transfer only. The parent or guardian must complete the "Parent/Guardian Expense Reimbursement Form" and submit it to AAA with the supporting paid receipts (and approved Pre-Authorization Form if required) for approval. Generally, payment requests that have been submitted and approved by Tuesday of each week will be paid Friday of that same week.

**Scholarship Distributions to Private Schools**

Direct payment to eligible\* private schools for tuition and fees for the benefit of the eligible FES-UA Program student by AAA is allowed. All payments are made as ACH Debit transfers only. Schools may not charge a different rate for scholarship students. The same tuition schedule must apply to all students enrolled whether they are on AAA scholarships or if their parents are paying for their tuition. Scholarship students are allowed to receive private scholarships to assist with meeting their portion of the financial responsibility to the school.

It is the responsibility of the household to determine if the chosen school is meeting their student's needs. If the school is not meeting their needs the household should transfer their student at any time during the school year or for the next school year if deemed eligible to renew. The scholarship follows the student to any eligible school as long as the household is eligible. For information on changing schools during the school year see the "Student Transfer Procedure" on page 10.

\*For the list of eligible schools go to <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/privateschooldirectory/>

**Parental Payments for Private School Tuition and Fees**

Parental payments are necessary when an eligible private school's tuition and fees total *more* than the awarded scholarship. The household is responsible for the additional charges that exceed the awarded scholarship.

At times, the school may award a supplemental private scholarship to the household, but if this does not occur, the difference is the sole responsibility of the household. NO EXCEPTIONS.



All households must remain current with their payments to the school for any fees owed by the household, not including the scholarship payments. Failure to pay, or make arrangements to pay, a balance owed may result in the school suspending or expelling your student. If the student is expelled they may no longer be eligible for the scholarship.

### **Private School Tuition and Fee Payments**

By accepting the scholarship student(s) and scholarship payment(s) the school agrees to repay any incorrectly made or overpayment of funds on behalf of the student(s), regardless of the reason. Failure to return the funds to AAA could lead to loss of eligibility as a participating school in the scholarship program and/or may lead to legal ramifications relating to the scholarship laws. The household is responsible for any balance of tuition/fees not covered by the scholarship.

Scholarships are paid in four installments throughout the school year. The payment calendar can be found at <http://www.aaascholarships.org/schools>

Before each installment is processed, a verification report will be sent to the school, listing the student's name and scholarship payment amount. The school must 1) verify each student's information, 2) indicate each student's absences to date and 3) state whether the household is current with any monies privately owed to the school. The school must sign and date the verification report and return it to AAA by the stated deadline. Schools must explain any "no" answers, in writing, on this report and/or attach documentation.

A separate ACH payment is issued for each scholarship student attending a school, even if multiple students are from the same household.

Student withdrawal may result in the school being required to reimburse the scholarship for the difference between actual time period attended and actual scholarship funds received to date. For information on changing schools during the year see the "Student Transfer Procedure" on page 10 of this handbook. The scholarship only pays for services rendered.

If any student receiving an AAA scholarship also receives a scholarship from another Scholarship Organization or a State-Funded Scholarship the school/guardian must contact AAA and the school must return the funds to AAA within ten days. Failure to report such situations to AAA may result in a school's loss of eligibility to enroll new scholarship students and/or to legal ramifications with the State Attorney's Office.

If a school receives a payment for a student who is not currently attending their school they must return the funds to AAA immediately, unless it is the final "exit" payment as determined by AAA. If the student has expenses over and above tuition and fees for actual attendance at their school for prior year(s), it is the household's responsibility to pay the debt. The school may not keep funds or request funds for prior year(s).

Failure to return the funds to AAA in these situations may lead to loss of eligibility as a participating school in the AAA scholarship program and/or may lead to legal ramifications relating to the scholarship laws. If pro-rated monies are owed to the school an exit ACH Debit payment will be issued following receipt of the Student Withdrawal Form (SWF).

### **Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment of Payment Received**

Schools must record receipt of scholarship funds for eligible students immediately.

The school should notify the parent/guardian that the scholarship payment has been received and have them come in to sign a "Payment Received Form" (PRF) which is supplied to the school by AAA. The signed form must be emailed to [plsa@aaascholarships.org](mailto:plsa@aaascholarships.org) confirming receipt of funds within ten days by the school. Additional payments to the school can be withheld until the Payment

Received Form is completed and returned.

**NO POWER OF ATTORNEY OR OTHER TRANSFER OF SIGNATURE AUTHORITY IS ALLOWED.**

The scholarship funds may not leave the possession of the school nor should any funds be “kicked back” to any family member of the eligible student. Students may not bring home the “Payment Received Form” for parent signature.

Failure by the school to follow these procedures may result in loss of eligibility as a participating school for the scholarship program, legal ramifications with the state attorney’s office, and reimbursement in full of any overpaid monies due to AAA.

**Student Transfers**

One of the benefits of private education is that if the parent/guardian is not satisfied with a school they may choose another one that better meets the needs of their student.

**A student’s scholarship may be transferred to another eligible\* in-state private school at any time during the year.** However, AAA will not renew or transfer scholarships while money is owed to a previous school.

If the parent/guardian plans to withdraw a student during the school year, the parent/guardian should notify the school two weeks prior to withdrawal.

How to transfer a scholarship *during the school year*:

1. The school the student is leaving must complete a Student Withdrawal Form (SWF) and return it to AAA within five business days of being notified that the student is leaving. AAA will not transfer a scholarship to a new school nor process other payments until the exiting school confirms that the household has no outstanding balance owed or a payment schedule is in place.
2. The new school must fill out a School Commitment Form (SCF) for each student and email it to AAA at [AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org](mailto:AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org).

AAA will complete the transfer process when both documents have been received. This process may include a final payment to the school that is being exited, which the Payment Received form must be signed by the appropriate individual following the check cashing policy, or a request for refund of over payment for the student transferring.

If at any time while utilizing the scholarship a student returns to public school, the student will lose their scholarship. The household will be required to reapply and document eligibility to qualify in future years.

**Scholarship Distributions to Florida Prepaid College or Florida Savings Program**

To transfer funds to the Florida Prepaid College Program or the Florida Savings Program, the parent/guardian must establish an account with the Florida Prepaid College Board. Go to <https://www.myfloridaprepaid.com/faq/can-find-information-saving-college-using-funds-gardiner-scholarship/> for more information on establishing an account. Once the account has been established, the parent/guardian of a FES-UA Program recipient can request a transfer of the awarded funds to the established account by providing the required information. See “Transfer to Florida Prepaid College & Savings Plan Form” on our website.

**Disallowed Spending Categories**

The accounts may not be used to pay for the following ineligible items/services:

- Live animals
- Food or housing for live animals
- Gas or electric powered gardening tools

- In-ground or above-ground swimming pools
- Blades or knives or items with blades or knives
- Theme park admissions or annual passes
- Wheelchairs, walkers and walking devices
- Braces (back, leg, neck, etc.)
- Medical testing kits and testing equipment
- Medically required equipment and accessories (feeding tubes, hygiene, sleeping, etc.)
- Hyperbaric chambers
- Family memberships to gyms, YMCAs or other facilities
- Pool tables
- Household items, including kitchen appliances and cookware
- Household furniture (chairs, lamps, pictures, beds, etc.) or fixtures
- Outdoor equipment (playground, basketball equipment, etc.)
- Gaming consoles (Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo, Nintendo switch, etc.)
- Mileage or fuel for transportation
- Vehicles, including but not limited to two-, three-, and four-wheeled vehicles
- Teaching manuals, teacher's edition with the annotated student text and copies of supplementary materials (print or digital) with answer keys, worksheets, tests, diagrams, etc. and professional development which may include training, workshops and consulting services.
- Board games that: 1) were not specifically designed to provide instructional content and student learning activities for assisting in the instruction of a subject or course and/or 2) are not required supplemental materials for an approved curriculum for the student
- Expenses incurred before the school year during which the student's FES-UA account was established
- Private sale and/or cash purchases

Note that this is not an exhaustive list. AAA reserves the right to approve or deny requests based on each student's facts and circumstances.

### **Appealing a Denied Request**

If a request is denied, a household may appeal that decision ONE TIME by submitting a new request within ten (10) business days, noting "Appeal" on the request and providing documentation that supports the reconsideration request. The decision made by AAA is final. After the appeal decision is made, any additional appeals for the same item will NOT be reviewed.

### **Loss of a Scholarship**

A household may lose their scholarship for any of the following:

1. Providing fraudulent information or withholding information on the application or at any time.
2. Failing to comply with the requirements of the Sworn Compliance Statement.
3. Continuing to attend a Florida public school, including:
  - a. Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
  - b. Florida Virtual School (as a public school student)
  - c. College-Preparatory Boarding Academy
  - d. A developmental research school
  - e. A district charter school

- f. A district virtual education program (as a public school student)
  - g. Florida VPK (unless being funded with FES-UA Program funds)
4. Accepting a McKay Scholarship or Florida Income-Based Scholarship (with AAA Scholarship Foundation or Step Up for Students).
  5. Enrolling in a school operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in the Department of Juvenile Justice commitment programs.
  6. Accepting any payment, refund, or rebate from a provider of any services for the FES-UA Program.
  7. Billing an insurance company, Medicaid, or any other agency for the same services that are paid through the FES-UA Program.
  8. Not making any eligible expenditures from an account for two (2) consecutive fiscal years.
  9. Not enrolling the student in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or a program offered by the institution for any period of three (3) consecutive years after high school completion or graduation.
  10. Accepting multiple FES-UA Program awards (during the same period).
  11. Failing to sign the "Payment Received Form" for payments within 5 business days of being notified by the school or within the time specified by school policy, whichever is less.
  12. Failing to sign and return the Handbook Acknowledgement Form to AAA by the stated deadline.
  13. Failing to complete AAA's internal audit process, if required.
  14. Owning, operating, or acting in the capacity of a principal or person with equivalent decision making authority of an eligible private school, regardless of where the student attends
  15. Otherwise violating the conditions of the scholarship program

**Change of Contact Information**

If there is a change of address, telephone, cell phone or E-mail address, the parent/guardian must immediately notify AAA in writing with a copy of an updated ID or utility bill.

AAA must be notified if the household is moving regardless of whether it is within the area or outside the area the household currently resides in. A scholarship can be transferred to any eligible private school in the state the scholarship was awarded as long as eligibility is maintained.

Failure to inform AAA of the household's current address may result in the household not receiving important, time-sensitive communication from AAA and may result in the loss of the scholarship. It is very important that AAA be able to reach you!

**Reach us at 888-707-2465 or [AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org](mailto:AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org)**

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FES-UA Program Handbook

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF FES-UA HANDBOOK**

INSTRUCTIONS: One of the steps in accepting the FES-UA Program award is to sign the bottom of this acknowledgement form and return it to AAA at [AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org](mailto:AAAGardiner@aaascholarships.org) (email), or by fax at 888-707-2465 or by mailing it to FES-UA-AAA Scholarships PO Box 15719, Tampa, FL 33684-0719.

By signing this form, I acknowledge receipt, understanding and agreement to comply with the information, policies and procedures in the handbook.

The handbook describes important information and guidelines about the FES-UA Program and I understand that I should consult AAA regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

If there is a difference between the information in this Handbook and the Florida Statute regulating the FES-UA Program, I understand that the Statute shall rule.

Since the information, policies, and procedures described in the handbook are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions may occur and I understand that the revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is not a contract or guarantee of a FES-UA Program. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Printed Name

**\*\*\*\*\*You must return this signed page to AAA Scholarship Foundation in order to complete the FES-UA Scholarship award acceptance process and before you may begin using the account.\*\*\*\*\***