

# Bursary Policy

## Introduction

The Board of Directors are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents or guardians means-tested financial support towards the payment of tuition fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and Bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 50% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Bursaries Committee, who will calculate an initial award level in relation to a family's financial and other circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other dependants). The Bursaries Committee will make their decision based on the School's confidential scale of awards, which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The scale of awards is reviewed and revised annually by the Bursar to reflect any changes in fees costs and is approved by the Board of Directors. Though bursaries are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending the individual parents' or guardians' individual circumstances.

Bursaries are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances.

Requests for Bursaries usually fall into two categories:

1. New applicants to the school where a place has been offered but parents or guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees
2. Existing pupils where a change in parents' or guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

## New Applicants

Information alerting the parents or guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of the School's fees is included in the School's Prospectus and on its website.

## The Bursary Application Process

Bursaries for new applicants may be made available to parents of children entering the school in Pre-Reception or above and parents of existing pupils from Nursery or above. The Bursar are responsible for the management and co-ordination of the process.

All applicants must be registered with an offer of a place at the school to be able to apply for a Bursary.

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**Step one:** Parents or guardians seeking a Bursary are required to undergo a financial review with Bursary Administration Limited, which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. Details of income and capital will be sought and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. A representative from Bursary Administration Limited will visit the parents or guardians' home(s) to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.

**Step two:** The Bursar assesses the financial review in order to establish the likely level of support, which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the school.

**Step three:** The Bursar prepares a recommendation, which is considered by the Bursaries Committee, and a joint recommendation is then reached.

**Step four:** The parents or guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the Bursary Award.

**Step five:** Parents or guardian are then required to sign an acceptance form accepting the place at the school and an acknowledgment agreeing to any conditions relating to the Bursary Award.

## The Case for Assistance

The Bursaries Committee considers a number of factors when making the decision about whether to make a bursary award.

The level of the bursary required is not influenced by the academic ability of the child but by the extent of the financial need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and the level of the award required recommended by the Bursary Committee. The School has a duty to ensure that Bursary Awards are allocated appropriately. As well as current earnings and expenditure, other factors, which will be considered in determining the level of award required, will include:

- The ability to maximise the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, we would expect both to be earning unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for the children under school age or other dependants, or the requirement of the partner's work.
- Opportunities to release any capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would significant equity values in properties.
- Contributions to household costs by other family members, or any adults (e.g. step-parents, grandparents and godparents) unrelated to the child or from any other source
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities), we will take these outgoings into account. There is an expectation that bursary applications, where possible, will have been made to other educational establishments in respect of siblings so that the burden of school fees is shared among institutions.

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- Acknowledging that other might have a different view, the school considers that the following, for example, may not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
  - Frequent or expensive holidays;
  - Luxury cars;
  - Investment in significant home improvements;
  - Higher than average non-contractual pension contributions;
  - A second property/land holding; or
  - Failure to honour payments in respect of school fees payable to other education establishment.

Awards of financial assistance to one child do not necessarily guarantee awards to siblings already in the school or subsequently admitted to the school. The Bursaries Committee is sympathetic to changes in family circumstances arising from illness or bereavement but any application submitted for these reasons is means-tested in the same way as any other award.

In cases where demand on the school's bursary funds exceed the availability of funds, the Bursaries Committee may refer applications back to the Admissions Committee. Attention will then be given to the assessment result of each child; academic potential and potential in co-curricular areas will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Those judged like to gain most from the educational provision at Abercorn School will be awarded bursaries. Inevitable difficult decisions have to be made at this stage, which may result in no award being given.

## **Existing Pupils**

### **Change in Family/Financial Circumstances**

Parents with a child at the school who experience an unexpected change in their family or financial circumstances after the point of entry may apply for a bursary explaining their situation. Parents will be required to complete a Bursary Application Form. All applications will be dealt with in exactly the same manner as set out in the Bursary Application Process notes above.

The Bursaries Committee is unlikely to take a sympathetic view of applications received in respect of a child already at the school where it become apparent that fees could never have been afforded and no previous bursary application was submitted.

### **Annual Review**

All Bursary Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Bursary Awards are reviewed in the Spring Term each year. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of February to be returned to Bursary Administration Limited by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of Bursaries, the Bursaries Committee have the discretion to recommend the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where

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the parents or guardians have to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

Should any information disclosed in response to the annual review become inaccurate at a later date, the School must be informed without delay. Failure to divulge a change in circumstances could lead to a Bursary being withdrawn or withheld.