



## Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

### Bursary Policy

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|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|
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| Committee Responsible: | Pupil and Personnel | Next Review: | 30.11.20 |
| Approved by:           | Full Govs           |              |          |

# Bursaries Policy and Procedures

## Policy Statement

The Governors of Highfields School are committed to broadening access to the School by offering eligible parents means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and may be awarded in the form of a discount on tuition fees payable to families, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants. Bursary support is based on an assessment of financial circumstances. It considers capital assets as well as income, investments and savings. It also makes allowances for dependents and other relevant considerations.

## Aims

The aims of the policy are:

1. To enable access to the education provided by the school is available to children from all sections of society;
2. To ensure that children already at the school will not be forced to leave if the members of their family responsible for fees have come upon unforeseen financial circumstances

Highfields School is a registered charity which is committed to providing Public Benefit according to its obligations under the Charities Act 2006. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis in order to take in to account the latest guidance from the Charity Commission and any other relevant factors.

All Bursary applications are treated in the strictest confidence and pupils will not be made aware that they benefit from a Bursary unless informed by the parents/carers.

## The Application Process

The application process for any new bursaries starts in the Spring Term. All existing bursaries are reviewed annually at the same time. All applications, whether new or renewal, must be received by the second week of the Summer Term. Governors will endeavour to inform parents if they have been awarded a bursary by the Summerhalf term holiday. Bursaries may be awarded outside of this annual process, but only on rare occasions. This will be for existing pupils where unforeseen circumstances have resulted in a family becoming unable to meet that year's fees.

Parents may apply for a Bursary by writing to the Admissions Registrar who will refer the application to the School's independent assessors and external company, Bursary Administration Ltd. This company will seek to establish the financial circumstances of the household and will ask the applicant family to provide full disclosure of their financial position. This information must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. Completed forms and evidence should be submitted to Bursary Administration Ltd.

Information provided to Bursary Administration Ltd is reviewed and assessed by them. This may involve a visit to the applicant family's home by a representative from Bursary Administration Ltd, to ensure that any information submitted has been correctly interpreted and that the basis of the assessment is fair.

It is critical that applicants answer all the questions carefully and in full, and documentary evidence be provided to support the application. Should any of the information disclosed in the

application become inaccurate at a later date the school must be informed without delay. Failure to disclose requested information or a change in financial circumstances to the school could lead to a Bursary being withdrawn. The Governors will decline or withdraw a Bursary if it is discovered that they have been misled at any time either during the application process or whilst a Bursary has been held in previous academic years.

Information and recommendations from Bursary Administration Ltd are sent to the Governors' Bursary Committee, with a proposal or recommendation from the Headmaster.

The Headmaster will assess all applications to establish the likely level of support required in order to allow the pupil to attend the School. In addition, the Headmaster will make a recommendation based upon the benefit to the pupil of attending Highfields School and the contribution the pupil will or is likely to make to the School. The Governors' Bursary Committee has the authority to make a final decision which is then communicated to the applicant family.

Please note that the decision of the Governors' Bursary Committee is final and there is no further right of appeal.

Should a Bursary be offered, parents are required to acknowledge agreement in writing of any conditions relating to the Bursary which they will be expected to fulfil.

### **Considerations in the Assessment Process**

The Headmaster will consider a number of factors when making a judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of any such support. Each application is considered on its own merits. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal. However, the School has a duty to ensure that any financial support it offers is well-focussed and targeted towards those most in need.

Factors considered include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Suitability of the child to the School:** attention is given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential is also considered as well as actual achievement. Those judged likely to gain most from the education provision will be given priority. Pupils to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmaster, be likely to make sound academic progress and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work and benefit from participation in the wider, extracurricular activities on offer at the School. Previous school reports may be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **Financial Circumstances:** the amount of the award is not influenced by the academic ability of the child, but by the extent of need. Consideration is given to the ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family; opportunities to release capital (including investments and significant equity value in houses); in cases of divorce or separation, the contribution made by both parents; any contribution to fees or other household costs by other, wider family members; any adults unrelated to the child or from outside sources; any fees being paid to other schools (or universities) for siblings.

All awards are subject to the School's ability to fund them within the context of its overall budget and cannot therefore be guaranteed.

## **Other Factors**

It is recognised that there may be other circumstances which could be taken into account. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the School
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant (for example, the child may be suffering bullying at their present school)
- Where a parent or guardian is terminally ill or unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health
- Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the School at an important stage of his or her education.

The School considers the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:

- Frequent and/or expensive holidays
- Expensive hobbies
- New or luxury cars
- Investment in significant home improvements
- A second property or land holdings

This list is indicative but is not exhaustive.

## **Misleading applications**

Governors reserve the right to seek redress for historical misinformation and may inform any appropriate authorities.

## **School Extras**

Any Bursary awarded is financial support towards fees only. All other extras, including peripatetic lessons of any nature, remain the responsibility of the Bursary recipient.

## **Review of Bursary Awards**

Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, or withdrawn depending on the financial circumstances of the family. Current Bursary recipients will be issued with repeat means-testing forms each year. Awards are reviewed to reflect changes in fee costs. Within overall budget funding, the School will consider applications for cases of sudden, unforeseen need where applications meriting assistance are received out of the normal cycle for the submission, scrutiny and award of Bursaries. In such cases, the sum will be set within budgetary constraints.

The Headmaster has a discretion to recommend to the Governors a reduction or withdrawal of an award where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory, where any conditions attaching to the award have not been met or where parents have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

## **Confidentiality**

The School respects the confidentiality of Bursary awards made to families, and recipients (parents and pupils) are expected to do likewise. It is a condition of the Bursary that it remains confidential. Breach of this condition will automatically result in the withdrawal of the Bursary and possible reimbursement to School.

## **Other Sources of Bursary Assistance**

The school encourages applications to trusts and charities which may provide financial support. A list of such organisations is available from the Admissions Registrar.