



Means-tested Bursary & Awards Policy

Related Forms

Confidential Statement of Financial Circumstances
School Admission Policy
Bursary Conditions Agreement
Continuation Award Application

MEANS -TESTED BURSARIES

General

The Trustees and Governors of The Towers are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/carers means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100 per cent on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Awards are made on the basis of the confidential Towers 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 fee costs and is approved by the Trustees and Governors. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents'/carers' circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the school where a place has been offered but parents/carers are unable to fully fund the tuition fees, and parents of pupils moving from the Junior School into the Senior school
- Existing pupils where a change in parents'/carers' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.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 to the School

Awareness - information provided by the school alerting the parents/carers of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees is available on the school website.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/carers of children entering Year 7 of The Towers (See the 's Admission's Policy). They are awarded at the discretion of the Trustees and the Headmistress. The Bursar and Headmistress are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **Step one** - parents/carers seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, may be found following the link under the fees section of the website and must be accompanied by **full** documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Bursar no later than **the date of the entrance exam** in any year for bursaries to start the following September.
- **Step two** - the Bursar assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the school. This may involve the Bursar, or his/her representative, visiting the parents'/carers' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair
- **Step three** - the Bursar prepares a recommendation in accordance with The Towers confidential scale of awards which is considered with the Headmistress and a joint recommendation is then reached.
- **Step four** - the joint recommendation is presented to the Trustees for approval.
- **Step five – January/February.** The parents/carers are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the bursary offer by letter.
- **Step six** - parents/carers are then required to sign a letter(for parents moving from Junior to Senior School) and the Acceptance Form (for new parents) accepting the place at the school and sign the Grant Condition Agreement which relates to the conditions of the bursary award.

The Case for Assistance

The Headmistress and Bursar will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support. In the main, the child's suitability for the school is the first consideration in granting support.

- **Suitability** - in assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmistress, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the school's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **Financial limitations**- the amount of the bursary award is not influenced by the level of the academic ability of the child but by the extent of need. Each case is assessed on its own merits

and awards are made accordingly subject to the school's ability to fund these within its overall budget. 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 all bursary grants are well focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant will include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, both would be expected to be employed unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for children under school age or other dependents or the requirements of their 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 equity values in houses.
- In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent.
- Contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the school considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
 - frequent or expensive holidays;
 - new or luxury cars;
 - investment in significant home improvements;
 - a second property/land holdings.
- Other factors- it is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:
 - Where a child has siblings at the School.
 - Where the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g: may be suffering from bullying at their present school).
 - Where a parent/carer is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the school will in normal circumstances set aside each year a hardship fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for bursary submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/carers with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a Bursary to the Headmistress explaining their situation and using the Confidential Statement of Financial Circumstances found on the web site. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

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. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat Continuation Award Application in February each year for return by half term.

For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmistress and Bursar, have the discretion to recommend to the Trustees the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents/carers have failed to support the school, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

The Towers is pleased to offer 3 academic awards. These are awarded for exceptional performance in the entrance exam. Once awarded these will continue throughout the pupil's schooling subject to annual academic reviews. The bestowing of an academic award is at the discretion of the Headmistress and Trustees.

Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary and scholarship awards made to families and recipients are expected to do likewise.