

BURSARIES

Scholarships and Bursaries

There is an important distinction between scholarships (not means-tested) and bursaries (means-tested).

Scholarships are awarded to children who have been assessed as having academic or other talents, and are offered a scholarship irrespective of their financial circumstances.

Bursaries are means-tested, and are offered to children who meet the entry criteria of Boundary Oak School. The standard assessment form prepared by the Independent Schools Bursars Association (ISBA), plus possibly an interview, is used.

Bursaries may be awarded in addition to a scholarship where financial need is demonstrated and the child would otherwise be unable to enter or remain in the school.

Bursary Policy

The Governors of Boundary Oak School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 75% (in exceptional circumstances) on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are subject to annual review of parental means and may be increased or decreased, depending on parental circumstances

Bursaries may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents/guardians' 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 normally fall into two categories:

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or guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of their education

There is a finite amount of money in the Bursary Fund and at times this will restrict the awarding of bursaries, or the amount awarded to a pupil.

New Applicants to the School

Information relating to Bursaries to assist with the payment of schools fees and the Bursary application forms are available from the Headmaster or the Bursar.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children in or entering any year group at Boundary Oak School. Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governors forming a Bursary Committee together with the Head and Bursar who are responsible for the management of the Bursary application process. Applications will normally be received during the Spring term and will all be reviewed at a meeting of the Bursary Committee.

- Step One. Parents/guardians seeking a bursary should complete the Bursary application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income, capital and outgoings, must be accompanied by supporting evidence. The completed form, together with the supporting documentation, is to be submitted to the Bursar by the parents/guardian.
- 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 representative, visiting the parents/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. If there is difficulty interpreting any aspect of the form an interview may be requested.
- Step Three. The Bursar prepares a recommendation in accordance with the Bursary which is considered with the Head and a joint recommendation is then reached.
- Step Four. The recommendation is presented to the Bursary Committee for approval.
- Step Five. The parents/guardians are advised in writing whether their child is to be offered a Bursary and the level of the offer.
- Step Six. Parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the school with the registration fee (as appropriate). An acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the Bursary must also be signed.

The Case for Assistance

The Headmaster and the Bursar will consider a number of factors when making the assessment of the requirement for support. These are as follows:

- Suitability of the Child. This is an overriding and principle requirement. The child will be required to undertake and pass an entrance assessment to Boundary Oak School. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those most likely to gain most from the educational provision provided by the School. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, be likely to make sound academic progress and would benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School. Where the pupil is already attending the school, a report will be sought from teachers as to the educational attainment and potential of the child. Previous school reports may be consulted for evidence of good behaviour and attainment in both cases.
- Financial Limitations. The amount of the Bursary award is determined by need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within the overall Bursary budget. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal to that family. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all bursary grants are allocated appropriately and so a number of factors will be considered in determining the level of any bursary grant to be awarded. These will include (but are not limited to):
 - The ability to improve the financial position or earning capacity of the family.
 - The opportunities available to release any capital to fund school fees. 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, any contribution made by the absent parent.
 - Where fees are being paid to other schools or universities.

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 need to be taken into account.
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
- Where a parental separation or parental bereavement may result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School.

Note that in assessing the application, the school may request a home visit.

Existing Pupils – Change in Family Circumstances

Within the overall Bursary budget, 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. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change are advised to discuss the matter with the Headmaster, who will be able to supply a Bursary application form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Annual Review

All Bursary awards are subject to a review of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Existing Bursary beneficiaries will be issued with a new bursary form in the Autumn term.

For those already in receipt of bursaries, the Head and Bursar, in making their joint recommendation to the Finance Committee, have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of an award where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory.

Confidentiality

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

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees. In the majority of cases, these are to assist children who are already attending a fee-paying school and due to a change of circumstances may be unable to remain. Boundary Oak encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information can be obtained from the Headmaster.

The Bursar
Boundary Oak School