

WOODBIDGE SCHOOL

BURSARY POLICY FOR 2011/12

General

The Governors are committed to maintaining the breadth of access to Woodbridge School by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees. Any award is dependent upon academic performance and financial need. Such support is known as a Bursary and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants. In a few rare cases an amount may also be awarded to cover extras and uniform.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances. The scale of awards is reviewed and revised to reflect any changes in fee costs. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they 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, family size, dependents 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/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn at key points in their education.

New Applicants to the School

Awareness to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of School fees is via:

- The School prospectus and other promotional literature
- The School website
- The local press by means of advertisements
- Information from the Admissions Officer at initial enquiry
- Information from the Headmaster and parental visits

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering Years 7, 9 and 12 of Woodbridge School. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors. The Headmaster and Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step One Parents/guardians 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 at Annex A 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 21 January in any year for bursaries to start the following September. Late applications will be considered if there is a good reason (e.g. families moving unexpectedly into the area).
- Step Two All applications are assessed 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 or at an interview based at School, to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.
- Step Three A recommendation is prepared in accordance with the Woodbridge School Scale of Awards. A recommendation is made.
- Step Four The parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of the Bursary offer during the **second week of February**.
- Step Five. Parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the School and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary, by the **first Monday in March**.

The Case for Assistance

The Headmaster 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 ability and potential to benefit from the School's education is the first consideration in granting support.

Financial criteria

The amount of the bursary award is influenced by the extent of financial 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 context of its overall budget. Applications for help with fees will need to supply any evidence of information disclosed. The following are examples, but not an exhaustive list: bank and building society statements, mortgage statements, tax returns, salary slips, valuations, company accounts, loan statements, benefit statements, educational expenses.

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 bursaries are well focussed and to do this the factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of award will include:

- Annual income of the family from all sources.
- 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 including the family home.
- In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent including the relevance of any court order, and the financial circumstances of any new partner.
- Contribution to household costs or school fees by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources such as trusts.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools and universities, the School's award will take into account all these outgoings.

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 and/or expensive leisure activities.
- New or luxury cars.
- Investment in significant home improvements.
- A second property/land holdings/investment portfolio.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental financial circumstances. Current Bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms. The School has the discretion to recommend the reduction or withdrawal of an award for those previously in receipt of bursaries not only where financial circumstances have improved but also 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.