Bursary Policy

Introduction

St Hilary's actively promotes democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

The Governors of the St Edmund's School Trust are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. 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 the applicant.

Awards are made on the basis of the confidential Independent School Bursars' Association (ISBA) scale of awards which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. 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, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors).

Awards may also be varied upwards or downwards for compassionate or other pertinent reasons, including but not limited to a pupil's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour; where the parents have failed to support the school or otherwise have not acted in accordance with their obligations under the school's Terms and Conditions, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees; or otherwise in accordance with the terms of the award or the school's Terms and Conditions.

A bursary may be withdrawn in its entirety in accordance with the terms upon which such an award is made or otherwise in accordance with the school's Terms and Conditions. A bursary may also be withdrawn in its entirety if, in the opinion of the Headmaster, the child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour (and/or the parents' behaviour or conduct (or the behaviour or conduct of one of the parents)) no longer merit the continuation of the award.

The school reserves the right to amend the way in which awards are assessed.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to St Hilary's, where a place has been offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees
- Existing pupils, where a change in the circumstances of the parents/guardians has resulted in difficulty in meeting the tuition fees and may result in a pupil being withdrawn part way through the relevant stage of education.

New Applicants to the School

Awareness

Information provided by the School alerting the parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of fees is included on the School website and School Prospectus. The Headmaster is also in regular contact with local schools and reminds them of our Bursary Policy in advance of Scholarship Day, and at Open Mornings and Experience Days.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year group of St Hilary's School. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors, and the School Business Manager is responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

1. Parents/guardians must first register their child with the school by contacting the Admissions Manager

2. Parents/guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form that seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, may be found in the Appendix and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. A covering letter explaining why they would like to join St Hilary's, and why their child would be a good recipient of a bursary is also required. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence and covering letter, are to be submitted to the Business Manager in an envelope marked 'Private and Confidential', or by email to bursar@sthilarysschool.com.

3. The Business Manager assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support that will be required in order to allow the child to attend the School. This may involve the Business Manager, or her representative, visiting the parents/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.

4. The Business Manager scores the application in accordance with ISBA guidelines and prepares a recommendation on the level of financial assistance required.

5. The recommendation is discussed with the Headmaster, and provided the allowance will not exceed the available pool, as determined by the Governors, is agreed.

6. The parents/guardians are advised of the bursary offer. This will incorporate the value of any additional discounts a child may be eligible for, excluding scholarships or exhibitions.

7. 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.

The Case for Assistance

The Governors 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 both actual achievements (where applicable) and the potential of each applicant. 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 Headmaster, 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 the context of what is viable 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, all applicants would be expected to be employed unless prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for children under school age or other dependents or, if applicable, 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:

• a second property/land holdings;

• other children at fee paying schools if they could potentially be offered places at St Hilary's.

- 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/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
  - Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the School adding to the stress of coping with the parents/guardians separating.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Business Manager, explaining their situation and using the forms in the Appendix. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make contact with the Business Manager promptly if their financial situation suddenly changes and they expect to be unable to meet future fees. Bursary applications are unlikely to be accepted if the account is already overdue.

Please note that unless there has been a significant change in the parents' financial circumstances since the time of registering their child, no application for bursarial help will be considered in the first two years of a child being at the School.

Annual Review

Bursary holders have a duty to inform the school of any significant change in their financial circumstances. The Governors review the total level of bursary awards annually and current bursary holders may be required to submit a further means tested application. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Business Manager, have the discretion to recommend to the Governors 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/ guardians 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 information gathered in respect of bursary applications and 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. St Hilary's School encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information on how to pursue such assistance may be obtained from:

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