



BURSARY POLICY

New Policy Drafted: April 2023 (NS / MR)

Governor Review: June 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Governors of Alderley Edge School for Girls are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents or guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a Bursary. Bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% of tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate, or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

The School welcomes applications from all eligible candidates as part of its mission to be as socially inclusive as possible. However, the funds available to offer such discounts are limited and will not cover all applications.

Parents awarded a Bursary towards tuition fees will also be eligible to receive an award towards the purchase of an iPad, and the cost of the school minibus (if used to travel to and from school) in proportion to the Bursary awarded. In addition, the school will fund one UK educational visit per year.

Bursaries are available throughout the period of a student's attendance at the School, subject to satisfactory behavioural conduct and academic progress, and to the continuation of the financial need. 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 based on the School's confidential 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 Director of Finance and Resources to reflect any changes in fee costs and is approved by the Governors. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards, at the discretion of the Bursary Committee, depending upon parents' or guardians' individual 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. For those to whom a Bursary has been awarded, the balance of fees and any other charges for the term are payable by the Parents/Guardians.

Information in relation to the means-tested financial support towards the cost of fees, can be found in:

- the School prospectus; the School website; from time-to-time advertisements in the local press and social media;
- all candidates registered for the Senior School entrance examination will be provided with a Bursary application form, upon request.

All bursary applications are treated in the strictest confidence. Pupils will not be made aware that they benefit from a bursary unless informed by their parents.

ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARDS

The ceiling for eligibility for financial support is £80,000 gross household income. These levels are reviewed each year and will be subject to inflation.

The award of a Bursary is subject to satisfactory performance in the Entrance Examination. If demand for Bursaries exceeds the number available, Bursaries will be awarded with reference to the extent of need and to those who the school believe will benefit from most attending the school. Each Student to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmistress, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission, possess the potential to develop the quality of their work, and benefit from participation in the wide, co-curricular activities on offer at the School.

The continued tenure of a Bursary is subject to satisfactory academic performance and progress, contribution to co-curricular life at the school, good conduct and adherence to the School's Terms and Conditions.

Once a Bursary is awarded the amount is not influenced by 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 its overall budget.

It is recognised that judgements as to what a family should prioritise to pay school fees will be subjective. The School has a duty to ensure that all Bursary grants are well focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant.

These might 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 family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources; and
- where fees are being paid to another school, the School's Bursary will consider these outgoings and consideration will also be given to the level of support provided by those other institutions. For example, it is unlikely to be fair for the School to provide large Bursaries for one child because Parents are paying a full fee elsewhere for another sibling.

Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that indications of wealth such as a second property/land holdings with significant equity or new or luxury cars would not be consistent with the receipt of a Bursary.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

New Admissions

Bursaries for new admissions, or entry Bursaries, are available to Parents of children entering the School in Years 7 and 12 and the process is as follows:

- completion and submission of the application form, together with supporting documentation, as part of the registration process, by the specified date in any given year;
- assessment of each application to establish the likely level of support required to allow the child to attend the School.

The Bursary Committee (which comprises the Headmistress, the Director of Finance & Operations and two Governors) may meet parents of those candidates who have applied for a Bursary to discuss their application. A home visit may also be necessary to ensure that the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. Where total household gross income is assessed as exceeding the ceiling of £80,000, applicants will not be called for a Bursary interview.

Once the Bursary Committee has reviewed all the information and made a decision, Parents will:

- be advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of the amount of the Bursary offer;
- be required to sign the acceptance form accepting the place at the School, the acceptance of which is explicitly deemed as agreement to the conditions relating to the Bursary.

The level of the award is subject to completion of an annual review, which will be requested in late April or early May. Details of the actual sum that can be made available will be notified in July, ahead of the following school year.

Existing Students - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the School will in normal circumstances set aside each year a modest hardship fund to provide for cases of sudden, unforeseen need. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents with a child at the School in Year 6 and above, whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for financial assistance to the Director of Finance and Operations, explaining their situation. This must be a significant new situation that has emerged since the child started at the School, such as illness, death, or redundancy.

Parental divorce/separation is unlikely to be a good reason, on its own, for a hardship award.

Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. It is likely that any such hardship awards will be time limited but in some exceptional circumstances may result in the provision of a Bursary.

CONFIDENTIALITY & DISCLOSURE

The Bursary application process is undertaken by the Finance team at the School, independent of the admissions process, and the data provided is used for the purposes of assessing the application for financial assistance only. An application for Bursary support will not affect a candidate's academic eligibility and vice-versa. Once a place is awarded, only the Headmistress, Director of Finance & Operations and Finance Team will be aware of Bursary recipients and this information is treated with discretion.

Recipients are expected to make full disclosure of any change in circumstances pertinent to eligibility for the existing award that is binding upon signing the acceptance form. If the School becomes aware or is made aware that the information provided is not accurate, the Bursary award may be amended or terminated the following term. In all circumstances Parents are bound by the School's Terms and Conditions including the requirement to give a full term's notice of withdrawal from the School, before the normal leaving date.

RELATED POLICIES

- Fees Assistance Policy

Scale of Awards

With effect from September 2024 the following scale will be used during the decision-making process. Awards are always tied to this scale, however they may be varied upwards or downwards; at the discretion of the Bursary Committee, depending upon parents' or guardians' individual circumstances.

Please note that pupils who will move into Year 11 in September 2024, will be protected at the Bursary rate awarded for year 11.

Joint Household Income	Level of Award
£70,000 - £80,000	Up to 10%
£60,000 - £70,000	Up to 20%
£50,000 - £60,000	Up to 30%
£40,000 - £50,000	Up to 40%
£30,000 - £40,000	Up to 60%
£20,000 - £30,000	Up to 80%
Below £20,000	Up to 100%

The table shows the maximum Bursary Award for the level of joint household income, it does not guarantee this amount. Awards are allocated in line with the budget for the year, parents' or guardians' individual circumstances, satisfactory performance in the Entrance Examination (if applicable), satisfactory academic performance and progress, contribution to co-curricular life at the school, good conduct and adherence to the School's Terms and Conditions.