



Bursary Policy

Leehurst Swan School



Approved by:	 Headteacher  Chair of Governors	Date: 01.03.2024
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Bursaries

Introduction

The Governors of Leehurst Swan School are committed to broadening access to education at the school by offering to eligible parents means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees to pupils who meet the school's entry criteria. The school does not offer full bursaries and parents are expected to make a contribution to the fees. The award is based upon the family's financial circumstances and 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 and any other person's dependent upon them etc), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Principles

Bursary awards are subject to an annual review with up to date information being required about the parents' financial circumstances for every year that their child attends the school, please note that Bursary awards may be removed or varied upwards or downwards upon review of this information.

A bursary may be withdrawn in its entirety in accordance with the terms upon which such an award is made or otherwise in accordance with the school's terms and conditions. A bursary may also be withdrawn in its entirety if, in the opinion of the Headteacher, the child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour and/or the parents' behaviour or conduct no longer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

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

New Bursary Awards

Bursaries are subject to the availability of annual budget funding and cannot be guaranteed for all new applications. The Bursary Review Committee will consider several factors when making a judgement to the justification for support of new applications to the School, with the Bursar responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

To apply for a bursary, parents must pay a registration fee, return a completed registration form, and the completed means-tested bursary application form. Application forms which do not include full supporting documentation are regarded as incomplete and will not be processed. Please note that bursary applications where the combined household gross income is over £80,000 will not be considered.

The School is unlikely to make a bursary award for children in Early Years or Pre-Prep (from Reception up to the end of Year 2) where the fees are considerably more affordable. This is based upon the long-term commitment to independent education and the sustainability to be able to afford future fee increases.

Parents should be aware that bursaries are usually allocated on entry and that if a bursary is not granted on entry to the School, a subsequent grant of a bursary is highly unlikely unless there is a significant and demonstrable change in circumstances. It is recommended that parents should therefore not take up a place if they feel that they cannot afford to pay the fees, nor should they have an expectation that once a pupil has joined the School, the decision not to award bursary funding might be reversed.

Leehurst Swan School may use an external organisation to assist with processing bursary applications, including making home visits. Information provided by applicants may be made available, in confidence, to that organisation for those purposes.

All personal data processed in connection with the school's arrangements for bursaries shall be processed in accordance with the school's privacy policy which is available on the school's website and is otherwise available from the school upon request.

Suitability

The Headteacher and Bursar will consider several factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support; inevitably this is a holistic judgment. In the main, the child's suitability for the school is the first consideration in granting support.

In assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to their academic assessment results in accordance with the school's published entry criteria. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headteacher, be likely to make good 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. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of the pupil's attainment, progress and behaviour. In addition, a reference will be requested from the child's current school.

Financial limitations

The amount of the bursary award is not influenced by the child's academic ability but by the extent of need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made subject to the school's ability to fund these within the context of 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 (but are not limited to):

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of each parent. 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 property assets.
- In cases of parents who are divorced or separated, the contribution that is being made or could be made by both parents, regardless of who the child lives with, and based on the principle that liability for the fees is joint and several. This means that the school may consider the financial circumstances of each parent separately and together, treating each parent's household separately.
- Any fees which are being paid to other schools (or universities).
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the school considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary. It should be noted that the list is not comprehensive:
 - frequent or expensive holidays;
 - new or luxury cars;
 - investment in significant home improvements;
 - a second property/land holdings;
 - failure to honour school fee payments to other schools.

Other factors

It is recognised that, in addition to meeting academic requirements and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered as part of the school's holistic judgment. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the school (though a bursary award to one child does not guarantee an award to a sibling).
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant (for example, where a child is suffering from bullying at their present school).
- Where a parent is critically or terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health or incapacity.
- Where a separation has resulted or is likely to result in the child having to be withdrawn from the school, adding to the stress of coping with the parents separating, although the school will nonetheless consider the financial circumstances of both parents in such cases.
- Where a previous school has awarded bursary support, please note that bursary support from a previous school is no indication or guarantee that the parents would be eligible for bursary support at Leehurst Swan School.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Parents with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply to the Bursar for assistance with the fees, this must be a significant new situation that has emerged since the child started at the school. Such awards are made for short-term assistance only; usually for no longer than one academic year. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to repeat consideration of the parent's financial circumstances each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on the outcome of any review. If the information requested is not completed by the required deadline and no satisfactory explanation is received, the bursary will cease at the end of the current academic year. The School may require parents in receipt of a bursary to submit additional mid-year information when more up to date financial information becomes available such as a P60 issued by their employer at the end of the tax year.

Parents should not assume that an award made before entry will last throughout their child's time at Leehurst Swan. However, provided that annual assessments of financial need and pupil performance remain unchanged, the offer of support is likely to remain the same.

For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Bursar and Headteacher, have the discretion to recommend to the Bursary Review Committee the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to support the school, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees or by otherwise not acting in accordance with the school's terms and conditions.

Should any information disclosed in response to the annual review become inaccurate at a later date, the School must be informed without delay. Failure to divulge a change in circumstances could lead to a Bursary being withdrawn or withheld.

Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to parents and recipients and prospective recipients are expected to do likewise and not share details with anyone other than family members.