

PANGBOURNE

Bursary Policy

This policy has been authorised by the Governors and has been prepared for parents, teachers and administration staff, and is freely available upon request.

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

1. To ensure access to the education provided by the school is available to children from all sections of society;
2. To ensure that children already at the school will not be forced to leave if the members of their family responsible for fees have come upon unforeseen financial circumstances

Introduction

Pangbourne College is a registered Charity which is committed to providing Public Benefit according to its obligations under the Charities Act 2006. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis in order to take in to account the latest guidance from the Charity Commission and any other relevant factors.

The school's Bursary Scheme covers Entrance Bursaries for new pupils. The Scheme is designed to assist parents on low incomes or for whom their financial situation prevents them from sending their child to the school. It also covers Hardship Bursaries for existing pupils whose families, for whatever reason, find themselves unable to pay full fees. Bursaries, whether for new or existing pupils, are entirely means-tested and are awarded on an annual basis to parents who are financially eligible and who meet the application requirements in full. Due to the limited resources of the school's Bursary Fund not every eligible application for a Bursary will be successful.

Publicity

The provision of Bursaries will be made known through:

1. The school's website
2. The school's available information at Open Days
3. Local advertising
4. Liaison with local schools

Procedure

All Bursary applicants are required to complete an application form and submit by the published closing date. The form is designed to provide a picture of the income and expenditure, and assets and liabilities of applicants. This information together with other factors which may support the application will then be expanded during a Home Visit, which will normally be carried out by an external agency. The applicants are asked to make a contribution of £80 towards the cost of the external assessment and this should be paid with the application. If for any reason the external review is not taken out then the money will be refunded.

It is critical that applicants answer of all the questions carefully and in full, and documentary evidence be provided to support the application. Should any of the information disclosed in the application become inaccurate at a later date the school must be informed without delay. Failure to disclose requested information or a change in financial circumstances to the school could lead to a Bursary being withdrawn. The Governors will decline or withdraw a Bursary if it is discovered that they have been misled at any time either during the application process or whilst a Bursary has been held in previous academic years.

New Applicants to the School

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year-group of Pangbourne College. They are awarded at the discretion of Bursary Awards Committee, which consists of the Headmaster and the Bursar, who is also responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step One: Parents/guardians seeking a bursary are required to download and complete the application form and return it to the Bursar, together with a covering letter providing as much explanation as possible on why a bursary is required and details of any change in your circumstances that have prompted this request. We also ask you to confirm what year group the child will be entering, whether they intend to be boarding, part-boarding or day and details of any scholarships that have been applied for at the College. Bursary applications should be accompanied by a cheque or direct transfer for £80.

The timescale for applications is:

- **Form 1 and Sixth Form entry** must be received by the end of October, prior to the intended September of entry (10 months ahead).
- Given the more extended offer period, bursary applications for **Form 3 entry** must be received by the end of September, 23 months prior to the intended September of entry. This will tie in with the admissions process and ensure that parents are able to make decisions on the offer of a place, knowing the financial support available. Parents/Guardians who receive a bursary offer for Form 3 entry, will be required to confirm their financial circumstances in the summer term prior to their child's entry to the College.
- Step Two: The external company carry out a Home visit and subsequently provide a full financial report to the Committee. This will evaluate the family lifestyle as well as reviewing the figures submitted. They will indicate to the College the strength of the application, the amount the family can afford to pay towards fees and the indicated level of bursary to be considered by the College.
- Step Three: The Bursar prepares a recommendation which is considered by the Bursaries Awards Committee and a recommendation is then reached.
- Step Four: Parents/guardians are advised of the outcome and 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 Bursaries Awards Committee 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 College is the first consideration in granting support.

Suitability: The child's suitability for the school is the first consideration. Attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential will be considered alongside actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable and most likely to gain from our education provision will be given priority. 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 co-curricular activities on offer at the College. 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 bursary application is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the College's ability to fund these within the context of its overall budget. As a small school, Pangbourne College has limited funds to make available for bursaries and not every eligible application for a Bursary will be successful. Please note that families who may have a low income, but have substantial assets may not be eligible to receive a Bursary. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal. However, the College has a duty to ensure that all bursary grants are well focussed 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, 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, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings.
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the College considers that the following, for example, would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
 - Frequent or expensive holidays.
 - New or luxury cars.
 - Investment in significant home improvements.
 - A second property/land holdings.

- 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 to the Awards Committee for a bursary and should complete the form available on the website. These applications must be supported in the same way as those of New Applicants to the College. Specific reference must be made to the cause of the change in circumstances that have arisen. All applications will be subject to a home visit by an external agency. Any awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are open to repeat testing of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms in these circumstances. In addition the College may also use an external agency to carry out checks to verify the application and for which there would be a cost to the parents. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head and Bursar, 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.

Please note that all awards are made for a specific period. It is essential that the parents/guardians understand that they need to re-apply, should they seek to have the award extended.

Confidentiality

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

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January 2022
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