



# St Hilary's School

## 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 St Hilary's School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering 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.

Bursary awards are entirely discretionary and subject to repeat testing of parental means each year. They may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances, including their savings, investments, realisable assets, income, size of the family, dependent relatives and any compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

### Bursary Committee - Term of Reference

The Bursary Committee will ensure that this policy and guidance is reviewed annually and that awards are made in accordance with the policy, noting any guidance as required, and specifically that:

- The Committee will meet once each year, normally in March
- The award is for up to 100% fee reduction for years 3-6 to be awarded at the discretion of the Committee subject to the criteria being met.
- The Committee will include the Headteacher, the Business Manager (Chair), the Chair of Governors and one further governor.
- Consideration will be given to the potential benefit to both the child and St Hilary's.
- The financial circumstances of the parents or guardians of the child will be subject to annual review.

Requests for financial support toward the tuition fees normally fall into one of 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of the parents/guardians has resulted in difficulty in meeting the tuition fees and may result in a pupil being withdrawn part way through the relevant stage of education.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 school's fees is included on the School website. The Headteacher is also in regular contact with local schools and reminds them of our Bursary Policy in advance of Scholarship Day, and during the Spring Term (in advance of the Bursary Committee meeting).

### 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 Bursary Committee, and the School Business Manager is responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step One. 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 at Annex A 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 by the end of March for entry the following September.
- Step Two. 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.
- Step Three. The Business Manager prepares a recommendation to be considered by the Bursary Committee following which a decision is then reached.
- Step Four. By the beginning of the Summer Term the parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a Bursary and if so, to what extent. Any offer will be conditional upon there being no significant change in circumstances prior to the child joining the School.
- Step Five. Parents/guardians are then required to formally register their child with the school, pay the deposit and acknowledge any conditions relating to the bursary. Children offered a full 100% Bursary would not be required to pay the deposit.

### The Case for Assistance

The Business Manager and Bursary 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 School is the first consideration in granting support.

- Suitability. Bursary funds are limited and those children likely to gain most from the educational provision will be given priority. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, 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. 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 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, 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 School considers that the following 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 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**

Within overall budget funding, the School will, in normal circumstances, set aside each year an Exceptional Bursary Fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for bursary submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. 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 at Annex A. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

### **Annual Review**

All bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of the Summer Term each year for return by the end of May. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Business Manager and Bursary Committee will make a joint decision and have the discretion to reduce or withdraw 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:

The Business Manager  
St Hilary's School  
Holloway Hill  
Godalming  
Surrey  
GU7 1RZ  
01483 521716  
[bursar@sthilarysschool.com](mailto:bursar@sthilarysschool.com)

The Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation  
Buckingham Suite  
7 Grosvenor Gardens  
London  
SW1W 0BD  
[www.royalspringboard.org.uk](http://www.royalspringboard.org.uk)

## APPENDIX - Restricted Bursary Fund

### Introduction

In 2007, a Restricted Bursary Fund (RBF) was set-up, with voluntary contributions from benefactors and the school, to support a child who would benefit from attending the school but does not have the financial resources. A fee discount of 100% would be applied through Years 3-6. Financial eligibility for the bursary is verified by an appropriate independent body and is reassessed on an annual basis. The School normally makes single consecutive awards, each running for a 4-year period. However, the School will consider making concurrent awards where candidates are of a particularly deserving case.

### The Award

Eligibility for an award is made on the basis of the parent's or guardian's financial circumstances and is offered to a child:

- Whose parents or guardians have demonstrated an inability to afford any significant contribution towards school fees **and**
- Who would benefit from an education at St Hilary's School

All applications for an award will be means-tested and applicants will be required to submit evidence of their income, capital and other assets. All applicants will be interviewed, and a home visit will be made. As a general guide, an award will only be offered where the gross annual income of the household is less than £40,000 per annum.

### Scope of award from the RBF

The following scope has been agreed by the Bursary Committee:

- The principle is that the fund covers the child's education and *whole class* activities. For example, if the whole class makes a trip then the fund would cover this.
- The financial cost to the school, whilst it has spare capacity, is the cost of tangible items provided by the school which will include the following:
  - Lunch
  - Whole-class trips, including the whole-class residential trips
  - Any **required** equipment (Sports, IT) not normally provided
- The RBF will cover these *marginal* costs, estimated to be £2-3k per annum.
- The parents or guardians are expected to meet the costs of such items as:
  - Travel to and from school
  - Uniform
  - Optional activities, e.g. additional specialist teaching such as music. However, the Head has the discretion to meet the cost of these from general funds.
- The committee reserves the right to meet extraordinary costs from the RBF in exceptional circumstances for a child in receipt of the basic award. The following conditions apply:
  1. The balance must not fall below £20,000.
  2. The total extraordinary award(s) must not exceed £1,000 per child per academic year.

### Managing the RBF

The RBF was reinstated in September 2018 with the aim of maintaining a minimum of £20,000.

The Bursary Committee will be responsible for the management of the RBF by:

- Continuous internal review to ensure that sums spent meet the annual criteria above
- Maintaining a full audit trail of all sums spent
- Producing an Annual Report, available to donors to the RBF
- Development of a plan to increase the RBF on a regular basis to secure the principal and the bursary

**Reviewed: July 2020, July 2021, June 2022, June 2023**

**Next review date: June 2024**

**Person responsible: Mrs Hannah Wynn (Business Manager)**