



Bursary Policy

Introduction

Leighton Park School is a Quaker school, open to those of all faiths and none, in which every individual can live together, learn and grow.

Very much at the heart of our Quaker values, Leighton Park School aims to improve accessibility to those students who on financial grounds would otherwise be unable to benefit from an education at the school.

The school therefore offers to eligible parents means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governing Body. The Bursary Committee is responsible for the management and co-ordination of the process.

The bursary resources available to the school are determined by the Governing Body. The total level of bursaries is therefore fixed and finite.

Awareness

Information is made available to prospective and existing parents in the Additional Information Booklet and on the school website. All parents who register their child for a place at the school receive a letter informing them of the scholarships available and the deadline by which if they are seeking financial support they should apply.

Open Access

Bursary support may be awarded in the form of a reduction of up to 100% on fees and may include additional support for uniform, books and extras such as educational visits, payable depending on the financial, compassionate or other relevant circumstances of applicants.

Categories for Financial Support

Requests for financial support usually fall into three categories:

- Applicants whose child has been offered a place but whose parents are unable to afford the full fees.
- Applicants whose child has been offered a scholarship but whose parents are unable to afford the full fees.

- Existing students where a change in the parents' financial circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting the fees payable and may result in the student being withdrawn from the school outside a normal break point (eg the start or end of GCSEs).

Decision Making

Bursaries are decided by the Bursary Committee. Awards are assessed on the basis of a completed Bursary Application Form. Applicants for bursary support are likely to receive a home visit by a representative of an outside agency appointed by the school to help assess appropriate levels of support.

The assessment determines the appropriate level of parental contribution in relation to their net resources and thus the level of award that will be offered. The level of the award may also be influenced by compassionate or other relevant circumstances.

Criteria for Assessment

The school will consider a number of factors when deciding the justification to support an application for a bursary, and the extent of such support.

Each case is assessed on its own merits. It is recognised that the judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be viewed differently by the individuals involved. However the school has a duty to ensure that it has as complete a view as possible of the financial assets of the applicant. Therefore, alongside the current earnings, other factors will be taken into account in determining the level of bursary award, including:

- 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;
- 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.

It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:

- where the social or pastoral needs of the child are relevant;
- where a parent is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.

Annual Review

Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be increased or decreased depending on parental circumstances. Award holders are expected to remain worthy of their position which is also subject to periodic formal review.

Bursary Application Process

A completed Bursary Application must be submitted to the Finance Manager by the admissions deadline which is normally in mid-November (and is published on the school website). Application Forms are available from the Bursary Office and via email jennyrowe@leightonpark.com. It is advised that forms are submitted well in advance of the deadline so that any incomplete information can be supplied before the deadline for applications. Applications that are not fully completed cannot be considered.

For students who are offered a place at the school, the Bursary assessment, including home visits, will normally take place between December and February. Parents will be notified by the Bursar as to whether their application for financial support has been successful and if so, the level of support to be offered, on 1st March preceding the September of entry.

Parents with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Bursar, explaining their situation and requesting assistance. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

The Bursary Committee

The Bursary Committee comprises the Head, Bursar, Finance Governor, Head of Development and Finance Manager.

Joint Bursary Scheme

As one of the Friends schools. Leighton Park School is entitled to claim monetary payments from the JBS committee for all Quaker students but proof of their family's attendance must be obtained from the Clerk of the Meeting. The Finance Manager will complete a return every year when requested by the JBS Committee Secretary, detailing those individual students from Quaker families in receipt of a bursary.

Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary awards and recipients are expected to do likewise.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's funds, 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 change of circumstances may be unable to remain. The school encourages parents to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information may be obtained from the Bursar.

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