

## **Bursary Policy**

### **Authority and Circulation**

This policy has been authorised by the Governing Body of Edge Grove School ("the School"). Its status is advisory only. This policy contains an overview of the Bursary Scheme currently in operation at the School and is made available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on request.

### **General**

The School is a registered charity that is committed to providing significant public benefit. The School is aware of its obligations under the Charities Act 2006 and seeks to adhere to the public benefit principles identified by the Charity Commission. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to take into consideration the latest guidance from the Charity Commission and any other factors relevant to this policy.

The Governors are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of schools 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 (and, under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headmaster and Governors, on boarding fees) payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

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 made on the basis of the basis of a detailed assessment of a family's financial circumstances and will always be dependent upon individual parents/guardians' 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.

Funding available for the award of bursaries by the School is strictly limited and cannot be guaranteed for any new applications at any stage. Subject to repeat testing, a degree of priority will be given to the renewal of awards to existing recipients rather than to new applicants.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the school where parents/guardians are unable to fully fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.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 schools fees is included in:

- The School prospectus.
- The School website and the School listing on the ISC website.

## The Application Process.

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year-group of Edge Grove, although awards for entry into the Pre-Prep Department will normally only be made under exceptional family circumstances. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors and the Headmaster and School Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step One. Parents/guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form requests details of income and capital and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, must be returned as indicated no later than the **date of the Entrance Exam or other agreed Assessment** in any year for bursaries to start the following September. Applications that are received after the assessment of a child may not be considered.
- Step Two. The School assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the School. This may involve the Bursar, or his 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 Bursar prepares a recommendation in accordance with the Edge Grove Scale of Awards which is considered with the Headmaster and a joint recommendation is then reached.
- Step Four. The joint recommendation is presented to the School Governors for approval.
- Step Five. The parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of the Bursary offer.
- Step Six. Parents/guardians 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 Headmaster and Bursar 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. In assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision. 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, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School. Each applicant should meet the School's normal entrance requirements. 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 available funding. 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 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 substantial equity 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 academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:
  - Where the social needs of the child are relevant (eg: 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 for a bursary to the Bursar, explaining their situation and completing the relevant application form. Such awards are subject to a similar process as with new admissions to the School detailed above and are equally 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 early in the Easter Term each year so that decisions regarding the continuation of an award may be made before the end of the Easter Term. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Bursar, in making their joint recommendation to the School Governors, 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.

## **Confidentiality**

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

## **Other Sources of Bursary Assistance**

In addition to the School's bursary funds, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees although the majority of these do seek to provide assistance to children at senior schools. 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. Edge Grove 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 via the website of the Educational Trusts' Forum at <http://educational-grants.org> which maintains a list of charities who may be able to assist.

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