



St Martin's School

N O R T H W O O D

A10 Bursary Policy

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To be reviewed by: Finance and Operations Committee



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Introduction

St Martin's School is a registered charity that is committed to providing public benefit and is aware of its obligations under the Charities Act 2011. This Policy is reviewed on a biennial basis to take into consideration the latest guidance from the Charity Commission and any other factors relevant to this Policy.

The Governors of the School are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents or guardians means-tested financial support towards the payment of tuition fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and Bursaries 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 applicants. Amounts will vary but are likely to be either 25%, 50% or 80%. Additional activities, such as After School Care, clubs, and individual music lessons, are not included in Bursary Awards but education trips may be at the school's discretion.

Bursary Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means at defined intervals which may be annually or biennially and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances.

Awards are made based on the School's bursary budget and the family's financial circumstances, compassionate or other pertinent considerations. The budget is reviewed by the Finance & Operations Committee and agreed each year by the Board of Governors. The Finance & Operations Committee also monitor spending and capacity against budget on a termly basis, including an oversight of the bursaries awarded.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories

1. New applicants to the School where a place has been offered but parents or guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
2. Existing pupils where a change in parents' or guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

The Case for Assistance

A number of factors will be considered when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support. Bursary funds are limited and those given priority will be those likely to gain most from our educational provision. Due to the limited financial resources of the School, not every eligible application will be successful.

- Suitability: in assessing a child's suitability, prime attention will be given to the School's ability to accommodate any special educational and/or welfare needs of the child
- Financial limitations: the amount of the Bursary Award is influenced 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 what is viable within 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 Awards 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 Bursary offered will consider all these outgoings
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that the following may 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 perceived educational need and match to St Martin's, 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 is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health
 - Where a separation has resulted in the child potentially having to be withdrawn from the School adding to the stress of coping with the parents separating.

Existing Pupils – Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the School will in normal circumstances set aside each year an amount to fund cases of sudden and unforeseen need in relation to existing parents bursaries for

current pupils. Parents or guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may make a request to the Bursar to be considered for a Bursary, explaining their situation. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. The process described below will apply equally in this circumstance.

Application Process – New and Existing Pupils

Parents or guardians seeking a Bursary are required to undergo a financial review by means of an on-line application which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. Details of income and capital will be sought and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence which can be uploaded. A link to the bursary application tool is available on the website or via this link:

<https://stmartinsbursary.applicaa.com>

Once the application is submitted the information will be reviewed by the Headmaster and Bursar, the family circumstances considered, and an outcome agreed. The Bursar will then communicate the outcome with the parents.

In the case of a bursary offer, the terms will be set out and the parents will sign to confirm the agreement.

Bursary Review

All Bursary Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means at pre-determined intervals which may be annually or biennially and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current Bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the appropriate stage. For those previously in receipt of Bursaries, the Head and Bursar, in making their joint recommendation, have the discretion to recommend 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 or guardians have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

Should any information disclosed in response to the annual review become inaccurate at a later date, the School must be informed by the parents or guardians 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 families to whom Bursary Awards are made and recipients are expected to do likewise.