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Beechwood Park School

BURSARY POLICY

Website: www.beechwoodpark.com

Policy Number:	Version 2.0
Policy Applicable To:	Whole School – including EYFS
Policy Revised By:	ARI
Last Review Date:	February 2025
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Governors Reviewed Date:	February 2025
Next Review Date:	February 2028

OVERVIEW:

The Governors of Beechwood Park School are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% of tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are made on the basis of a confidential sliding scale which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on individual parents'/guardians' circumstances (for example their savings, investments and realisable assets as well as their income, the size of their family, and other persons dependent upon them and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations. The Bursar reviews and revises the scale of awards annually to reflect any changes in fee costs. The Governors approve all of these revisions.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

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parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part-way through a stage of education.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

The School informs parents/guardians about the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of School fees in:

- The School prospectus;
- The School website;
- The local press by means of advertisements.

Applications

The School generally awards bursaries to parents/guardians of children entering the School in Year 3 or above. The Bursary Committee, which consists of at least two Governors, the Head and the Bursar agree all final awards.

STEP 1

Parents/guardians seeking a bursary pay the Registration Fee. (The Head and Bursar use their discretion to waive the Registration Fee in cases of extreme need).

STEP 2

Parents complete the standard BWPS Means-Tested Bursary Application Form, which establishes the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which is available on request from the Bursar, requests details of income and capital and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence.

STEP 3

The Bursar passes on all completed applications to an external organisation, nominated by the governors, in order to establish the likely level of support required to allow the child to join the School. This will usually involve a video call to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.

STEP 4

The external organisation prepares a report for the Bursary Committee.

STEP 5

The Bursary Committee assesses the report and agrees an award.

STEP 6

The Bursar communicates the agreed offer or an award to the parents, following it up with a formal letter making the offer clear. (This will usually be no later than the beginning of the summer term for a September entry).

STEP 7

Parents/guardians sign a letter accepting the place at the School and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary. On acceptance of a place, parents are normally expected to pay a deposit to secure their child's place. In cases of exceptional financial need, the Head and Bursar may use their discretion to waive this requirement.

The Case for Assistance

The Bursary Committee will consider a number of suitability factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support.

The child's academic ability and potential is the first consideration, but the School will also assess each child's extra-curricular and pastoral ability and potential. The School will use the child's previous school reports, internal standardised benchmarking assessment data, interviews and informal assessment to identify suitability for awards.

Successful candidates will, in the opinion of the Head, be capable of managing the demands of the curriculum at Beechwood Park and to contribute to the wider extra-curricular life of the school.

Where Bursary funds are limited, the Bursary Committee will give priority to those applicants who are expected to make a significant contribution to the School and to gain most from Beechwood Park's educational provision.

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 their family's need. The school assesses each candidate on their own merits. The School makes awards according to its budgetary limits.

The School has a duty to apportion all bursary grants fairly. As well as family income, the School will consider the following factors:

- Parents' or guardians' ability to improve their combined financial position or earning power. For example, where there are two parents, 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 capital.
- In cases of separation, the contribution made by both parents.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the School's grant will take into account all of these outgoings.

Impediments to Awards

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 Circumstances

The School recognises 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, where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health, where a marital separation might result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the School will in normal circumstances set aside each year a short-term hardship fund, for cases where parents/guardians with a child or children at the School experience sudden and significant change in financial circumstances.

Applications for a bursary in these circumstances should be made to the Head and Bursar, explaining their situation and using the standard BWPS Means-Tested Bursary Application Form. These applications will usually be assessed by the School's external providers and are always subject to the normal scrutiny by the Bursary Committee. Any awards will be for a specific duration to allow either the restoration of the original position or for alternative educational provision to be found. They are also subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to the annual review of parental means. The School reserves the right to vary these awards up or down depending on this annual review. The Bursar will annually issue current bursary holders with means-testing forms at the beginning of February each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Bursary Committee may 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 bursary awards made to families and recipients are expected to keep the nature and value of their award confidential from other parents.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's bursary fund, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which may help 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. Beechwood Park encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance and it will assist parents in their applications. Further information on how to pursue such assistance may be obtained from:

The Bursar

Tel: 01582 840333

Email: a.ridler@beechwoodpark.herts.sch.uk

The Educational Trusts Forum

Website: www.educational-grants.org