



THE VINE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

BURSARY POLICY

Introduction

1. The Vine Christian School (the School) is committed to providing an excellent Christian education to boys and girls from a broad social and financial background by offering eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 80% on fees payable.
2. Bursaries are given on the basis of need rather than as a reward for outstanding achievement.
3. Bursaries are given to those parents under pastoral oversight and for that reason is extended only to those who;
 - attend Three Mile Cross Church
 - attend any local evangelical Church

Eligibility

4. Bursaries at the School are available to existing students and prospective students.
5. 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 the 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 its limited charitable resources are directed towards the most deserving cases and so, as well as current earnings, commitments and outgoings, other factors will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant, 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 suitably 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. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity value in houses;
 - in cases of separation, the contributions made by the absent parent; and
 - contributions to household costs by other, wider family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.

Terms of bursary provision

General

6. The School reserves the right to make or alter its overall bursary scheme from time to time in the light of its changing financial or other circumstances.
7. Any terms on which a bursary is made to an individual will be set out as part of the offer of a

place. Changes in the application of the scheme to individuals already at the School will be at the discretion of the Trustees.

8. The Trustees' decision is final in awarding, re-assessing or removing a bursary.

Current provision

9. Bursaries are expressed as a percentage reduction from the prevailing School fees. So, for example, a 30% bursary would mean that the parents would need to meet 70% of the current level of School fees.
10. Bursaries are reviewed annually (see below) to take account of changes in parental circumstances, and:
 - where parents' circumstances have improved, the level of bursary may be reduced, however
 - where parents' circumstances have worsened and/or where fee levels have increased relative to the parents' ability to pay, the level of bursary may be increased but, over the duration of the child's time at the School, only up to a maximum figure, usually 10% above the original award made. This maximum figure will be communicated to parents at the same time as the original award.
11. Using the example above, for parents who are offered a 30% bursary, over the course of their child's education at the School, the maximum bursary given would rise to no more than 40% of the prevailing fees. Their bursary could fall below the 30% level if the annual review showed that their circumstances had improved.

Extras

12. Bursary awards apply to the standard fees only. If any Extras are incurred, those must be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of the School.

Confidentiality

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

Applications

14. Applications for financial support fall into two categories: new applicants and existing pupils:

New applicants

15. Bursaries are available for new applicants at the School, where parents are unable to fund the full fees. All awards are conditional on:
 - recipients meeting the required entry standards (see the School's admissions policy);
 - recipients attending either Three Mile Cross Church or any local evangelical Church
 - completion of the "Confidential Statement of Financial Circumstances in support of an application for Bursary support" and full supporting documentation;
 - the School satisfying itself that the information given is accurate. The School may seek objective third-party confirmation of a family's financial circumstances (including from a credit reference agency); and
 - a pastoral visit if the School deems this appropriate.
16. The School will not proceed with an application from anyone giving misleading, inaccurate or incomplete information.

Existing pupils: annual reassessment

17. Once awarded, the bursary (as defined in the offer) normally applies for the duration of a pupil's school career. However, each bursary holder will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of April each year for return by the date indicated on the bursary form. The same conditions apply as above. Continuation of the bursary is conditional upon:
 - full disclosure of information requested within the timescales given;
 - the School satisfying itself that the information given is accurate. The School may seek objective third-party confirmation of a family's financial circumstances (including from a credit reference agency); and
 - a pastoral visit if the School deems this appropriate.
18. The School reserves the right to withdraw a bursary from anyone giving misleading, inaccurate or incomplete information.
19. In addition, the Head has 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 have failed to make timely payments of any contribution they are making towards fees or extras.

Existing pupils: Hardship Bursaries

20. In addition to access to a bursary, a Hardship Bursary may be offered to parents of existing pupils where a significantly detrimental change in financial or personal circumstances has created a difficulty in paying the fees. Financial help may be offered in the form of a short term Hardship Bursary award. Such awards are subject to availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. Hardship funding will be awarded on a temporary basis and will not be guaranteed for the remainder of the pupil's education at The Vine Christian School. As soon as the situation has arisen, the Chair of Trustees needs to be informed so that consideration can be given to a request.

The Application Process

21. If an applicant wishes to apply for a bursary the following steps need to be followed:
 - a. Parents need to register for a place at the School by filling in the appropriate form (see the admissions policy for more detail). On the registration form, parents should indicate interest in a bursary.
 - b. Following an Admissions interview, the Confidential Statement of Financial Circumstances in support of an application for Bursary support needs to be completed and submitted to the Chair of Trustees.
 - c. The Trustees may invite the applicant to attend an interview with them to go over the form and support.
 - d. If the applicant is offered a place following the assessments, then the School will provide an estimate of the bursary support that can be provided at the same time as the offer is made.
 - e. Parents are then required to sign an Agreement with the School, accepting the place. This includes the requirement for an annual review of their financial circumstances (see above). The contract will also acknowledge agreement to any conditions relating to the bursary.
 - f. Prior to joining, the School will ask parents to complete an additional detailed financial declaration with updated information for the tax year just finished and provide relevant verification for all income and allowable expenses. It is on the basis of this return that the final bursary offer will be confirmed.
22. Forms and supporting documents should always be returned by the due dates given as delayed bursary applications cannot be processed and you may then potentially forfeit a bursary – bursary places at the School are highly competitive.

Author: RMS
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