



BURSARY POLICY

General

The Governors of Westfield 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 these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 50% on tuition fees payable.

Awards are made on the basis of family's financial circumstances, taking into account the total amount of the bursary fund and the number of applications. Bursary awards are subject to testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on any changes in parental circumstances. The amount of the bursary fund is reviewed and revised annually by the Bursar to reflect any changes in fees and approved by the Governors. Though awards are generally based on gross income levels, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parent's 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 similar factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations. NB: a voluntary reduction in family income will not be maintained by an increase in the level of help if, for example, parents give up employment by choice.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

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a change in parents' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.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

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 likely to gain most from the educational provision will be given priority. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of her work, and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the School's usual academic 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 ability to fund these within the context of 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 grants 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:
 - Evidence of applications to other organisations for fee support.
 - 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 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:
 - Expensive holidays abroad.
 - Luxury cars.
 - 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 a child has siblings at the School.
 - 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.

There is no course of appeal following the award decision, but unsuccessful applicants may re-apply in subsequent years.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the School will in normal circumstances set aside each year a Hardship Fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for bursary submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. 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 using the standard application form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Hardship cases. The Governors assess individually any other cases brought to their attention concerning parents of children already at the school, who are experiencing particular hardship, brought about by illness, loss of employment etc. Such assistance as may be granted will be at the sole discretion of the Governors and will remain confidential. It will normally be granted for a fixed duration with a regular review of circumstances being required.

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 in mid-February of each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Bursar have the discretion to 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 do likewise.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, 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 a change of circumstances may be unable to remain. Westfield School 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 from:

Bursar
Westfield School
Oakfield Road
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 4HS

Email: bursar@westfield.newcastle.sch.uk

New Applicants to the School

Awareness: Information provided by the School alerting the parents of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees is included in:

- The School information pack.
- The School website.
- Press and media advertisements.

The Application Process: Bursaries may be made available to parents of children entering any year-group of Westfield School. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors and the Headmaster and Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process. All applicants are actively encouraged to apply also to external agencies for bursary assistance, a list of these is sent with every application form.

- **Step One.** Parents seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Bursar no later than the **28 February** in any year for bursaries to start the following September. Evidence of applications to other organisations for fee support will be taken into consideration as a positive indicator.
- **Step Two.** The Bursar 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 contacting the applicant to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. We reserve the right to organise a visit to the applicant's home in order to confirm these details.
- **Step Three.** The Bursar prepares a recommendation in accordance with the school's current criteria which is considered with the Head and a joint decision is then reached which is then reviewed and ratified members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- **Step Four.** The parents are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of any Bursary offer. Awards are identified by 1 April, in good time for parents to consider the level of financial assistance offered when deciding whether or not to accept a place at Westfield in the new academic year commencing in September.
- **Step Five.** Parents are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the school and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary.

Families can be assured that, at all stages, the information they supply remains confidential to a very small number of staff in the finance office and members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

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Support for Westfield Families

- **Sibling Reductions.** Any family with two or more daughters at the school is eligible for a discount off fees for the second, third and any subsequent daughters. Full fees will be charged for the first child's place, the second will receive 10% remission of fees and the third and subsequent children, 15% remission. As siblings leave the school, leaving one child from the family in school, the charge will revert to full fees.
- **Former Pupil's Allowance.** A discount of a 5% reduction off the fees is offered to the daughters of any girl who attended Westfield in the past. To be eligible for this allowance, the mother must have been a pupil at the school for a minimum of five years. The school must also be satisfied that the daughter meets the entry criteria and the school is able to meet her educational needs. This discount will be applied in addition to any other awards and/or discounts.