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St Paul's Cathedral School

Means-tested Bursary Policy & Guidance

May 2017

St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian, co-educational community which holds to the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust in its life and practice, to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and where the safety, welfare and emotional well-being of each child is of the utmost importance.

The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum. It aims to give each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. All pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and to achieve standards of excellence in all of their endeavours.

Through the corporate life of the school, and through good pastoral care, the school encourages the independence of the individual as well as mutual responsibility. It aims to make its pupils aware of the wider community, espouses the democratic process and encourages a close working relationship with parents and guardians.

General

The governors of St Paul's Cathedral School 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 bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100 per cent on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants. Details are available from the Bursar Mr Martin Kiddle bursar@spcs.london.sch.uk or D/L 020 7651 0282

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances. There should be no pre-existing debt. Awards are made on the basis of the St Paul's Cathedral School discretionary scale of awards which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The scale of awards is reviewed and revised annually by the Bursar and F&GP committee to reflect any changes in fee costs and is approved by the governors. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on 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.

Requests for financial support usually fall into three categories:

- New applicants to the school at Year 3 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. These are known as Hardship Bursaries.
- Two Bursaries (sometimes three) are offered each year to pupils entering Year 7 for the duration of their two years with us. These are awarded following the procedure set down for children entering year 7-8 and a bursary is offered to successful candidates following a means test.

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 website.

The Application Process.

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering at Year 3 or Year 7 of St Paul's Cathedral School, other than in exceptional circumstances, at the beginning of the academic year. They are awarded at the discretion of the governors and the Head 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, which requests details of income and capital, is available from the Bursar, and 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 end of the term preceding that for which support is required, (in any year for bursaries to start the following September the forms will be required before the end of the spring term.)
- 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. The information will then be passed to our appointed independent assessors, Bursary Administration Ltd, who will arrange to make a home visit and prepare a detailed report covering both financial aspects of the request as well as other considerations.
- Step three – upon receiving the report from Bursary Administration the Bursar in consultation with the Head will prepare a recommendation for consideration by the Governors or sub- committee thereof (in accordance with the St Paul's Cathedral School confidential scale of awards which is considered with the Head and a joint recommendation is then reached.)
- Step four - the joint recommendation is presented to the Finance & General Purposes committee who make a confidential recommendation to the Governors of St Paul's Cathedral school for approval.
- For an award starting in September they will be presented to the May committee meeting.
- Step five -. The parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the level of bursary.
- 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 Head 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 Head, 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. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the school's normal 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 what is viable 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:
 - 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:
 - 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 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/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

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 and is intended only to support a pupil until the end of that academic year. 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 forms available from the Bursar. Such awards are 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 at the beginning of April each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the head 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 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. St Pauls Cathedral 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:

The Bursar, St Paul's Cathedral School

Email: bursar@spcs.london.sch.uk

The Educational Trusts Forum

Website: www.educational-grants.org

The Royal National Children's Foundation

Website: www.rncf.org.uk