



# Liberty Christian School

Variable Tuition  
Philosophy, Process and Practices  
For Current and Prospective Families

2023-2024 Academic Year

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## Liberty Christian School Variable Tuition Philosophy

In keeping with our mission to foster an inclusive Christian community, Liberty Christian School (Liberty or the School) seeks to attract and maintain a diverse and talented student body. As such, the School is committed to providing variable tuition to families with demonstrated financial need. The purpose of the variable tuition program is to make a Christian education accessible and affordable to more families. No family should assume that a Christian education is out of reach solely for financial reasons.

Variable tuition at Liberty is determined by the availability of funds each year and a family's demonstrated ability to pay educational expenses. Income alone does not preclude the possibility of variable tuition because additional factors such as other dependents, medical expenses, unusual expenses or extraordinary situations are considerations.

Variable tuition comes from the School in the forms of budget and fundraising which are directly applied to the student's tuition account. They are not loans and do not need to be repaid. The School expects that families receiving variable tuition will contribute to the Liberty Community by volunteering their time and talents to the extent they are able. Please contact our volunteer coordinator directly to get plugged in. The School expects that families requesting variable tuition will carefully plan, budget and adjust spending to demonstrate that a Christian education is a family priority. Our review of applications for variable tuition includes a thorough consideration of each family's financial choices with regard to lifestyle and discretionary income. The School does not provide discounts to offset lifestyle expenditures that could be directed toward education. Unfortunately, the school is not able to provide variable tuition to every deserving student. We work within the available resources to make the school accessible to as many students and families as possible.

To ensure equity and fairness, families applying for variable tuition must **disclose all sources of income. This includes tuition paid by grandparents or family members, as well as income from stepparents, cash-based businesses, family members living with the family, cash gifts, trust, inheritance, etc.**

Liberty follows set procedures to ensure a fair, consistent and equitable assessment of each family's ability to pay educational expenses. The variable tuition process is strictly confidential. Admission applications to the School are considered without regard to the need for variable tuition.

## 2023-2024 variable tuition Application Process

### Step 1 Complete the variable tuition Application and Submit Required Documents by November 30, 2022

- Liberty Christian School uses a third-party provider, FAST, to assist with our variable tuition process. Beginning November 1, 2022, go to the FAST portal at [fa.libertychristian.com](http://fa.libertychristian.com) to complete the application online.
- The FAST application is comprehensive and will take time to complete. Give yourself the time you need by not waiting until the deadline to begin. You can log out of the portal at any time and return later to finish your application.
- When you complete the application, the report will be sent to the LCS Tuition Review Committee.
- For help completing the FAST application contact FAST support at 877-326-3278.
- FAST charges a \$48 fee to process the application.
- When asked on the application how much you will contribute toward your child's educational expenses, do not answer \$0. **Liberty does not offer full-variable tuition. Consider what you are able to pay toward tuition, rather than what you would like to pay.** Keep in mind that the primary responsibility for paying for your child's education lies with you and that every family at Liberty contributes to their student's tuition to the extent they are financially able.
- In addition to completing the application, the following documents are required in order to receive a variable tuition discount from the School. Variable tuition applications cannot be processed without complete tax documents.
  - Copy of most recent 2022 paystub for each salaried parent. If both parents are salaried or if a parent has multiple jobs, please combine all pay stubs into one file to upload.
  - 2021 W-2s
  - Signed copy of 2021 Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ plus accompanying schedules
  - If a parent/guardian owns a business, signed copies of the 2021 business tax returns and accompany schedules and K1s are required for each business owned (Form 1040 Schedules C and E for sole

proprietors, Form 1065 for partnerships, Form 1120 for corporations and Form 1120S for S-Corps)

- Other tax and financial documents may be required once your application is processed and reviewed.
- Copy of most recent mortgage statement
- Copy of most recent bank statements

- Required forms may be submitted online through FAST within your account or by mail. Uploading your documents online is preferred so they can be verified more quickly.

**Step 2**      **Receive notice of variable tuition discount on the 2023-2024 re-enrollment agreement starting in December through Jan. 2023**

**Step 3**      **Accept your variable tuition award on or before January 29, 2023**

- Complete your 2023-2024 your non-refundable \$700 re-enrollment fee by January 29, 2023. Tuition Management will automatically draft this fee from your account setup in the billing system.

### **Tips for Completing Your Variable Tuition Application**

1. **Complete one FAST per household.** Both custodial and non-custodial parents (as well as stepparents and legal guardians) are required to complete the application and submit appropriate documentation, regardless of marital status. In cases of divorce, separation or parents who are not living together, each household must file a separate FAST.

2. **Separate salary from profit.** If you are a business owner, you will be asked about your salary in the Family Income section. Enter only the amount you actually draw as salary reported on your W-2. You will provide information about income from 1099s and profits/losses from businesses elsewhere in the FAST.

3. **Differentiate applicants from dependents.** Questions about “student applicants” refer to your children who are applying for variable tuition via the FAST. Questions about “other dependents” refer to the children (or adults) for whom you provide support but ARE NOT applying for variable tuition.

4. **Carefully consider how much you can pay.** When asked on the FAST application how much you will contribute toward your child’s educational expenses, do not answer \$0. Carefully consider what you are able to pay toward tuition, rather than what you would like to pay. **Keep in mind that the primary responsibility for paying for your child’s education lies with you** and that every family at Liberty contributes to their student’s tuition to the extent they are financially able. Our commitment to providing variable tuition means we are sharing the investment in your child’s education with you. In the applicable question, be sure to include amounts you receive from family and friends to help pay tuition or amounts that family or friends pay directly to school on your child’s behalf.

5. **Differentiate between annual and monthly figures.** The FAST application asks for **annual** figures, while the Monthly Income and Expense Worksheet asks for **monthly** figures. Be careful to correctly enter these numbers to ensure proper calculations. If the bottom-line amount on the Monthly Income and Expense worksheet is negative (that is, your expenses are greater than your income), provide detailed information about how you are covering the shortfall.

6. **Tell your story.** Offer explanations when requested and utilize the Letter section to explain any unusual circumstances so that your story or situation is clear and understandable to those reviewing your application.

7. **Use the FAST helpline.** For questions about completing the FAST application or uploading documents, FAST is your best source of help. You can reach them at 877-326-FAST or [help@ismfast.com](mailto:help@ismfast.com). For questions about Liberty's variable tuition process and practices, contact Julie Barber at [julie.barber@mylcs.com](mailto:julie.barber@mylcs.com).

8. **FAST** only saves information from completed sections. If, for example, you are working on Income, you need to complete the entire section for that information to be saved. If you do not know an answer at the time, you may use a "?" as a placeholder in order to save that section.

9. **Remember to upload. Variable tuition applications cannot be processed without complete tax documents.** You are strongly encouraged to upload tax documents via the FAST portal.

- Make sure the documents are on your computer and **each specific form is saved as a separate file**. Remove any security or password protection from your document files.
- When you submit your application, you will receive an email detailing what documentation is required and instructions on how to submit. At a minimum, you will be asked to send copies of your W2s as well as federal and state tax documents.

## Liberty Christian Variable Tuition Practices

### Non-Discrimination

Liberty Christian School does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or any other category protected by law in the administration of the variable tuition program. The School follows procedures that ensure a fair, consistent and equitable assessment of each family's ability to pay educational expenses. Admission to the School is decided without regard to need for variable tuition.

### Confidentiality

Liberty Christian School takes the confidentiality of the variable tuition process seriously. The School will not supply information provided by a divorced or separated parent to the other parent unless mandated by court order. The School holds in strict confidence all information about variable tuition requests and expects that awardees and their families will do the same. Many Liberty students receive variable tuition. Families have different financial situations and levels of need, and therefore receive differing levels of variable tuition from the School. When students and families share the details of their variable tuition package with others, it compromises the confidentiality of the program.

### **Availability of Funds**

Funds for variable tuition come from the School's operating budget and fundraising. While the School dedicates significant resources towards variable tuition, funds are not sufficient to provide variable tuition to all qualified students. The budget and demand for variable tuition varies year to year. Some families may not receive as much variable tuition as they qualify for, and some families who may qualify may not receive any variable tuition. In support of our commitment to current families, the first priority for variable tuition is given to returning students (within the variable tuition budget), as long as they continue to qualify for variable tuition. The School does not guarantee the same level of tuition and supplemental support year to year or for other children in a family who may later be admitted and enrolled.

### **Determination of Awards**

Variable tuition at Liberty is determined by a family's ability to meet educational expenses and the availability of funds. All variable tuition awards are solely need-based. The School does not offer full-tuition grants, merit aid or athletic scholarships. Liberty is affiliated with Financial Aid for School Tuition (FAST), a third-party organization that works with school across the United States. FAST collects and analyzes the information families give regarding their financial position and, using a standard computation method, makes an initial recommendation regarding the dollar amount a family should be able to contribute toward tuition. This amount calculated by FAST (called the Income available for tuition) is a starting point that is used in conjunction with Liberty's variable tuition practices and our review of the family's financial situation to determine the final award amount. The complexities and unique circumstances of each family's situation are considered by the variable tuition Committee in its final decision. It is difficult to predict how much variable tuition, if any, a family will qualify for, as circumstances vary widely and the demand and budget for variable tuition varies year to year. To ensure equity and fairness, families applying for variable tuition must **disclose all sources of income**. Our review of applications for variable tuition includes a thorough consideration of each family's financial choices with regard to lifestyle and discretionary spending, such as summer program expenses, college tuition, vacation expenses, club memberships, lessons, club sports, and financial support to other family members, charitable contributions and vehicle loan/lease expenses. **The School does not provide variable tuition to offset lifestyle expenditures that could be directed toward education.** Families who do not qualify for variable tuition will be notified accordingly. These families can apply for variable tuition in future years, and their financial situation will be reevaluated each time they apply. If a family chooses to withdraw an enrolled student prior to the due date of **January 29, 2023** because the family does not qualify for variable tuition or the amount of variable tuition awarded is deemed to be insufficient, there will be no additional financial obligation due. variable tuition awards are ultimately decided by the variable tuition Committee. **The amount of variable tuition awarded, if any, is at the sole discretion of the variable tuition Committee.** Annual variable tuition awards are subject to change in the event a recipient is hired as a Liberty Christian School full-time employee and becomes eligible for tuition remission. The respective variable tuition award(s) will be reviewed for changes in financial status and potentially adjusted per FAST and committee recommendations.

### **Custodial/Non-Custodial Parents and Other Guardians**

The School believes that a Liberty education is a family decision and commitment. As such, **both custodial and non-custodial parents (as well as stepparents and legal guardians) are required to complete the**

**variable tuition application and submit appropriate documentation.** If the other parent is deceased, please provide a statement to that effect.

In cases of separation, divorce or parents who never married, the School's practice – for determining a student's financial need is based on the principle that both parents are responsible for the support and educational expenses of their children to the extent they are financially able, regardless of the provisions of any legal agreement or court order regarding payment of education expenses. While prenuptial agreements, divorce agreements and court orders are considered, they do not bind the School. Consequently, each parent is required to complete a separate variable tuition application. variable tuition is awarded to the student. It is the family's responsibility to determine how the tuition balance will be paid.

If a parent remarries, the financial information of the stepparent should be included on the application. Obligations of the parent and stepparent to their other children are taken into consideration. If a stepparent refuses to provide financial information, an imputed income will be added for purposes of calculating the student's financial need.

If a parent refuses to provide financial information, an imputed income will be added for purposes of calculating the student's financial need. If one parent is completely uninvolved in the child's life and has been for some time, the custodial parent should complete an affidavit from the Business Office to request a waiver of the other parent's information. Liberty defines parent involvement as having custody rights, providing financial support, attending academic/arts/athletic events, having an account on the MyLiberty school portal, or being listed as authorized to pick up a student from School.

### **Non-Working Parents**

In keeping with the principle that each family bears the primary responsibility for financing a student's education, Liberty believes that for families requesting variable tuition, both parents should be fully employed to the best of their abilities. **An imputed income will be added for purposes of calculating the student's financial need for any able parent who is not providing income based on the submitted FAST information.** Exceptions to this practice include a disability or health issue that prevents a parent from working, staying at home with pre-school-age children, or caring for disabled children or elderly parents. (If one of these applies, please explain in the letter portion of the application describing the circumstances.) A parent who is unemployed involuntarily and actively seeking employment should submit documentation of an active job search such as Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) claim filings.

### **Returning Students Requesting Variable Tuition for the First Time**

Liberty accepts variable tuition applications from returning families who have not received variable tuition in the past on the same basis as any other family requesting variable tuition.

### **Reconsideration**

After receiving a variable tuition decision, a family may request reconsideration of their decision **if there are significant financial circumstances that were not included in the original application.** For more information on requesting reconsideration of a variable tuition decision, please contact the Julie Barber in the Business Office at [julie.barber@mylcs.com](mailto:julie.barber@mylcs.com)

### **Renewal Applications**

Families must reapply for variable tuition each year. All financial obligations to the School must be current, and parents must complete a new FAST application and submit required documents. The amount of variable

tuition awards will vary from year to year based on available funds and the family's changing financial situation. If family income increases, appropriate decreases in variable tuition and supplemental support may occur. If the family's financial situation deteriorates, the School will endeavor to increase the level of variable tuition to the family. Every family, regardless of individual situation, is expected to pay some portion of tuition increase each year. The School does not guarantee the same level of variable tuition or supplemental support year to year or for other children in a family who may later be admitted and enroll.

### **Incomplete and Late Applications**

Variable tuition applications are not considered complete until the FAST application and all required and/or requested documentation has been submitted. Applications received after the applicable deadline will be considered for award if and when funds become available. Incomplete and late applications may not be considered if funding is no longer available when materials are received.

### **Accuracy of Information Provided**

FAST uses submitted tax documentation to validate the information provided on the application. The School assumes that all information provided in variable tuition applications and to the Internal Revenue Service is truthful and accurate. The School reserves the right to review and revise, or revoke, a variable tuition award at any time due to changes in financial or marital status, discovery of grossly inaccurate or deliberately falsified information, discovery of tax numbers that vary significantly from estimates, or discovery of errors in the determination of eligibility for variable tuition.

### **Recipient Standards**

Recipients of variable tuition are expected to meet the same standards of performance and behavior that all other students are expected to meet. To be eligible for variable tuition and to continue to receive variable tuition, students must remain enrolled or accepted at Liberty, meet all current financial obligations to the School and continue to demonstrate financial need.

### **Changes to the Program**

The variable tuition program, philosophy, process and practices are subject to the professional judgment of the variable tuition Committee and are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the School and may be modified without notice.