

FOUNDATION AWARDS MEANS-TESTED GUIDANCE

The Governors of Tonbridge School are committed to broadening access to education at the School by offering to eligible parents means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees for as many boys as possible who meet Tonbridge School's criteria for Foundation Awards. These Awards may be in the form of a discount of up to full fee remission in cases of proven need, (and, where appropriate, an allowance for other educational expenses such as school uniform or school trips), depending on the individual circumstances of the prospective pupil and each of his parents.

Foundation Awards are subject to an annual review of the boy's and his parent's financial circumstances, with fresh information being required about the pupil's parents' circumstances for every year that their son attends the School. Foundation awards may be removed or varied upwards or downwards, depending on the pupil's and parents' financial circumstances.

Awards may also be varied upwards or downwards for compassionate or other pertinent reasons, including but not limited to a boy's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour; where the parents have failed to support the School or otherwise have not acted in accordance with their obligations under the School's Terms and Conditions, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees; or otherwise in accordance with the terms of the award or the School's Terms and Conditions.

The Application Process

Foundation Awards may be made available to parents of boys entering Novi (Year 9) of Tonbridge School. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors; the Headmaster and School Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

Step One (September Year 6)

- Both parents seeking a Foundation Award are required to complete a form which seeks to establish the identity and financial circumstances of the family and of each parent. In the event both parents are separated and/or divorced, financial information from both parents should still be provided, as should the financial information of any other adults in the same household of either of the parent. The form, which requests details of all income, savings and capital must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to directoroffinance@tonbridge-school.org.
- Both parents seeking a Foundation Award will be required to sign a declaration stating that the information they have provided is both accurate and complete as well as requiring, in the event their application for a Foundation Award is successful, them to update the School in the event those circumstances change during the academic year in question. If any information provided in the application, or as part of the broader assessment process, is subsequently discovered to be false or misleading or incomplete, the School may withdraw any award which has made and, depending on the circumstances, may require reimbursement.

Step Two

- The Bursar or their nominee assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the boy to attend the School. Parents may be asked to meet the Bursar or their nominee at the School and/or provide additional supporting information as may be requested.

Step Three

- The Bursar or their nominee prepares a recommendation which is considered with the Headmaster and Foundation Manager and a joint decision is then reached.

Step Four (March Year 6)

- Following examination, interviews and assessments, the parents are advised whether their son is to be offered a Foundation Award.

Step Five

- Both parents are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the School and an acknowledgement agreeing to any additional terms and conditions relating to the Foundation Award. Parents are also required to sign a document agreeing to withdraw from other school applications.

Tonbridge School may use an external organisation to assist with processing bursary applications, including making home visits. Information provided by applicants may be made available, in confidence, to that organisation for those purposes.

All personal data processed in connection with the school's arrangements for bursaries shall be processed in accordance with the School's privacy policy which is available on the School's website and is otherwise available from the School upon request.

The Case for Assistance

A number of factors are considered when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support; inevitably this is a holistic judgment. In the main, the boy's suitability for the School is the first consideration in granting support.

Suitability

In assessing a boy's suitability, attention will be given to their academic assessment results in accordance with the School's published entry criteria. Foundation Award funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the School's educational provision.

Financial Limitations

The value of the Foundation Award is determined by need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made subject to the School's ability to fund these. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal; however, Tonbridge School has a duty to ensure that all Foundation awards 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 (but are not limited to):

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of each parent. 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 property assets.
- In cases of parents who are divorced or separated, the contribution that is being made or could be made by both parents, regardless of who the child lives with, and based on the principle that liability for the fees is joint and several. This means that the School may consider the financial circumstances of each parent separately and together, treating each parent's household separately.
- Contribution to household costs including school fees by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by third parties / outside sources.
- Any fees which are being paid to other schools (or universities).
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a Foundation Award. It should be noted that the list is not comprehensive:
 - frequent or expensive holidays
 - new or luxury cars
 - investment in significant home improvements
 - a second property/land holdings
 - failure to honour school fee payments to other schools.

Other Factors

It is recognised that, in addition to meeting academic requirements and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered as part of the School's holistic judgment. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the School (though a bursary award to one child does not guarantee an award to a sibling).
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant
- Where a parent is critically or terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health or incapacity.
- Where a separation has resulted or is likely to result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School, adding to the stress of coping with the parents separating, although the school will nonetheless consider the financial circumstances of both parents in such cases.
- Where a previous School has awarded means-tested support (but please note that bursary support from a previous school is no indication or guarantee that the parents would be eligible for bursary support at Tonbridge School.

Annual Review

All Foundation awards are subject to repeat consideration of the family's financial circumstances each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on the outcome of any review. Current Foundation Award holders will receive an annual means-testing review during the summer term.

For those previously in receipt of Foundation Awards, the Headmaster has the discretion to reduce or withdraw an award not only where a boy's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees or by otherwise not acting in accordance with Tonbridge School's Terms and Conditions, or otherwise in accordance with the terms of the Foundation Award or the school's Terms and Conditions.

All Foundation Awards are reassessed in detail before a boy enters the Sixth Form. At that point the School may advise that it can no longer provide a Foundation Award and advise a change of school.

Confidentiality

Tonbridge School respects the confidentiality of Foundation Awards made to parents and recipients and prospective recipients are expected to do likewise.

As the value of Foundation awards can be anything from 10% to 100% of fees, experience suggests that it may not be helpful for you to openly communicate the possible value of your son's award to others.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the Tonbridge School Foundation, 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. Tonbridge School encourages parents 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 Educational Trusts Forum's website: <http://www.educational-grants.org>