



Dauntsey's School

Bursary Policy

1 General

- 1.1 In line with School's founding principles and the objectives of the Charity, the Governing Body of Dauntsey's School is committed to broadening access to education at the School by offering to eligible parents or guardians means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees to enable a pupil to attend Dauntsey's School who otherwise would not be able to do so. Such support is known as a bursary and may be awarded in the form of a remission of up to 100% of fees.
- 1.2 Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:
 - 1.2.1 New entrants to the School where a place has been offered but parents are unable to fully fund the fees and other educational expenses.
 - 1.2.2 Existing pupils where a change in the pupil's and/or parents' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting fees and other educational expenses and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of their education. Financial support may be offered in the form of a short term 'hardship' bursary designed to allow the child to remain a pupil at the School until a natural 'break point' has been reached in their education.
- 1.3 Bursary awards are made on the basis of an assessment of a family's financial circumstances, including their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and other relevant factors. Bursary Administration Limited (BAL) collate the financial circumstances of bursary applicants on behalf of Dauntsey's School and prepare a report for the School which is provided to the Bursar. Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental financial circumstances each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental financial circumstances.
- 1.4 Awards may also be varied upwards or downwards for compassionate or other pertinent reasons, including but not limited to a pupil's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour.
 - 1.4.1 A bursary awarded to New Entrants may be increased if family circumstances change significantly, meaning that the fees paid by the family become less affordable. This would normally be a temporary adjustment, until the next financial review, in line with the intention of short term 'hardship' bursaries.

1.4.2 A bursary may also be withdrawn in its entirety if, in the opinion of the Head, the child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour (and/or the parents' behaviour or conduct (or the behaviour or conduct of one of the parents)) no longer merit the continuation of the award. This could include the circumstances 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.

1.5 The School reserves the right to amend the way in which awards are assessed.

2 Awareness

2.1 Information provided by the School alerting parents to means-tested financial support is included:

2.1.1 In the School's prospectus.

2.1.2 On the School's website.

2.1.3 In liaison with local state primary and secondary schools

2.1.4 In the School's Registration Form.

3 Open Access

3.1 Bursary support in the form of reduction of 100% of the fees may also include additional support for uniform, a digital device, books and other extras such as necessary educational visits, depending on the financial or other relevant family circumstances of the applicant.

4 The Application Process: new entrants

4.1 Bursaries may be made available to parents of children entering the First Form (Year 7) or Lower 6th (Year 12) of Dauntsey's School. Bursaries for boarding places are only available in the 6th Form (Year 12 entry). The School's website www.dauntseys.org sets out the timetable for applications and awarding of scholarships and bursaries for pupils wishing to enter the School. Applications for bursaries will not be considered before the application date specified on the website, and parents should be aware that they may need to re-submit the application if sent in early. All bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governors, who delegate the responsibility for the management and coordination of the process to the Head Master and Bursar.

- 4.2 Step one – both parents seeking a bursary are required to complete a form (Bursary Declaration Form) which seeks to establish the identity and financial resources 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 (separately as required), 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.
- 4.2.1 The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Bursar no later than the closing date for applications for that School year entry point, in the academic year that the child is being assessed for entry to Dauntsey's. Typically, this is Year 6 for First Form Entry and Year 11 for Lower Sixth entry.
- 4.2.2 Both parents seeking a bursary will be required to sign a declaration stating that the information they have provided is both accurate and complete. In the event their application for a bursary is successful, parents will be required to update the School if those circumstances subsequently 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 been made with immediate effect and, depending on the circumstances may require reimbursement.
- 4.2.3 If both parents are living, the School will not generally accept a bursary application by one parent only (e.g. where the other parent is refusing to participate in the process), unless there is a Court Order in place which has removed the responsibility of one parent. However, the Bursary Awarding Group – consisting of the Head of Admissions, Head Master and Bursar - recognises that these cases are sometimes complicated, and the Bursar is open to a conversation if a parent wishes to discuss the family's circumstances before proceeding with an application.
- 4.3 Step two – Completed forms and supporting information is securely passed to Bursary Administration Ltd (BAL) who review and assess the information. BAL are a firm of independent assessors who work with a large number of Independent Schools. BAL will also undertake a home visit, which will include a discussion about finances. BAL then provide the Bursar with a report on the basis of the information provided and the home visit or conversation. This report includes a recommended level of fee assistance (where necessary), based on their experience of very many similar reviews.
- 4.4 Step three - the Bursar reviews the BAL report and prepares a recommendation in accordance with the School's confidential scale of awards to be considered by the Bursary Awarding Group.
- 4.5 Step four – The School's entry assessments are conducted 'means blind' so that those pupils who have applied for a bursary award are not distinguished from anyone else during assessment. Following the assessments for the year in which the pupil is applying, the Head of Admissions will bring the relative performance of all pupils to the Bursary Awarding Group.

- 4.5.1 The Bursary Awarding Group meets to review the relative performance of all applicants requiring bursarial assistance.
- 4.5.2 It should be noted that the School's funding for bursaries is finite, and the requests for fees assistance / bursaries always exceed the School's ability to provide it. It is not possible to provide assistance to all pupils who have applied and so the awarding of a bursary is done on the basis of both means testing and performance in the entry assessments.
- 4.5.3 It is envisaged that in many cases bursary awards will be made to scholarship level pupils.
- 4.6 Step five – At the published time for offers to be made, the parents are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and the level of the bursary offer. Successful candidates will be offered a reduced deposit, in line with the level of bursary award made.
- 4.7 Step six – 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 bursary.

5 The Case for Assistance

- 5.1 The Head Master and Bursar will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for Bursarial support and the extent of such support; inevitably this is a holistic judgment. In the main, the child's suitability for the School is the first consideration in granting support.
- 5.2 Suitability - in assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to their academic assessment results in accordance with the School's entry criteria as well as performance in other areas of assessment, for example in sport or music scholarship assessments. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the School's educational provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head Maser, be likely to make good 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. Previous School reports will be consulted for evidence of the pupil's attainment, progress and behaviour.
- 5.3 Financial limitations - the *amount* of the bursary award (as distinct from the decision to award one at all) is not influenced by the child's academic ability but by the extent of need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made subject to the School's ability to fund them 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 are considered in determining the necessary level of grant include (but are not limited to):

- 5.3.1 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.
- 5.3.2 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.
- 5.3.3 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.
- 5.3.4 The number of school aged children in the household.
- 5.3.5 Contribution to household costs including school fees by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by third parties / outside sources.
- 5.3.6 Any fees which are being paid to other schools (or universities).
- 5.3.7 Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary. It should be noted that the list is not comprehensive:
- frequent or expensive holidays;
 - luxury cars;
 - investment in significant home improvements;
 - a second property/land holdings other than for the parents' business interests which are held solely to provide the family's income.

- 5.4 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:
- 5.4.1 Where a child has siblings at the School (though a bursary award to one child does not guarantee an award to a sibling).
 - 5.4.2 Where the social needs of the child are relevant (for example, where a child is suffering from bullying at their present School).
 - 5.4.3 Where a parent is critically or terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health or incapacity.
 - 5.4.4 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.
- 5.5 The School is unlikely to award a bursary where parents have failed to honour school fee payments to another School.
- 5.6 The School will not normally award a bursary where the child in respect of whom the application is made, has a sibling who has a full fee-paying place at another Independent School.

6 Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

- 6.1 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 bursaries. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a hardship award to the Bursar, explaining their situation.
- 6.1.1 A means testing review in line with that required for New Entrants will be required, and conducted by BAL. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.
- 6.2 If parents continue to require financial support in subsequent years, they will be required to submit repeat means-testing forms in the same way as other bursary holders.

7 Annual Review

- 7.1 All bursary awards are subject to repeat consideration of the child's and each parent's financial circumstances each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on the outcome of any review. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of the Spring Term each year, for return by the end of February. Bursary holders will usually be advised of the outcome of the annual review by the end of the Term.
- 7.2 For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head Master and Bursar have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil'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 the School's Terms and Conditions.
- 7.3 All bursaries will be reassessed in detail before a pupil enters the Sixth Form.

8 Extras

- 8.1 Bursary awards apply to tuition and boarding fees only. Extras must be paid in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Dauntsey's School.
- 8.2 Depending on the level of fee assistance determined by means tested assessment by BAL, additional help with extras may be available. In line with the Open Access policy (Section 3, above), this is more likely if a 100% bursary award is offered. The extent of additional help will be communicated in writing at the time that the bursary is awarded.
- 8.3 Pro-rated assistance may be provided to holders of substantial bursaries for the expense of necessary academic trips attended by all or most pupils in a year or subject group or those overtly for academic enrichment.

9 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 9.1 The School respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to parents and recipients and prospective recipients are expected to do likewise.
- 9.2 Parents applying for a bursary submit information about their families for consideration by BAL and the School. For data protection law purposes, the School is the data controller and BAL is a data processor in relation to the information submitted.
- 9.2.1 BAL is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and has satisfied the School as to its arrangements regarding the security of any information and documents an applicant may provide.
- 9.2.2 In making a bursary application and completing the bursary application form, the parents will be taken to have consented to the processing of financial and personal data relating to the applicant, personal data relating to the child, and sensitive personal data relating to the applicants and the child, both by BAL and by the School. Relevant information may also be obtained from third parties to order to assess the award.
- 9.3 It should be noted that the report produced by BAL is the property of the School and the Information Commissioner's Office regards the report as confidential and exempt from the provisions in the data protection legislation in relation to Data Subject Access Requests.

10 Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

- 10.1 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. Dauntsey's 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 Bursar.

J D Davey
Bursar

Date: September 2024

Appendix A: Bursary Application Process and key dates 2024/25

