

# University School of Jackson

## Tennessee Education Freedom Scholarships Policy

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2026

**Applies To:** All enrolled students receiving state-funded scholarships

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### 1. Overview

The University School of Jackson (USJ) is participating in the Tennessee Education Freedom Scholarship (EFS) Program, which allows our parent(s) to benefit from state-funded scholarships awarded to eligible K–12 students. This policy outlines the procedures for managing EFS funds and, where applicable, coordinating them with USJ's internal financial aid program.

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### 2. Acceptance and Application of EFS Funds

- **Eligibility Verification:**

The Tennessee Department of Education awards scholarships to a limited number of parent(s) with children enrolled in grades K–12 at independent schools. All scholarship eligibility and award decisions are made solely by the Department of Education; **USJ does not determine who qualifies or receives funds**. Once the state issues a conditional approval, parent(s) must log in to the state portal and select their school of choice. USJ will only be able to view a student's record in the portal after the parent(s) has selected USJ. The school must then verify that the information in the portal matches its records. This includes confirming there is a signed enrollment contract, the student's name, date of birth, and grade level. If any information does not match, USJ will contact the parent(s) to request that corrections be made with the state. When both records align, USJ will certify the information in the portal and enter the parent(s)' tuition obligation for the school year. Once this step is complete, the parent(s) will receive a formal approval notification from the Tennessee Department of Education.

- **Fund Application:**

The scholarship amount for the 2025–26 school year was \$7,295 but may vary annually based on state legislation. Upon receipt of EFS funds, the USJ business department will apply the scholarship amount directly to the student's tuition and eligible fees.

- **Payment Arrangements:**

Parent(s) are responsible for the full contract amount and the timely approval of tuition and fees covered by the EFS. Initial payment arrangements will be set up with the full contract amount, less any Financial Aid (FA) and EFS awards, distributed evenly across the chosen payment plan as discounts. If EFS is awarded after payments have been made, resulting in a credit balance, the parent(s) may be reimbursed up to the amount of tuition payments they have contributed to the account.

- **Administrative Fee:**

An administrative fee of \$250 will be applied to every student account that receives the EFS scholarship. This fee supports the administrative costs associated with processing and managing scholarship funds, including the initial applicant enrollment confirmation, financial tracking, and ongoing compliance with program requirements. All administrative fees must be paid directly by the parent(s). No scholarship or aid award may be applied to administrative fees.

- **Finance Fee:**

Regular financing fees apply based on the chosen payment plan for the full tuition balance: 5% monthly and 3% quarterly. One-pay parent(s) that choose to pay the net portion of tuition will

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be assessed a finance fee of 3% of the scholarship portion. USJ reserves the right to adjust these percentages each year based on current market conditions. All finance fees must be paid directly by the parent(s). No scholarship or aid award may be applied to finance fees.

- **Additional Expenses:**

The parent(s) is also responsible for additional fees not covered by EFS including, but not limited to, application fees, extracurricular activities, and other non-tuition-related expenses such as afterschool or summer childcare programs unless otherwise specified by the EFS guidelines.

- **Early Withdrawal:**

Parent(s) remain responsible for the full amount of tuition. If a student receiving an EFS scholarship withdraws before all EFS funds have been disbursed, the remaining undisbursed portion of the scholarship will be charged back to the student account.

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### **3. Coordination with School-Based Financial Aid**

- **Disclosure Requirement:**

Parent(s) must disclose all external scholarships, including EFS awards, when applying for USJ's internal need-based financial aid.

- **Aid Adjustment:**

USJ's financial aid committee will consider the EFS amount when determining internal aid awards to prevent duplication of benefits and to allocate resources effectively to parent(s) with demonstrated need. The FA award letter will present the parent(s) with the financial aid awarded, along with an adjusted financial aid amount if the scholarship is received.

- **Full Coverage Scenarios:**

The combined total of the EFS scholarship and financial aid may not exceed the full amount of tuition.

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### **4. Compliance and Reporting**

- **Record Keeping:**

USJ's business department will maintain accurate records of all EFS transactions and ensure compliance with state reporting requirements.

- **Assessment Requirements:**

In accordance with state regulations, USJ will administer a nationally standardized achievement test to students receiving EFS funds and submit aggregated assessment data to the Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) as required.

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### **5. Parents' Responsibility**

Parent(s) who receive an EFS scholarship are responsible for completing all steps required by the state to ensure funds are properly awarded and applied to their student's tuition account. USJ strongly encourages parent(s) to review the resource links provided below to understand all state guidelines regarding the scholarship. Parent(s) are also responsible for annual recertification with the state.

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Parent(s) must notify both the state and USJ immediately if the student withdraws, transfers, or changes enrollment status during the school year.

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## **6. Policy Review and Amendments**

This policy is subject to periodic review to ensure alignment with state regulations and USJ's mission. USJ remains dedicated to preserving its independence and values; and therefore the right to reconsider our participation in the EFS Program if any future modifications ever conflict with our mission. Any amendments to this policy will be communicated to all stakeholders in a timely manner.

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## **7. Resources**

2025-26 EFS Parent(s) Handbook:

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/efs/2025-26\\_EFS\\_Parent\(s\)\\_Handbook.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/efs/2025-26_EFS_Parent(s)_Handbook.pdf)

Tennessee Education Freedom Scholarship Program Home Page:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/efs.html>