

GUIDANCE ON BURSARIES

June 2026



HARROW
SCHOOL

What is a bursary?

A bursary is financial support offered to boys who would benefit from the education Harrow offers but whose parents would not otherwise be able to afford either the whole or part of the cost of sending their son to the School.

Availability of bursaries

Each year, Harrow provides a considerable number of bursaries, with individual awards varying between 5% and 100% of the fees, depending on the level of financial help needed. For those on the largest bursaries, this includes discretionary support for books, equipment, exam entry fees and essential educational visits.

Although the School is able to offer many bursaries, it receives more requests for bursaries than it has funds available. Inevitably, this involves difficult decisions, and some applicants will be disappointed.

Bursaries are only available on entry to the School at 11+, 13+ and 16+.

Who can apply for a bursary?

Prospective parents must indicate when they register their son that they will need a bursary in order to accept the offer of a place at Harrow. The registration fee must be paid. If this is unaffordable then please contact the Access Team at accessteam@harrowschool.org.uk.

The School will not consider late bursary applications from parents who accept the offer of a place at Harrow without applying for a bursary by the required deadline, except in the most exceptional and wholly unforeseeable circumstances.

To qualify for bursary support, parents must be fully resident in the UK and have lived in the UK for at least two continuous years at the time of applying for the bursary.

How to apply

The Bursar and the Awards Registrar manage and co-ordinate the application process for bursaries. The Head of Access is also involved in the process for boys requiring significant bursaries. Bursaries are awarded based on an assessment of the overall financial situation of the family. Awards may be greater or smaller depending on individual parents' circumstances (for example their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family and any other dependants), and compassionate or other relevant considerations.

All prospective parents who wish to apply for a bursary for their son must complete the bursary application form on the online registration portal so that reasons for the support and the level needed can be ascertained. A link to the portal will be sent to parents.

Details required include:

- family circumstances
- family finances, including income and expenditure, and assets and liabilities
- the reason a bursary is needed, the level of support required, and the measures the family has taken to find alternative sources of funding, including from other family members

Specific guidance for parents

The School must identify all individuals with parental responsibility and may request evidence where needed. We consider the financial circumstances of all adults with parental responsibility and, where relevant, those in the applicant's household. Separate forms may be completed if parents prefer not to share information. Where parents have remarried or formed new households, relevant circumstances may be taken into account in line with safeguarding and statutory duties.

The School may involve an independent third-party organisation, Bursary Administration Limited, for assessments or reviews. All parents applying should expect to be visited at home by a representative of the School. The School will not offer a bursary if parents do not co-operate with the requests for information, meetings or a home visit. We ask for this detailed information because bursaries may be financially extremely significant, with a full five-year award amounting to well over £320,000.

Factors in assessing applications

Bursaries are awarded solely at the School's discretion. The description that follows is not intended to be prescriptive. The School reserves the right to approach each case flexibly according to the specific circumstances. The School will consider several factors when assessing whether financial support might be available and, if so, the amount of such support. In the main, this will be determined by the applicant's suitability for Harrow, parents or guardians' financial circumstances, and the level of funding available to the School.

We will not consider bursary applications that arrive after the application deadline. Once all the available bursary funds are allocated, no more bursary awards can be made. It is therefore necessary to set the deadline at an early stage so that we can manage the allocation of bursary funds and confirm the decisions of the Bursaries Committee to parents as soon as possible.

Suitability

Each boy to whom support is offered must meet Harrow's admission criteria. In addition to making sound academic progress following admission and possessing the potential to develop the quality of his work, the boy must be likely to benefit from participation in the wider co-curricular activities on offer and play a full part in the life of the School.

Financial limitations

Each application is assessed on its own merits, and awards are made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these. It is recognised that the School will have to make judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees. The School tries, however, to ensure that all bursary awards are consistently assessed and applied. As well as an assessment of current income, outgoings and assets, other factors that may be considered in determining the level of bursary required include:

- The family's ability to improve its financial position or earning power; for example, where there are two partners, both would be expected to be employed unless one is prevented from doing so through ill health or disability, the need to care for children under school age or other dependants, or the requirements of their partner's work
- Future changes in the family's circumstances, for example if a parent is promoted or starts a new, more highly paid job, or the family is expecting a windfall
- In cases of separation, the contribution that is being made, or should be made, by the absent parent
- Contribution to household costs, including School fees, by other members of the wider family, by any adults unrelated to the child, or by outside sources
- Whether fees are being paid to other schools or universities. It is expected that, wherever possible, parents will apply to these other schools and universities for financial assistance for siblings so that the burden of fees is shared among these organisations. The School should not be expected to effectively subsidise other schools' fees
- Choices in the use of family income and assets. The School expects families to give priority to paying school fees over other expenditure

The School considers that the following, for example, may not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:

- substantial and/or non-contractual pension contributions
- substantial and/or non-contractual mortgage payments, especially accelerated capital repayments
- substantial rental payments
- voluntary surrender of paid employment in favour of business start-ups or extended retraining
- use of capital for purposes other than school fees
- self-improvement, for example by giving away assets or selling them at an undervalue

The School also considers that the following, for example, may not be consistent with receipt of a bursary:

- frequent or expensive holidays
- luxury cars
- investment in significant home improvements
- a second property or land holdings
- failure to honour school fee payments to other schools

Other factors

In addition to financial matters, the School may consider other factors. These include:

- if a boy has brothers already at the School (though a bursary award to one child does not guarantee awards to siblings)
- where the boy's social needs are relevant
- a parent is critically ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health or incapacity
- a parental separation might result in the boy having to be withdrawn from the School, adding to the boy's stress of coping with his parents separating

Application process

Parents will be sent a link to complete a preliminary assessment so the School can assess if a bursary may be offered. If appropriate, this will be a full assessment requiring information and supporting evidence.

For 11+

Harrow School can provide a small number of bursaries to support exceptional candidates for Years 7 and 8 (probably at a school within the Harrow Corporation) ahead of the boy joining Harrow School in Year 9. This is called the Year 7 Award. The application process is as follows:

- Parents whose sons meet the criteria for a Year 7 award must register by the deadline via the School's online portal; there will be no exceptions.
- A preliminary financial assessment of the family of shortlisted candidates will be conducted, but the School may refer an application to Bursary Administration Limited.
- References will be requested from the applicant's current school.
- Applicants will take the ISEB Common Pre-Test (ISEB CPT).
- Exceptional applicants needing 100% support will be invited to take the Harrow Test in January of Year 6.
- Applicants and their parents/guardians will be interviewed as part of the second round of assessments.
- All applicants may be subject to a home visit by a representative of the School and may also be asked to meet the Bursar at the School.
- The Awards Registrar will consider all information to make recommendations to the Bursary Committee.
- Admissions will inform parents of the value of any bursary by June of Year 6, in conjunction with the offer of a place.

For 13+

Awards will only be made after a satisfactory performance in the general entrance examination or scholarship assessment. The School will adhere strictly to all closing dates. The application process is as follows:

- Parents must indicate that they intend to seek bursary assistance when completing the online registration form.
- Parents who will need a bursary must inform the Admissions Office in writing no later than October of Year 6, to be reviewed as part of the assessment stage 2, which takes place between January and March of Year 6.
- The School will consider the application and prepare recommendations.
- All applicants may be invited to participate in a subsequent interview conducted by a representative of the School.
- Admissions will inform parents of the value of any bursary by June of Year 6, in conjunction with the offer of a place.

Sixth Form (16+)

This is a broadly similar approach to 11+ and 13+. Where practicable, the School will notify parents of the level of any bursary at the same time as the result of their entrance application.

Parents offered a bursary will be required to sign a letter accepting the offer and any conditions related to the bursary.

Review of awards

All bursaries are conditional on the recipient's good behaviour and continuing high performance. All awards are reviewed at least annually and are subject to repeat testing of parents' means. The amount awarded may increase or decrease, or even be withdrawn, if parents' circumstances change.

All bursaries will be reassessed in detail before a boy enters the Sixth Form and cannot be carried through unless the boy has met the minimum academic requirements for entrance to the Sixth Form, has behaved well and has consistently made a good contribution to the School's co-curricular programme.

The School has the discretion to reduce or withdraw an award not only where a boy's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to support the School, for example by late payment of their contribution to the fees.

The difference between applying for a place and applying for a bursary

Please note that Harrow makes its decisions to offer provisional places at the School before parents' need for financial support with School fees is assessed. Parents who will need bursary support should be aware that the offer of a place at the School does not guarantee the award of a bursary, or necessarily the level of bursary that has been requested. If we are unable to offer parents a bursary, the School reserves the right to withdraw the provisional offer of a place where it is apparent that parents cannot afford the fees without financial assistance. Where demand for bursaries exceeds the funds available, the School will offer bursaries to enable as many applicants to come to Harrow as funds allow. Preference will be given to those judged likely to benefit most from an education at Harrow.

What bursaries do and do not cover

When a boy on a high-level bursary first joins Harrow, the School can offer financial assistance at the same level with the cost of uniform and a laptop. During the boy's time at Harrow, financial support for curriculum trips and public examination costs may be provided on the same pro rata basis. Parents must contact the Awards Registrar to seek guidance before signing up to any trip or extra activity. The School would not expect boys on bursaries to go on voluntary overseas trips.

The Hardship Fund

The Hardship Fund is available exclusively to boys who are currently enrolled at the School. The fund is reserved for exceptional and unforeseen changes in a fee payer's circumstances, such as death or critical illness. The School has limited resources available to support hardship cases, so such support is short-term only.

Hardship awards will only be provided where there has been a material change and will not be made if the fees were unaffordable on accepting a place.

Confidentiality

In applying for a bursary, parents are entering into a special relationship with the School, and we expect them to respect our good faith. The School respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families, and recipients are expected to do the same. It is not the School's policy to tell boys that they are receiving a bursary, nor to identify bursary holders to any other pupil. Parents are welcome to tell their son.

Data Protection Act

The School will hold bursary application data in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy. Copies of these policies are available on request. We may share information, including financial information that has already been submitted to Harrow School, with other schools within the Harrow Corporation.

Other sources of bursary assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, there are several educational and charitable trusts that provide assistance with tuition fees. In most cases, these are to help children who are already attending a fee-paying school and who, due to a change of circumstances, may be unable to remain in that school.

Harrow School encourages parents and guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. More advice and information may be obtained from The Educational Trust Forum website educational-grants.org.

Revised: June 2026

Next review: June 2028