Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School- *The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day School or Schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.*

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL BRAMLEY

BURSARY AND FEES ASSISTANCE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

For Prospective and Current Parents

St Catherine's School is committed to widening access to its education. Our Bursary and Fees Assistance programme provides means-tested support to families who would otherwise be unable to afford the full cost of school fees.

The following FAQs explain how Fees Assistance works, who may apply and what families can expect from the application and assessment process.

What is Fees Assistance?

Fees Assistance is means-tested financial support towards tuition fees at St Catherine's School. It is intended to help families who can demonstrate financial need and whose daughter is considered suitable for, and likely to benefit from, the education offered by the School.

Awards are made at the discretion of the School's Executive Committee and depend on the funds available.

How much assistance is available?

Fees Assistance may provide remission of **up to 75% of tuition fees**.

The amount awarded will depend on an assessment of the family's financial circumstances and the availability of School funds.

In exceptional circumstances, the School may also provide assistance towards essential educational costs such as school uniform, transport and educational visits.

Is VAT included when calculating my award?

Yes. The percentage remission is calculated on the gross tuition fee, inclusive of VAT, so that the family's net liability is reduced proportionately.

Who can apply?

Applications may be made by families whose daughter is:

- Applying to join St Catherine's School;
- Already attending the School and moving to a new phase of education; or
- An existing pupil whose family wishes to be considered for Fees Assistance.

The policy applies across the **Prep School, Senior School and Sixth Form**.

At what ages or year groups is Fees Assistance normally available?

Awards may generally be made at the School's key admissions points:

- Reception
- Year 3
- Year 7
- Year 9
- Lower Sixth

Applications may also be considered when an existing pupil moves between phases of the School: Pre-Prep to Prep, Prep to Senior, or Senior to Sixth Form.

When do I need to apply?

Applications for Fees Assistance should be submitted by the **end of the first half of the Autumn Term in the year preceding entry or change of phase.**

This is typically the **penultimate Friday in October**. Parents should check the application information for the relevant year to confirm the exact deadline.

Applications received after the deadline may not be able to be considered.

Is Bursary or Fees Assistance the same as a scholarship?

No. Bursary or Fees Assistance is **means-tested** and is awarded primarily on the basis of financial need, alongside the pupil's suitability for the School and the availability of funds.

A scholarship is **non means-tested**; it rewards achievement or specific talent (academic merit, athletic skill, artistic talent…).

How does the School decide who receives a Bursary or Fees Assistance?

The School considers three principal factors:

1. **Financial need** – the family's overall financial circumstances.

2. **Educational suitability** – whether the pupil meets the School's academic and pastoral expectations and is likely to benefit from the opportunities available.

3. **Availability of funds** – awards can only be made within the resources available to the School.

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that an award will be made.

What financial information will we need to provide?

The School considers the financial position of the household as a whole. This may include:

- Gross household income and income from all sources;
- Savings and investments;
- Property and other assets;
- Business interests;
- Trust income;
- Liabilities and financial commitments;

The financial circumstances of both parents, regardless of marital status or living arrangements; and Contributions from other adults living in the household.

Parents will be asked to provide supporting documentation so that the School can make a fair and consistent assessment.

Why does the School consider savings, property and other assets as well as income?

Bursary or Fees Assistance is intended for families who would otherwise be unable to afford the full fees. The School therefore needs to consider the family's overall resources rather than income alone.

Families are expected to make reasonable use of the resources available to them before seeking financial support from the School.

Will you consider the finances of both parents if they are separated or divorced?

Yes. The School may consider the financial circumstances of **both parents, regardless of marital status or living arrangements**.

This enables the School to assess the resources potentially available to support the pupil's education.

Does my daughter need to meet the School's usual admissions requirements?

Yes. Receiving Fees Assistance does not replace the School's admissions or suitability requirements.

The School must be satisfied that the pupil meets its academic and pastoral expectations and is likely to benefit fully from the educational opportunities available.

For existing pupils, positive behaviour, attendance and engagement will also be relevant.

How do we apply?

Parents should complete the School's **Fees Assistance application form** and provide the requested supporting financial documentation.

The School may ask for additional information if this is needed to understand the family's circumstances fully.

What happens after we submit the application?

Applications are first assessed by the Head of Finance and/or nominated senior staff. Recommendations are then considered by the Executive Committee, which makes the final decision.

As part of the assessment, the School may arrange a meeting with parents and, where possible, a home visit to clarify the information provided.

Applicants are notified of the outcome in writing.

How long will it take to hear back?

The School aims to notify applicants of the outcome in writing within a few weeks of the assessment meeting.

Is our financial information kept confidential?

Yes. Applications and supporting information are treated confidentially and processed in accordance with applicable UK data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice.

Information is shared only with those involved in assessing and administering awards.

If we receive an award, is it guaranteed for the whole time our daughter is at St Catherine's School?

No. All awards are reviewed annually.

Families receiving Fees Assistance will be required to provide updated financial information when requested.

Following a review, an award may increase, decrease or cease depending on the family's circumstances and the funds available.

What happens if our financial circumstances change after receiving an award?

Parents must inform the School promptly of any significant change in circumstances.

This includes, for example:

- A change in employment or income;
- An inheritance;
- The acquisition or disposal of property;
- A significant change in savings or investments; or
- A change in family composition.

The School may review the level of assistance following a material change in circumstances.

Can an award be reduced or withdrawn?

Yes. The School may reduce or withdraw an award where circumstances change. This may include situations where:

- The family's financial position improves;
- Information supplied is inaccurate, incomplete or misleading;
- Fees due from parents are not paid on time;
- A pupil's attendance, behaviour or progress becomes unacceptable;
- Parents do not comply with School policies, procedures or contractual obligations; or
- The funds required to maintain the award are no longer available.

Any decision to withdraw support will be made fairly and proportionately.

What if our circumstances change unexpectedly after our daughter has joined the School?

Existing families who experience a **significant and unforeseen change in financial circumstances** may be able to apply for a **Hardship Award**.

Unlike the normal Fees Assistance application cycle, applications for Hardship Awards can be made at any point during the academic year.

Are there circumstances in which fees assistance may be given to existing pupils?

Yes – the School may provide short-term financial support to an existing pupil's family following an unexpected change in their financial circumstances.

Its purpose is to minimise disruption to the pupil's education. An award would normally be expected to last for a limited period, for example to enable a pupil to complete an academic year or key stage.

All Fees Assistance is subject to the availability of funds.

Can more than one child in a family receive Fees Assistance?

The School will **normally consider only one Fees Assistance award per family at any one time**.

Individual circumstances can be discussed with the School as part of the application process.

Does applying guarantee that we will receive assistance?

No. The School has limited funds available and must balance the needs of all applicants.

Awards therefore cannot be guaranteed, even where a family demonstrates financial need. Decisions also take account of the pupil's suitability for the School and the funding available in the relevant year.

Who makes the final decision?

Recommendations for Fees Assistance are considered by the **School's Executive Committee**.

The Governors provide oversight of the Fees Assistance and Hardship Awards programme, including the funding available, award criteria, distribution of awards and compliance with the School's charitable and regulatory obligations.

What if I disagree with a decision?

Decisions on Fees Assistance are made by the Executive (Headteachers and Chief Operating Officer) at its discretion, taking into account financial need, the pupil's suitability, and the funds available. Given the limited nature of the funds and the number of families the School seeks to support fairly, these decisions are final and there is no right to appeal. Parents are welcome to discuss an outcome with the Head of Finance to better understand how the decision was reached.

What happens if our application is successful?

Parents will receive written notification of the outcome.

To take up the award, parents will be required to:

- Accept the award in writing;
- Comply with any conditions attached to it; and
- Notify the School promptly of any material change in their circumstances.

Who should I contact if I have questions before applying?

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the School if they have questions about the Fees Assistance process, application requirements or deadlines. If you are a parent of a new applicant please email, admissions@stcatherines.info. For parents of existing pupils, please email our Head of Finance via fees@stcatherines.info

The School understands that every family's circumstances are different and will treat enquiries about Fees Assistance sensitively and confidentially.

These FAQs provide a general guide to St Catherine's School's Fees Assistance and Hardship Awards arrangements. Awards are discretionary, subject to assessment and the availability of funds, and are governed by the School's current Bursary and Fees Assistance Policy and relevant terms and conditions.

These FAQs are reviewed alongside the Bursary and Fees Assistance Policy which is reviewed annually.