

Bursaries Policy and Procedure



Wycombe Abbey is committed to providing academically able pupils from all backgrounds with the very best start in life, which includes enabling those whose parents may not otherwise be able to meet the full cost of fees with the opportunity to attend the School. Parents/guardians of candidates who require financial assistance are actively encouraged to apply for a means-tested Bursary. The School is proud to offer Bursaries to ensure that all those worthy of a place at the School have the same opportunities regardless of their personal circumstances.

Bursaries are generally awarded at the point of entry to the School as part of the admissions process, but may also be offered to existing parents in cases of sudden or unforeseen need.

The online Bursary Application Form is available via a secure link from the School.

For new entrants, the Closing Date for submission of the bursary applications is 1 September in the academic year prior to entry. A Bursary application will not be considered after this date.

All personal data is handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act (2018). Further information is available in the School's Privacy Notice for Parents and Pupils.

Any prospective parent wishing to find out further information about bursaries or to register their interest in a bursary should contact the Admissions Department – admissions@wycombeabbey.com or telephone 01494 897008. Where a parent is applying for a full bursary place, and the registration fee of £420 presents a difficulty, parents are encouraged to contact the Director of Admissions.

The means-tested application is processed and assessed via electronic application and external advisors.

1. Financial Assistance with Fees

Assistance, in the form of a Bursary, may represent up to 100% of the fees and is dependent on assessment of the parental financial circumstances. All Bursaries are reviewed annually and may increase or reduce in accordance with changes to parental circumstances.

The financial assessment takes into account the value of assets held, including the family home, savings, investments, pension provision and other realisable assets, as well as income, the size of the family, and any other dependents.

In general, a family with a combined disposable income of less than £30,000 may be eligible for an award of up to 100%. Alternatively, a family with a combined gross income of over £150,000 may not qualify for any support. We also offer additional assistance to recipients of bursaries to help cover the cost of co-curricular activities, uniform costs and educational trips.

The number and value of awards made is dependent on the funds available at the time.

2. Eligibility

Bursaries are normally only given to children of parents permanently resident in the UK. The Bursary

Committee considers a number of factors when assessing whether, and to what extent, any support will be awarded. The principal consideration will be a child's suitability and the likelihood of them thriving at the School.

Suitability

An applicant must be likely to thrive at Wycombe Abbey, and benefit from participation in the wider, co-curricular activities on offer. Candidates must also meet the academic requirements and perform well in the assessment process. Previous school reports will be consulted. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable by the Headmistress will be given priority.

Financial Limitations

The extent of the Bursary awarded to an applicant will not be influenced by their academic ability but by the extent of need. Each situation will be assessed on its own merits and awards will be made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within the context of an overall budget. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay for school fees will be personal. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all Bursary awards are considered alongside current earnings. Other factors that will be considered in determining the level of grant will include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. 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 capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity values in houses,
- In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent/guardian,
- Contribution to household costs by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or from outside sources,
- Where siblings are at other fee-paying schools or places of education, it would be expected that applications for financial assistance have been made to those organisations,
- The School considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a Bursary:
 - Frequent or expensive holidays
 - New or luxury cars
 - Investment in significant home improvements
 - A second property/land holdings
 - Lavish personal expenditure.

It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances that should be considered. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the School,
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g. being bullied at their present school),
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health,
- Where a separation may result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School, adding to the stress of coping with the parent/guardians separating.

Separated Parents/Guardians:

- It is recognised that the financial arrangements of and between parents/guardians who live separately can be complex. However, in general, the financial circumstances of both parents/guardians will be assessed.

- If either of the applicant's parents/guardians is absent, there will be a decision taken by the School as to what extent the absent parent's/guardian's financial circumstances should be assessed.
- In all situations, the financial information collected from each parent/guardian will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed without explicit consent.
- In the case of divorce, court orders and financial agreements regarding the care of dependents must be submitted with the application.

3. Application Process - New Applicants to the School

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of pupils entering years 7, 9 and 12. They are awarded at the discretion of the School. The Bursar's PA is responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **Step One**
Parents/guardians seeking a Bursary should indicate their requirement when they register for a place at the School and must complete an online application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The online form requests details of income and capital. The completed online form *and supporting documentation* is to be submitted no later than **1 September** in any year for the award to start the following September. Applicants should be aware that, even if a full Bursary is awarded, the payment of the registration fee is normally still required, however the Admissions Department can advise where alternative registration fee and deposit arrangements are acceptable.
- **Step Two**
The School reviews the initial applications and confirms whether they meet the minimum criteria for further detailed assessment by the School's external research company (Bursary Administration Limited (BAL)). Qualifying applications are then passed to BAL for assessment.
- **Step Three**
BAL will contact parents to arrange a financial interview to review the necessary supporting documentary evidence, to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. BAL will then submit a confidential financial report to the School.
- **Step Four**
The Bursary Committee considers the BAL financial report and additional information including entry assessment results and interview feedback, before deciding on whether a Bursary is to be awarded and, if so, at what level.
- **Step Five**
Parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and whether they have been successful with their application for a Bursary. Depending on the funds available it may be that not all successful candidates will be offered a Bursary.
- **Step Six**
Parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the Bursary. Please note that payment of the School Acceptance Deposit will be waived for those receiving 100% Bursary Awards and set at the lower of £3,500 or 50% of one term's reduced fees for all other recipients.

All Bursary awards are reviewed annually and may be increased or reduced to reflect changes in the financial circumstances of the parents/guardians. The review entails the completion of the online Bursary Renewal application form along with submission of all necessary documentary evidence.

5. Change in Family Circumstances

The School makes provision annually, where possible, for cases of sudden or unforeseen need. These appeals will only be considered where there can be proved a significant recent change in the family's financial circumstances. Existing parents who wish to discuss the possibility of assistance with fees should contact the Director of Finance in the first instance.

Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. If granted, support may only be provided to complete the current stage of education.

6. Confidentiality

The confidentiality of Bursary awards made to families is respected and the School will not publicise such awards without the permission of the recipients. Recipients are also expected to respect such confidentiality.

7. Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to our 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. Parents/guardians are encouraged to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance.

These sites give useful information on the grant application process and provides links to a large number (1200+) of charities. Some of these are grant-making, some support education, some are vocational:

- The Educational Trusts Forum: www.educational-grants.org
- Educational Grants Advice: www.isc.co.uk/schools/information-for-parents/fee-assistance-and-bursaries/

Vocational Trusts

Welfare funding covering the Trades and Industries for which parents may have worked may be relevant. For example, electrical engineers can use www.eeiba.org/about.shtml or civil servants can use www.scbf.org.uk. Parents working in a retail environment may be eligible under the Fashion & Textile Children's Trust (www.ftct.org.uk).

Geographical and Local Trusts

Local Community Foundation funding maybe available in some areas. Consider applying for financial support for Paid Extras or Trips rather than Fees. Talk to local vicars. They may be a trustee on one of the local Trusts.

Member of staff
Updated

Bursar
November 2024

Version: BURS/v9/24

Related Policies:

Privacy Notice for Parents and Pupils
Admissions Policy