



# Bursary Policy

---

## General

The governors of The Unicorn School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees. Such support is known as a bursary and bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

We can only formally consider applications from parents/guardians of children who have been offered a place by the School.

The bursary form is available from The Bursar and must be submitted during the autumn term, for the following academic year.

## Financial Assistance with fees

Bursary awards may represent up to 100% of fees, and are dependent on an assessment of parental financial circumstances. Bursaries are reviewed annually and may increase or decrease due to changes in parental circumstances. Each situation will be assessed on its own merits and awards will be made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund the within the context of its budget.

The financial assessment takes account of 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. Other factors that will be considered in determining the level of grant will be:

- The ability of the family to improve its financial situation. 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, for example significant savings and investments, or home equity.
- Contribution to household costs by other family members, or other adults, or from other 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 or land, lavish personal expenditure.
- Separated parents: the school recognises 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 parent is absent, the school will decide to what extent the absent parent's/guardian's financial circumstances should be assessed.
- In the case of divorce, court orders and financial agreements regarding the care of dependents should be disclosed.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the school where a place has been offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

### **New Applicants to the School**

Awareness - information provided by the school alerting the parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees is included on the school website.

### **The Application Process**

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year-group of The Unicorn School. (See the School's Admission's Policy). They are awarded at the discretion of the governors and funds are limited.

Parents or guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form can be obtained from the Bursar at [bursar@unicornoxford.co.uk](mailto:bursar@unicornoxford.co.uk). The completed form is to be submitted to the Bursar during the autumn term, for the following academic year.

The School uses an external company, Bursary Administration Limited, to review each credible bursary application submitted. The company will review applications, and may carry out home visits and financial checks on the bursary applicants on behalf of the School. They will provide a confidential financial report to the School, which will be considered by the Bursary Panel. Applicants should be aware that funds are limited and not all applications may be successful.

### **Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances**

The School will, in normal circumstances, make provision for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle. Parents/guardians with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Head or Bursar, explaining their situation and using the standard application form, available from the Bursar. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

### **Confidentiality**

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families and recipients are expected to do likewise.

### **Other Sources of Bursary Assistance**

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. The School encourages parents/guardians 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.

Created by: Alison Jarratt

Reviewed by: Andrew Day

Date of next review: November 2019