

Staines Preparatory School



Bursary Policy

September 2024

General

The governors of Staines Preparatory School are committed to broadening access to education at the school by offering to eligible parents' means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees for as many pupils as possible who meet Staines's Preparatory Schools entry criteria. Such support is known as a bursary. Bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 50% remission in cases of proven need, depending on the individual circumstances of the prospective pupil and each of his or her parents. Bursaries are considered for pupils from Year One to Year Six only.

Bursary awards are subject to an annual review of the pupil's and his or her parent's financial circumstances, with fresh information being required about the pupil's parents' circumstances for every year that their child attends the school. Bursary awards may be removed or varied upwards or downwards, depending on the pupil's and parents' financial circumstances. Bursary awards may vary depending on the child's and each parent's financial circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and other factors).

Awards may also be varied upwards or downwards for compassionate or other pertinent reasons, including but not limited to a pupil's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour; where the parents have failed to support the school or otherwise have not acted in accordance with their obligations under the school's Terms and Conditions, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees; or otherwise in accordance with the terms of the award or the school's Terms and Conditions.

A bursary may be withdrawn in its entirety in accordance with the terms upon which such an award is made or otherwise in accordance with the school's Terms and Conditions. A bursary may also be withdrawn in its entirety if, in the opinion of the Head, the child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour (and/or the parents' behaviour or conduct (or the behaviour or conduct of one of the parents)) no longer merit the continuation of the award.

The school reserves the right to amend the way in which awards are assessed.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

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

Within the second category there may be temporary arrangements dealing with the disbursement of "hardship" funds when local or national economic circumstances affect the income of school families.

New Applicants to the School

Awareness

Information provided by the school alerting parents of prospective pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees and other educational expenses is included in:

- The school's information pack.
- The school's website.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents of children entering Year 1 or above of Staines Preparatory School. (See the school's Admission's Policy for further information on the school's entry criteria). They are awarded at the discretion of the governors. The headmistress and school bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step one – both parents seeking a bursary are required to complete a form which seeks to establish the identity and financial circumstances of the family and of each parent. In the event both parents are separated and/or divorced, financial information from both parents should still be provided, as should the financial information of any other adults in the same household of either of the parent. The form, which requests details of all income, savings and capital, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the bursar no later than the 1st of December in any year for bursaries to start the following September.
- Both parents seeking a bursary will be required to sign a declaration stating that the information they have provided is both accurate and complete as well as requiring, in the event their application for a bursary is successful, them to update the school in the event those circumstances change during the academic year in question. If any information provided in the application, or as part of the broader assessment process, is subsequently discovered to be false or misleading or incomplete, the school may withdraw any award which has been made with immediate effect and, depending on the circumstances may require reimbursement. The school may also terminate its parent contract (Terms and Conditions) and require the removal of the child in such circumstances.
- Step two - the bursar or their nominee assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the school. This may involve a representative of the school visiting the parents' home(s) to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. Parents may also be asked to meet the bursar or their nominee at the school and/or provide additional supporting information as may be requested.
- Step three - the bursar or their nominee prepares a recommendation in accordance with the school's confidential scale of awards which is considered with the headmistress and a joint recommendation is then reached.
- Step four - the joint recommendation is presented to the Bursaries, Scholarships and Fees Committee for approval. The committee may request further information to inform their deliberations. These recommendations are then presented to the Finance and General-Purpose Committee for further approval before final approval from the Full Governing Body
- Step five - end of March - The parents are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the bursary offer.
- Step six – both parents are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the school and an acknowledgement agreeing to any additional terms and conditions relating to the bursary.

Staines Preparatory School may use an external organisation to assist with processing bursary applications, including making home visits. Information provided by applicants may be made available, in confidence, to that organisation for those purposes.

All personal data processed in connection with the school's arrangements for bursaries shall be processed in accordance with the school's privacy policy which is available on the school's website and is otherwise available from the school upon request.

The Case for Assistance

The headmistress and bursar will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support; inevitably this is a holistic judgment. In the main, the child's suitability for the school is the first consideration in granting support.

- Suitability - Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the school's educational provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the headmistress, be likely to make good academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the school. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of the pupil's attainment, progress and behaviour.
 - Financial limitations - the amount of the bursary award is not influenced by the child's academic ability but by the extent of need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made subject to the school's ability to fund these within the context of its overall budget. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal; however, the school has a duty to ensure that all
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bursary grants are well focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant will include (but are not limited to):

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of each parent. 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 any capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity values in property assets.
 - In cases of parents who are divorced or separated, the contribution that is being made or could be made by both parents, regardless of who the child lives with, and based on the principle that liability for the fees is joint and several. This means that the school may consider the financial circumstances of each parent separately and together, treating each parent's household separately.
 - The number of school aged children in the household.
 - Contribution to household costs including school fees by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by third parties / outside sources.
 - Any fees which are being paid to other schools (or universities).
 - Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the school considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary. It should be noted that the list is not comprehensive:
 - frequent or expensive holidays;
 - [new or] luxury cars;
 - investment in significant home improvements;
 - a second property/land holdings;
 - failure to honour school fee payments to other schools.
- **Other factors** - it is recognised that, in addition to meeting academic requirements and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered as part of the school's holistic judgment. These include:
 - Where a child has siblings at the school (though a bursary award to one child does not guarantee an award to a sibling).
 - Where the social needs of the child are relevant (for example, where a child is suffering from bullying at their present school).
 - Where a parent is critically or terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health or incapacity.
 - Where a separation has resulted or is likely to result in the child having to be withdrawn from the school, adding to the stress of coping with the parents separating, although the school will nonetheless consider the financial circumstances of both parents in such cases.
 - Where a previous school has awarded bursary support (but please note that bursary support from a previous school is no indication or guarantee that the parents would be eligible for bursary support at Staines Preparatory School).

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the school will in normal circumstances set aside each year a hardship fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for bursaries. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a hardship award to the bursar explaining their situation and using the forms at Annex A. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

If parents continue to require financial support in subsequent years, they will be required to submit repeat means-testing forms in the same way as other bursary holders.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to repeat consideration of the child's and each parent's financial circumstances each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on the outcome of any review. Current bursary holders

will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of October each year, for return by the end of November. Bursary holders will usually be advised of the outcome of the annual review by the end of March. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the headmistress and bursar, in making their joint recommendation to the Bursaries, Scholarships and Fees committee, have the discretion to recommend to the governors the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude, attendance or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to support the school, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees or by otherwise not acting in accordance with the school's Terms and Conditions.

Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to parents and recipients and prospective 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. Staines Preparatory School encourages parents 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

Staines Preparatory School

Email: j.philpott@stainesprep.co.uk

The Educational Trusts Forum

Website: www.educational-grants.org

Royal National Children's Spring Board Foundation Website: <https://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/>

Annex A. [Means testing guidance and forms.](#)
