

St Margaret's Bushey



Bursaries and Scholarships Policy

Last reviewed : December 2009
Next review : January 2011

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BURSARIES

General

St Margaret's School is committed to broadening access to the school by making available to parents/guardians of those who have been offered a place following the normal admissions and selection process, means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 33% of tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances. Awards are made on the basis of the St Margaret's School Scale of Awards, which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The Scale of Awards is reviewed and revised annually by the Bursar and the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to reflect any changes in fee costs, and approved by the Governors. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents/guardians' 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 like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

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parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in a difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.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 in:

- The School Information Booklet
- The School website.
- The local press by means of advertisements

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering Year 7 and above of St Margaret's School. (See the School's Admissions Policy). They are awarded in accordance with this policy and the Headmistress and Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- Step One. Parents/guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, may be found at Annex A and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Bursar normally immediately after a place has been offered but in exceptional circumstances prior to this.
- Step Two. The Bursar 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 the Bursar, or his representative, visiting the parents/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.
- Step Three. The Bursar prepares a recommendation in accordance with the St Margaret's School 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 Chairman of the Governors' Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval.
- Step Five. The parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of the Bursary offer.

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. In the main, the child's suitability for the school is the first consideration in granting support.

- Suitability. In assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmistress, be likely to make sound 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.

- Financial Limitations. The amount of the bursary award is not influenced by the level of the academic ability of the child but by the extent of need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, 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 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:
 - 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 any 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 both parents.
 - Contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
 - Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings.
 - Acknowledging that others might have a different view, 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.
- Other Factors. It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:
 - Where a child has siblings at the School.

- Where the social needs of the child are relevant (eg: may be suffering from bullying 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 has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the School adding to the stress of coping with the parents/guardians separating.

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 bursary submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary 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.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of June each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmistress and Bursar, in making their joint recommendation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents/guardians have failed to support the school, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

The 100% Bursary

Each year one 100% Bursary will be awarded to a pupil on entry to Year 7. The Bursary will be open to a girl who satisfies the normal entry criteria for a place at St Margaret's, but whose family circumstances would normally preclude her from a St Margaret's education. The Bursary will also include daily travel on a school coach if appropriate, the cost of essential educational visits and a grant towards the initial cost of school uniform and equipment.

Information about this Bursary will be circulated annually to maintained schools in the vicinity of the school and an application should be supported by a strong recommendation from the Head teacher of the applicant's current school.

Completed Bursary forms (Appendix A) should be received from the parent(s) by 30th November in the Year preceding entry into Year 7, accompanied by a covering letter. The Bursar assesses all applications, which may involve the Bursar or his representative visiting the applicants in their own home as explained above. Applicants who fulfil the financial criteria for the 100% Bursary will be notified by the end of the Autumn Term and invited to register to attend the entrance examinations in January, and if their results are satisfactory, will then be invited to attend an interview. A report from the Head of the current school will be requested.

Based on the report received from the current school, performance in the examinations, and at interview as assessed by the Headmistress, and after an interview with the parent(s) conducted by the Headmistress and the Bursar one 100% Bursary will be offered each year.

The Bursary will be subject to annual review.

Confidentiality

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

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are awarded each year at 11+ and sixth form level to both internal and external candidates. The value of a scholarship is normally in the region of £500 per term.

11+ scholarships are awarded on the basis of success in the 11+ entrance examinations and interview. All external applicants sitting the main examination in January of the year of entry are considered. All girls already attending St Margaret's in Year 6 are also considered for scholarships. They all sit internal examinations in January and on the basis of these the most outstanding candidates are invited to attend a scholarship interview.

At Sixth Form level scholarships are awarded on the basis of outstanding academic achievement. Some smaller exhibitions may also be offered on academic merit. Awards will be made on the basis of scholarship examinations and an interview and mock GCSE examination results will also be taken into consideration. Girls wishing to be considered for a Sixth Form scholarship must apply by completing a scholarship application form which can be obtained from the Admissions Secretary at the School. Applications should be submitted by 30th November of the year preceding entry to the Sixth Form.

Two music scholarships are usually awarded at 11+ and one at Sixth Form level. In addition to meeting the normal entry criteria prospective music scholarship candidates will have an audition. This will include performance of two contrasting pieces and sight-reading on the main instrument (minimum standard Grade 4 for Year 7 and Grade 6 for Year 12) and one piece on the second instrument, if available. 'Instrument' may include voice. There are no written music papers and the potential of a pupil will be taken into consideration as well as

her achievement at the audition. Successful candidates are expected to take an active part in and make a full contribution to the musical life of the school. Written applications for music scholarships for entry in September must be submitted by 30 November of the preceding year.

An Art scholarship may be awarded for the Sixth Form. In addition to meeting the normal entry criteria candidates for the Art Scholarship will have a two hour practical assessment to which they must also bring a portfolio of their own work and a written reference from their current Art teacher.

Scholarships are subject to annual review and can be withdrawn if a student is not working to capacity or maintaining the behavioural standards we expect of a St Margaret's scholar.

Other Sources of Financial 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. St Margaret's 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 , bursar@stmargarets.herts.sch.uk

and also

The Joint Educational Trust
6 Lovat Lane
London EC3R 8DT
Email: admin@jetcharity.org
Website: www.jetcharity.org

Annex:

A. Bursary Application Form

Revised, December 2009