



# **BURSARY POLICY**

**Reviewed March 2025**

## GENERAL

1. The Council is committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school 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.
2. Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and 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. Awards are made on the basis of the confidential assessment of each case.
3. 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parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

4. Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering the Prep School (Years 3 to 8). Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Council and the Finance Director is responsible for the management and coordination of the process.
  - Step one - parents/guardians may seek a bursary once they have paid the registration fee and their child has been offered a place at the School.
  - Step Two – parents/guardians complete a Bursary Application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are submitted to Bursary Administration Limited who will then conduct credit checks, a home visit and a financial assessment of the application. Applications are normally assessed no later than the **Summer Term half term** in any year for bursaries to start the following September.
  - Step three - the Headmistress assesses all bursary applications once the financial assessment is received by the DFO in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required.
  - Step four - the DFO prepares a joint recommendation for bursary support with the Headmistress to be presented to the Council's representative.
  - Step five – After the decision is taken, the parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered bursary support.
  - Step six - parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter acknowledgement agreeing to conditions relating to the bursary – see Annex A.

## THE CASE FOR ASSISTANCE.

5. The Headmistress and DFO 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 assessment of each applicant but potential and talent will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as being the most likely to gain from the educational provision offered. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmistress, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission, possess the potential to develop the quality of her work and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the school. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the school's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **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 what is viable within its overall budget. The Bursary will be based on the financial circumstances of the family having regard to all pertinent considerations. As a guide, it is unlikely that a Bursary will be awarded to a family with gross income in excess of £80,000pa and a bursary of 100% is unlikely unless the family gross income is less than £30,000pa. 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 the absent parent.
  - 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 (e.g. 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.
    - It will be assumed, where a child is already within the school and parents are choosing to divorce for reasons other than abuse or violence that financial arrangements have been made for the payment of fees.

#### **EXISTING PUPILS – CHANGE IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES**

6. 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 financial assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/guardians with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for hardship support to the Finance Director, explaining their situation. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding, cannot be guaranteed and if awarded, would be for a finite period (no more than two terms).

#### **ANNUAL REVIEW**

7. 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 in March each year for return by the start of the summer term. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmistress and Finance Director, in making their joint recommendation to Council's representative, have the discretion to recommend 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.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

## Annex A – Bursary Conditions of Award

- 1 **Grant of the award:** An award is granted at the sole discretion of the Godstowe Preparatory School Company Limited (the **School**).
- 2 **Obligations of the Pupil:** The Pupil who is the subject of an award is required to work hard, to contribute positively to the life of the School, to be a credit to the School and to set a good example to other pupils. The Pupil must adhere to the School's required standards of conduct and progress. These are the **Purposes of the Award**.
- 3 **Obligations of the Parents:** The Parents are required to:
  - 3.1 support and encourage the Pupil to achieve the Purposes of the Award; and
  - 3.2 treat members of the School community reasonably and to uphold the aims and the good name of the School; and
  - 3.3 comply with the School's *Terms and Conditions*.
- 4 **Means tested awards:** All means tested awards will be subject to annual review and the Parents shall each year be required to complete a financial means questionnaire. After any annual review, the School reserves the right to vary the value of the award with immediate effect and will confirm the new value in writing to the Parents.
- 5 **Continuation of the award:** Continuation of the award is dependent upon the following conditions being fulfilled:
  - 5.1 in the case of a means tested award, the Parents satisfying the School's financial requirements each year; and / or
  - 5.2 in respect of all awards:
    - 5.2.1 the financial resources allocated by the School to support the award being sufficient to maintain the award; and
    - 5.2.2 it being in the financial interests of the School to maintain the award; or
    - 5.2.3 the Pupil complying with the obligations set out in clause 2 above. (Please also see clause 7.2.1 below.)
- 6 **Confidentiality:** The value and Terms and Conditions of the award shall remain confidential to the Parents and the Pupil and the School.
- 7 **Termination of the award:** The award may be terminated on the following grounds:
  - 7.1 **termination on financial grounds:** the School may terminate the award on one Term's notice in writing if, in the opinion of the School Council acting in good faith:
    - 7.1.1 the Parents have not satisfied the School's financial requirements under clause 4 and clause 5.1; or
    - 7.1.2 the School is no longer able to continue the award under clause 5.2.1 or 5.2.2 above.The termination shall take effect from the date set out in the written notice;
  - 7.2 **termination on the grounds of conduct:** the School may terminate the award by written notice sent to the Parents with immediate effect if, in the opinion of the School Council acting in good faith, one or more of the following conditions has been fulfilled:

- 7.2.1 the Pupil has not complied with the obligations set out in clause 2 and in the further opinion of the School Council there has been no significant improvement following consultation with the Parents and / or the Pupil and the issue of a written warning; or
- 7.2.2 the Parents have not complied with the obligations set out in clause 3; or
- 7.2.3 the Parents of the Pupil do not keep the value and Terms and Conditions of the award confidential in accordance with clause 6; or
- 7.2.4 the Parents withdraw the Pupil from the School without providing proper Notice.

7.3 **repayment of the award:** the Parents will be required to repay all or part of the benefits received under the award if it is terminated in any of the following circumstances:

- 7.3.1 under clause 7.1.1 if the Parents have knowingly or recklessly provided false or inaccurate information about their financial position, all benefits received from the date on which the false or inaccurate information was supplied may be repayable; or
- 7.3.2 under clause 7.2.1 if the Pupil has been found to have committed a serious breach or series of persistent minor breaches of discipline for which the sanction would normally be Expulsion or required Removal, up to three Terms' benefits (if received) may be repayable.

8 **Cancellation and Withdrawal:** For the avoidance of doubt, the benefit receivable under an award will not apply to the Parents' liability to pay the first Term's Fees if less than a Term's Written Notice of Cancellation is given, or to any Term for which the School requires payment of Fees in Lieu of Notice following Withdrawal without proper Notice.

9 **Conditions of Award:** These Conditions of Award take precedence over any of the School's *Terms and Conditions* which are inconsistent with them but in all other respects the School's *Terms and Conditions* as amended from time to time shall apply and these Conditions of Award shall be interpreted in accordance with them.

**Next review due February 2026**