

VINEHALL SCHOOL

POLICY ON SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

General

The Governors of Vinehall School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering financial assistance with the payment of schools fees to eligible parents/guardians in the form of scholarships and bursaries.

Such assistance, which may amount to a discount of up to 100% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants, is subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances.

The level of assistance is made on the basis of the Vinehall School Scale of Assistance, which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The Scale of Assistance is reviewed and revised annually by the Head, Bursar and Financial Manager 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.

Scholarships

Scholarships are only available to families who are not already part of the Vinehall community and are for award to children who would not otherwise be able to benefit from a Vinehall education. The intention is to attract talented children who will enhance our community and provide them with a broad range of educational opportunities and training in preparation for 13+ transfer to Cranbrook or a Public School, the latter probably through a scholarship.

Applications for scholarships are welcome from pupils currently in Year 4 or above (i.e. for entry in Year 5 at the earliest). They are advertised in the local press in early January and parents/guardians apply through forms available from the Registrar. Scholarships are competitive and entry tests take place at the beginning of March. Children with special talent in a specific area (e.g. music, drama, sports) are seen by teachers in the relevant department and supporting references and reports are taken into account.

The level of financial assistance provided, which may be up to 100% remission on fees, is determined by the same assessment of financial need used in an application for a bursary (see The Application Process below). Application forms should be submitted by the end of January so that they may be assessed in advance of the children's testing in March.

The Head, Deputy Head and Director of Studies will grade applicants in order of their academic and other talents, together with an assessment of their ability and potential to benefit from the educational opportunities available, while the Bursar and Financial Manager will assess the level of financial assistance necessary in each case. Recommendations will then be put to the Awards Committee.

Bursaries

Requests for bursary assistance 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 in full.
- 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 assistance with the payment of schools fees is included in:

- The School's prospectus. A copy of this policy is included in the prospectus folder.
- The School website.
- The local press by means of advertisements.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering the School from Year 3 onwards. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors, and the Head, Bursar and Financial Manager are responsible for managing and coordinating 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, is obtainable from the Registrar and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Financial Manager as soon as possible in any year for bursaries to start the following September.
- Step Two. The Financial Manager assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of assistance which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the School. This may involve the Financial Manager, or her 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 Financial Manager and Bursar prepare a recommendation in accordance with the Vinehall School Scale of Assistance which is considered with the Head and a joint recommendation is then reached.
- Step Four. The joint recommendation is presented to the Awards 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.
- Step Six. Parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at

the school and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary.

The Assessment Process

The Head, Bursar and Financial Manager will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for assistance, and the extent of such assistance. The child's suitability for the School is the first consideration in granting assistance.

- 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 likely to gain most from the educational provision will be given priority. Each pupil to whom assistance is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, 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. Each applicant should meet the School's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour as well as potential.
- 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 focussed 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 scholarship or bursary:
 - Frequent or expensive holidays.
 - New or luxury cars.

- Investment in significant home improvements.
- A second property or 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.
 - 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 the overall provision for bursarial assistance, the School will in normal circumstances set aside some funds for cases of sudden hardship or unforeseen need. Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Head, explaining their situation and completing the application form, obtainable from the Registrar. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Annual Review

All scholarships and bursaries are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current scholarship/bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of May each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of scholarships/bursaries, the Head, Bursar and Financial Manager have the discretion, in making their joint recommendation to the Awards Committee, 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.

Confidentiality

The School respects the confidentiality of scholarship/bursary awards made to families and recipients are expected to do likewise. A breach of confidentiality is likely to lead to the withdrawal of the award.

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. Vinehall School encourages parents/guardians to apply for assistance to the following where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance:

The Educational Trusts Forum *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 (obtainable from the Registrar)