



Bursary Policy

Introduction

Leighton Park School is a Quaker School, open to those of all faiths and none, in which every individual can live together, learn and grow.

Very much at the heart of our Quaker values, Leighton Park School aims to improve accessibility to those students who on financial grounds would otherwise be unable to benefit from an education at the School.

The School therefore offers to eligible parents means-tested financial support with the payment of School fees. Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governing Body. The Bursary Committee is responsible for the management and co-ordination of the process.

The bursary resources available to the School are determined by the Governing Body. The total level of bursaries is therefore fixed and finite.

Awareness

Information is made available to prospective and existing parents on the School website. All parents who register their child for a place at the School receive a letter informing them that bursaries are available and the deadline by which if they are seeking financial support they should apply.

Open Access

Bursary support is means tested and is awarded in the form of a reduction on fees of up to 100%. Where appropriate an allowance may also be made for other education expenses such as school uniform or school trips.

Categories for Financial Support

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

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financial circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting the fees payable and may result in the student being withdrawn part way through a stage of their education.

Decision Making

Bursaries are decided by the Bursary Committee. Awards are assessed on the basis of a completed Bursary Application Form. Applicants for bursary support are likely to receive a home visit by a representative of an outside agency appointed by the School to help assess appropriate levels of support.

The School's assessment determines the appropriate level of parental contribution in relation to their net resources and thus the level of award that will be offered. The level of the award may also be influenced by compassionate or other relevant circumstances.

Criteria for Assessment

The School will consider a number of factors when deciding the justification to support an application for a bursary, and the extent of such support.

Suitability

In assessing a student's suitability, priority will be given to those with academic potential, taking into account (but not limited) to their academic assessment results in accordance with the School's published entry criteria. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the school's provision. Each student to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the head, 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.

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 the overall budget. It is recognised that the judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay School fees will be viewed differently by the individuals involved. However, the School has a duty to ensure that it has as complete a view as possible of the financial assets of the applicant. Therefore, alongside the current earnings, other factors will be taken into account in determining the level of bursary award, including 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;

- contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources;
- acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
 - significant equity in a main residence;
 - frequent or expensive holidays;
 - new or luxury cars;
 - investment in significant home improvements;
 - a second property/land holdings;
 - rental properties;
 - failure to honour school fee payments to other schools.

It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered as part of the School's holistic judgement. These may include:

- where the social or pastoral needs of the child are relevant, including siblings;
- where a parent is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.

Annual Review

Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be increased or decreased depending on parental circumstances. Awards may also be varied 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. Award holders are expected to remain worthy of their position (e.g. good standards of behaviour and attendance) which is also subject to periodic formal review. The School reserves the right to amend the way in which awards are assessed.

Bursary Application Process

A completed Bursary Application must be submitted to the Finance Manager by the admissions deadline which is normally in mid-November (and is published on the School website). Application Forms are available from the Bursary Office and via email jennyrowe@leightonpark.com. It is advised that forms are submitted well in advance of the deadline so that any incomplete information can be supplied before the deadline for applications. Applications that are not fully completed cannot be considered. In exceptional circumstances and entirely at the discretion of the School, Bursaries may be considered out of the main process but always using the usual criteria for suitability.

For students who are offered a place at the School, the Bursary assessment, including home visits, will normally take place between November and January. Parents will be notified by the Bursar as to whether their application for financial support has been successful normally by end of January and if so, the level of support to be offered at the same time as an offer of a place is made.

Parents with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Bursar, explaining their situation and requesting assistance. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Bursary support for any family is normally limited to the equivalent of one Senior day fee, irrespective of the number of children at Leighton Park.

The Bursary Committee

The Bursary Committee comprises the Head, Bursar, Finance Governor, Director of Marketing and Admissions and Finance Manager. Others may be invited to join the Committee from time to time.

Confidentiality

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

Ian Austin Bursary Fund

In addition to our main bursary fund, Leighton Park is able to make awards from the Ian Austin Bursary Fund for Sixth Form students with particular academic ability and/or musical talent. These awards are means-tested and cover up to 100% of the day fee for the two years of the Sixth Form.

Parents use the School's standard bursary application form to apply for the Ian Austin Bursary Award but should complete the relevant section to demonstrate how they meet the following criteria:

- Are applying for the Leighton Park Sixth Form, for either our International Baccalaureate Diploma or A Level programme
- Are able to evidence a strong affinity with the School's Quaker values, including but not limited to, having a determined desire to change the world
- Exceptional academic achievement and /or
- Able to demonstrate remarkable musical talent.

This award was established thanks to the generosity of the Austin family.

Awards are made by the Bursary Committee in the same way as for other bursary awards.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's funds, 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 change of circumstances may be unable to remain. The School encourages parents to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Organisations that support bursaries in the independent schools sector include:

The Educational Trusts Forum

Website: www.educational-grants.org

Royal National Children's springboard Foundation

Website: <https://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/>

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