



Means-Tested Bursary Guidance

General

The Directors of Wolverhampton Grammar School are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support towards the payment of School fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and this 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. Where circumstances merit it, the School may also consider additional Bursary assistance for trips that are not included within the Annual Fees.

Bursary awards are subject to annual re-assessment of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent on them, compassionate or other 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 fully to fund 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parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn partway through a stage of education e.g. part way through GCSE/A level years

Due to limitations in funding, requests for support can be considered only for applicants at Year 7 and Year 12 and existing students in their GCSE/A level years.

New Applicants to the School

Information provided by the School alerting the parents/guardians of potential students to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of School fees is included in the:

- Fees, Scholarships and Bursaries information booklet
- Registration Forms for Junior, Senior and Sixth Form application
- School Prospectus
- School Website
- Local press by means of advertisements at the time of entrance examinations

Application process

Bursaries are currently available only to parents/guardians of children entering at Year 7 and Year 12. They are awarded at the discretion of the Directors, and the Head and the Finance Director are responsible for the management and co-ordination of the process.

1. Parents/Guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete a Statement of Financial Circumstances Form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form (KSB1), which request details of income and expenditure, may be obtained from the Admissions Registrar when an application for a place is submitted. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Finance Director by a date to be advised, prior to the entrance examination or interview process of any year for bursaries to start the following September. Parents/Guardians are asked to sign a Declaration on the Statement of Financial Circumstances form which covers acceptance of the conditions of a bursary award.
 2. The Finance Director 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 Finance Director or her representative inviting the parents/guardians to the School for an interview and/or visiting the parents/guardians' home and/or using an external assessment agency to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.
 3. The Finance Director prepares a recommendation based on the assessment and in accordance with the relative needs of other Bursary applicants/recipients, which is considered with the Head. The overall total annual bursary award sum is approved by the Directors. Strict confidence is maintained as to the identity of individuals unless otherwise agreed with the parents/guardians.
 4. For Year 7 external applicants, parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a bursary at the same time as an offer of a place is made, usually within three weeks of the entrance exam taking place. Internal applicants from the Junior School are also advised at the same time.
 5. For Year 12 applicants, parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a bursary by the end of March, prior to a start date of the following September.
 6. Parents/Guardians are then required to sign an acceptance form for the place at the School and to signify their agreement to the conditions relating to the bursary award
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The Case for Assistance

The Head and the Finance Director will consider a number of factors when reaching 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 their performance in the School's entrance process or, in the case of Year 12 applicants, their predicted GCSE results. Potential will also be considered as well as achievement. Bursary funds are limited and applications have to be prioritised for those likely to gain most from the School's academic and wider provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission, possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work, and benefit from participation in the wider, co-curricular activities on offer at the School. 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 parental need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within 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 properly focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant will include:

1. 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 dependants, or the requirements of their partner's work.
2. Opportunities to release capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity values in houses.
3. In the case of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent.
4. Contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
5. Where fees are being paid to other schools or universities, the School's award will take into account all these outgoings.

6. Acknowledging that others may 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 a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to ill health
- Where a separation may result 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 sum of money for cases of sudden and unforeseen needs for families with children in the midst of their GCSE/A level years. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/ Guardians with a child at the School whose circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Finance Director, explaining their situation and using the Statement of Financial Circumstances form (KSB1/KSB2), available from the Finance Director's Office. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. Any award given is unlikely to exceed a period of two years and would be subject to annual re-assessment.

Options for payment of fees for any child within the School can be discussed with the Finance Director to assist with any short-term financial problems.

Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to annual assessment of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. The School has an ethical and regulatory obligation to ensure that the bursary funds to which it has access are allocated strictly according to need, hence it is essential to check annually that parents/guardians are still in need of support, and at what level. Repeat Statement of Financial Circumstances Forms (KSB2) are sent in April each year to current bursary holders as well as to those who have new offers made for the following September. The original assessment for new offers is made on the previous tax year's income rather than the current year and hence the KSB2 form acts as a confirmation of the assessment. All KSB2 forms must be returned by the start of June. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head and the Finance Director have the discretion to reduce or withdraw an award not only where there is a significant increase in income but also where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour have been unsatisfactory. It is expected, for example, that a pupil in receipt of a bursary will maintain above-average 'approach to work' grades for academic effort. The Head and the Finance Director also have the discretion to reduce or withdraw an award where the parents/guardians have failed to support the School, such as by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

Confidentiality

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

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, there are a small number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with 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. Wolverhampton Grammar School encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance.

For further information please contact the Educational Trusts' Forum:

www.educational-grants.org

The main charitable trust is:

Royal National Children's Foundation, Sandy Lane, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2ES

Tel: 01932 868622

Email: admin@rncf.org.uk

Other Financial Assistance

In addition to means tested bursaries, the School offers a number of Scholarships for both Year 7 and Sixth Form entrants. Details of these are available on the School's website or on request from the Admissions Registrar.

Contact Details at Wolverhampton Grammar School

Finance Director: Shona Hemmings

Email: bursar@wgs-sch.net

Telephone: 01902 421326

Admissions Registrar: Jane Morris

Email: jam@wgs-sch.net

Telephone: 01902 422939



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