

8.1 BURSARY AWARD POLICY

Person(s) responsible:	Director of Finance & Operations/Governors
Last updated:	December 2023
Review period:	12 months
Next review:	December 2024

Aim of the Bursary Policy

The Governors are committed to assisting families of children in the school who experience unanticipated financial hardship and also to broadening access to Farleigh by providing a number of 110% bursaries to children in, or facing, challenging circumstances.

General

The school has limited resources from which it can offer bursaries. It has no endowment funds or other specific reserves set aside for the purpose of financial assistance with fees. Accordingly, other than in exceptional circumstances referred to below, bursaries will not normally be available for new applicants to the school.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental¹ means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards or terminated, depending on parental circumstances. Awards may be made for a specified number of terms, a year, or exceptionally for longer than a year but are not normally made for longer than two years without a repeat review.

Awards are subject to independent review and are made at the discretion of the Bursary Committee which comprises at least two governors and the Head. Award decisions are based on families' financial circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as income, the size of the family, any other dependants or benefactors) and compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Existing Pupils

The Application Process

Step One: Parents seeking a bursary are required to contact the Director of Finance & Operations (DFO) who will provide an application form (Statement of Financial Circumstances) which seeks to establish the financial means of the household with a view to establishing whether this is sufficient to pay all, some or none of the required school fees. The form requests details of income and capital assets which must be accompanied by full documentary evidence to support the application. Once completed they should be submitted to the DFO. Parents are encouraged to add a covering letter, setting out the justification for their application.

Step Two: Applications will normally then be independently assessed by Bursary Administration Ltd (BAL) in order to establish the recommended level of support, if any. This may involve a visit to the parents' home by BAL to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and that the financial assessment is balanced and complete.

¹ Throughout the policy the term 'parent' is taken to mean the fee payer(s) contractually responsible for the fees.

Step Three: BAL will submit a comprehensive report with conclusions to the DFO, who prepares a recommendation which is considered by the Bursary Committee and a decision is reached.

Step Four: The parents are advised whether their child will be offered a bursary and, if so, at what level and for how long.

Step Five: If parents decide to accept a bursary, they are required to sign a letter accepting the offer and agreeing to any conditions attached to the bursary.

Unsuccessful applications are usually the result of either lack of evidence of financial need, concern about the appropriateness of the family making a long-term commitment to fee-paying or insufficient availability of bursary funds at the school. There is no formal appeal process following the Committee's decision but at the same time no bar to reapplication after an interval of 12 months or sooner if the family's situation changes markedly.

The Case for Assistance

The Bursary Committee will consider a number of factors when making their judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support.

Financial Limitations: 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 subjective. 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 or caring responsibilities.
- Opportunities to release any capital or equity: capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would large 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.
- Fees being paid to other schools (or universities).
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the school considers that the following, for example, 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 holding;
 - Other significant discretionary expenditure.

Anticipated length of the funding requirement: the school is more likely to make an award to enable a pupil to complete a stage of education at Farleigh than to embark on a commitment to a child at a young age where circumstances suggest a long-term

commitment to independent education may be unsustainable. Applications on behalf of children of Pre-Prep age are unlikely to be successful.

Other Factors: It is recognised that, in addition to 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.
- Where a parent is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.

Transformational Bursaries

The school currently collaborates with the Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation to identify pupils eligible for bursaries for pupils in Year 7 and 8. Royal SpringBoard work across the UK's boarding and independent schools sector to expand the number of 100% bursary places (those that cover all fees and extras) and ensure that these opportunities are targeted towards young people who most need them: those that have faced challenging circumstances – children and teenagers in or on the edge of care, or growing up in households and communities where opportunities to flourish are limited. They identify, prepare and support pupils to ensure that they will thrive at prep schools and beyond.

Exceptional Cases

Special consideration will be given to the award of a large (up to 100%), means-tested bursary, for a small number of pupils in particular need. These may include refugees or bereaved child(ren) of a member of staff who dies while in service at Farleigh. This bursary could cover day and/or boarding fees. Other exceptional cases will also be considered on an ad hoc basis.

Subject to budgetary constraints, special consideration may also be given to the award of a means-tested bursary for a child joining Farleigh from a family with a long-standing connection to the school.

Reviews

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 the Spring each year for return at the start of the summer term. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head has the discretion to withdraw 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.

Where awards are made for a specific period, it is the responsibility of the parents to make contact with the DFO, if an extension of support is sought, at least half a term before the funding is due to end.

Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families and it is a condition of any award that recipients also treat it confidentially.