



Bursary Policy

September 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 St Christopher School is committed to ensuring that pupils who would benefit from an education at St Chris are not excluded from entering the School owing to their financial circumstances by offering means tested financial support with school fees to pupils who meet the School's admissions criteria.
- 1.2 This support is known as a Bursary. Bursaries are awarded in the form of a discount ranging from 5% - 100% in cases of proven need, depending on the individual circumstances of the individual. St Chris is also committed to ensuring that no current pupil should have to be withdrawn part-way through a stage of their education owing to unforeseen financial difficulties, by offering means tested hardship support.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the School has charitable status and therefore the Governors have an obligation to ensure that the limited pool of available funds is used prudently to support parents who otherwise would not be able to send their child to the School.
- 1.4 In this document the word "parents" is taken to mean parent(s), carers or legal guardians.

2. Who is eligible to apply for a Bursary?

- 2.1 Parents of new pupils entering the School from the age of 9+ (Year 5) who are of limited financial means, can apply for a Bursary award. Bursaries are not offered to pupils on admission to the Nursery or Junior School in years Reception to Year 4. Current pupils moving up to Senior School from Junior School at 11+ are eligible to apply. Only in very exceptional circumstances can existing pupils apply for a Bursary rather than hardship support; this must be agreed with the Head and the Director of Finance and Operations. Overseas applicants are not normally eligible to apply for a Bursary. St Chris prioritises those pupils already living in the vicinity of the School, particularly those in the socio-economically deprived postcodes of Letchworth.
- 2.2 As a guide, the following criteria provide an outline of the circumstances in which a household might be eligible for Bursarial support:
 - Combined gross income of less than £100,000;
 - Both parents working, unless prevented from doing so through incapacity or the need to care for children under school age or other dependents;
 - Ownership of only one property (with a mortgage) unless for commercial purposes or living in rented accommodation;
 - Savings or discretionary spending of less than £3,500 per year.



- 2.3 St Chris considers that the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a Bursary award:
- Frequent and/or expensive holidays;
 - New or luxury cars;
 - Investment in significant home improvements.
- These lists are not exhaustive.

3. Who is eligible to apply for hardship support?

- 3.1 Parents of existing pupils whose ability to pay the fees has declined significantly owing to unforeseen circumstances may apply for a hardship award.
- 3.2 Such awards are granted on a termly basis and priority will be given to pupils in the GCSE or A-Level years. In exceptional circumstances where parents require assistance for more than one term it is necessary to re-apply.
- 3.3 Applicants must be able to demonstrate an unexpected drop in income, and be unable to pay school fees from any other readily available assets. Separation or divorce is not likely to prompt a financial hardship award as parents make a joint commitment to pay school fees when their child joins the School.

4. How are applications for financial support assessed?

- 4.1 Means-testing is conducted in partnership with a third party ([Bursary Assessment Associates](#)).
- 4.2 Parents are required to fill in an online form, provide evidence of their financial circumstances and a representative from Bursary Assessment Associates will either visit you at home or meet with you online. The application process is covered in detail in the Bursary application process, along with the list of documents required (Annex A).
- 4.3 The means testing process considers the affordability of School fees based on each family's financial circumstances. St Chris recognises that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal.
- 4.4 The assessment primarily consider family income, assets and liabilities. However, the following factors will also be considered:
- 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 and land holdings;
 - In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent (see the section on separated parents below);
 - Contribution to household costs (including school fees) by other members of the wider family, by other adults unrelated to the child, or by outside sources;
 - Where siblings are at other fee paying schools or places of education, it is expected that those organisations are also offering assistance with fees;
 - The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family subject to the wider family context;
 - Discretionary support to other family members;
 - Charitable giving.

The School reserves the right to amend its assessment process at any time.



5. **How do I apply?**
 - 5.1 In the first instance, please register your child via the School's [online admissions portal](#) and indicate that you would like to apply for a Bursary on the Registration Form. You will then be sent a link to the secure online Bursary application form. For further information please go the Bursary page of the website.

6. **Is a pupil's academic ability considered when making a Bursary award?**
 - 6.1 The Bursary application process is separate to the admissions process.
 - 6.2 However, Bursaries will only be offered to pupils who have met the admissions criteria for entry to the School. Where demand for Bursaries exceeds funds available, awards will be made on the basis of our assessment of an applicant's potential, including, but not limited to, their performance in our entrance tests. Each pupil to whom financial 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 their work, and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School.

7. **How are Bursary applications from separated or divorced parents considered?**
 - 7.1 In most circumstances, the financial circumstances of both parents of an applicant will be assessed. The School will be guided by any court orders or legal arrangements. Separated or divorced parents may complete a separate online form if they wish, and the information collected will not be shared with the other parent without explicit consent.

8. **Are pupils on Bursaries eligible for support with extras?**
 - 8.1 Pupils who are awarded a full (100%) Bursary will also be offered support with extras such as lunches, educational trips, transport to school, and exam fees (see Annex B). Pupils on lower Bursary awards are expected to pay for extras, however St Chris endeavours to minimise additional costs to parents.

9. **Does financial assistance with fees remain confidential?**
 - 9.1 The School respects the confidentiality of bursary and hardship awards made to families. A very small number of senior staff will be aware of the award. Likewise, parents are not expected to disclose to others the details of the bursary award they have been granted. A breach of confidentiality may result in the termination of the bursary award. Under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018, the School is the Data Controller and information submitted in connection with an application for financial support will be processed lawfully and fairly in accordance with this legislation and the School's Privacy Notice.

10. **How often are Bursary awards reviewed?**
 - 10.1 Bursary awards are subject to an annual review of a family's financial circumstances, with current information required for every year that a child applies for a Bursary. Bursary awards may be varied up or down, depending on financial circumstances.



11. Can a Bursary award be removed at any time?

- 11.1 A Bursary award may be withdrawn in its entirety in accordance with the terms and conditions upon which an award is made (see Annex C), or otherwise in accordance with the School's Terms & Conditions. A Bursary may also be withdrawn in its entirety if, in the opinion of the Head, the child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour (and/or the parents' behaviour or conduct) no longer merit the continuation of the award. In addition, a bursary may be withdrawn if fees are not paid on time in accordance with the School's parent contract.

Reviewed by: Director of Finance and Operations

Date: September 2023

Next review: September 2024



ANNEX A

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR NEW BURSARIES, BURSARY RENEWALS AND HARDSHIP AWARDS

Application process for a Bursary (new pupils)

Parents who are applying for a Bursary for their child are strongly encouraged to register and complete their Bursary application well in advance of the deadlines below.

- Please register your child via the St Chris [online admissions portal](#).
- You will then receive an email from the St Chris Admissions team, providing you with a link to Bursary Assessment Associate's secure online Bursary application form. (If you are not comfortable completing an online form you can contact BAA and request a paper form).
- This form must be completed by **Friday 24 November 2023 for all applicants looking to join the School in September 2024**. We advise you to leave plenty of time before the deadline to complete your application, and to ensure you have all the required supporting documents which are listed below. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for an award.
- St Chris will inform parents as soon as is reasonably possible within the process Bursary application process if they clearly fall outside the criteria for Bursary support so that families can decide whether or not to proceed with an application.
- In February, once St Chris has assessed whether the pupil meets our admissions criteria, parents will be advised of whether their child has been offered a place at the School, whether or not a Bursary will be available, and the confirmed Bursary offer to be awarded should the parents accept the place for their child at St Chris.
- The standard level of deposit required to secure a place in the Senior School is £1,100. Parents awarded a Bursary are required to provide a deposit reduced by the level of the Bursary award, with a minimum deposit payable of £100. (For example, a pupil awarded a 60% Bursary would pay a deposit of £440; those receiving a Bursary worth in excess of 80% of fees will pay £220 and those awarded a full Bursary will pay £100.).
- Parents are required to sign the Bursary Acceptance Form agreeing to the conditions relating to the Bursary, and return it by the deadline specified in the accompanying letter confirming the amount of the Bursary award. The offer is time limited and a delay in returning the acceptance form could result in the offer being rescinded.

Renewal process for a Bursary (existing pupils)

- Parents of pupils already in receipt of Bursaries will be sent via email a link to Bursary Assessment Associate's secure online Bursary application form. (If you are not comfortable completing an online form you can contact BAA and request a paper form). This will be sent no later than **30 September** each year.
- Parents must complete the online form no later than **Friday 24 November 2023 for all Bursaries for academic year 2024-5**. Applications completed after the deadline are unable to be considered. The documents listed below will be required in order to complete your application.



- The process of reassessment may include a home visit.
- Bursary offers for the following year will be confirmed to parents no later than 31 March 2024.
- Parents are required to sign the Bursary Acceptance Form agreeing to the conditions relating to the Bursary, and return it by the deadline specified in the accompanying letter confirming the amount of the Bursary award. The offer is time limited and a delay in returning the acceptance form could result in the offer being rescinded.

Hardship application process

- Parents who wish to apply for a hardship award should contact the Director of Finance and Operations in the first instance (dofo@stchris.co.uk)
- Where appropriate, the Director of Finance and Operations will then initiate the means-testing process outlined above for Bursaries.
- The documents listed below will be required in order to complete your application.

Supporting documents required to be sent with every application:

- last 3 months statements for all bank, building society and savings accounts
- last 3 months payslips (if you work)
- Last P60 (if you work)
- Proof of all benefits and other support received (if you are in receipt of benefits or other support)
- Most recent mortgage statement(s) or rental agreement

Supporting documents to be sent depending on your situation (please read carefully to see which apply to you)

- P45 (if you have stopped working or changed jobs)
- Details of additional income such as rent or investments
- Copy of HMRC tax calculations if you or your accountant complete a tax return
- Confirmation of schedule D self-employment income from your accountant
- Annual report and accounts if you own your own business
- Trust fund statements if anyone in the family has a trust fund
- Pension documentation if anyone in the family is in receipt of pension income
- Last 3 months statements for credit cards, finance leases, loans if you have them
- Details of lump sums received if relevant
- Any other documents which you feel are important to support your application



ANNEX B

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH EXTRAS FOR BURSARY AWARDS

Grants towards the following extras, which are directly related to attendance at St Chris, will be considered for those awarded a full (100%) Bursary:

- school lunches;
- field trips which are part of the curriculum;
- public examination entry fees;
- travel to and from school

School Lunches

If the pupil is on a full fee bursary the School will meet 100% of the cost of school lunches.

Field Trips which are part of the Curriculum

Throughout their time at the School pupils will be expected to attend various field trips which are an essential part of the curriculum for that subject.

For those on a full fee bursary, a grant may be made to cover the expenses of any travel and accommodation required as a result of the trip. The Head of Department will advise whether a trip is a requirement of the curriculum.

Public Examination Entry Fees

The fees for public examinations, which are part of the School curriculum, will be met by the School, providing the pupil is on a full fee bursary.

The cost of any examination for which a pupil enters but which is not part of the School curriculum will be debited to the pupil's account.

Travel to and from school

Pupils on a full Bursary will be expected to travel to school in the most cost effective way, making use of public transport where possible. Where this cost is not manageable, parents are welcome to request support via the Director of Finance and Operations. Parents are not able to apply for mileage in a private vehicle.



ANNEX C

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR BURSARY AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AWARDS

1) Award of a Bursary or Financial Hardship Support

A bursary or financial hardship support is awarded at the sole discretion of St Christopher School, Letchworth Garden City.

2) Annual Review

All means-tested bursary awards are subject to annual review and parents shall each year be required to undergo a means-tested assessment. All means-tested hardship awards are subject to termly review. After any annual or termly review, the School reserves the right to vary the value of the bursary or hardship award with immediate effect. This can range from 0% to 100% and the School will confirm the new value in writing to the parents. Exceptionally there may be consideration to extend a financial hardship award for a further year and if so, it is subject to the same review process as a bursary award.

3) Withdrawal of the Bursary or Financial Hardship Support

A bursary or hardship award may be withdrawn by written notice sent to the parents from the School.

In this event, parents will become liable for the School fees in full for the entire year in respect of which the notice is given. If the School is considering withdrawing bursary or financial hardship support it will, save in exceptional circumstances, give one terms' notice of its intention to do so to the relevant parties.

This will enable to parents to give one terms' notice to the School should they wish to withdraw their child, in line with the School's Parent Terms and Conditions. In exceptional circumstances, such as fraud or material breach of the standard Parent Terms and Conditions, without prejudice to the School's contractual common law and other rights, withdrawal of bursary or financial hardship support will be immediate. In particular it should be noted that failure to comply with the School's standard Parent Terms and Conditions, including the prompt payment of monies owed to the School, may lead to withdrawal of bursary or hardship support, and parents are reminded of their joint commitment to meet financial obligations to the School (unless stated otherwise by a court order).

4) Repayment of the Bursary or Financial Hardship Support

The parents will be required to repay all or part of the bursary or financial hardship support if it is terminated in the following circumstances:

- a) if the parents knowingly or recklessly provided false or inaccurate information about their financial position;
- b) 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;