

St Helen's School

Bursary and Hardship Awards Policy

September 2023



1. Introduction

St Helen's offers a limited number of bursary and hardship awards each year which are designed to enable students whose parents might not be able to afford the full fees to attend the school or who are experiencing short-term financial difficulties and need support. Both bursary and hardship awards are means-tested and subject to ongoing review.

2. Availability

Bursary Awards

- 2.1 The Governors of St Helen's are keen to promote the attendance at the School by students whose parents might not be able to afford full fees. At the same time, the School does not benefit from a large bursary endowment and has limited resources from which it can offer bursaries. As a result, the number and size of bursaries offered can vary from year to year and the School has no obligation to continue to fund a bursary if insufficient funds are available, subject to giving appropriate notice.
- 2.2 Bursaries may be awarded on entrance to St. Helen's at 11+ (Year 7) and 16+ (Year 12) **only**.
- 2.3 Bursary awards range from 10% up to 100% of tuition fees only. All other fees eg., music lessons, lunches etc. are paid for at the full rate and not discounted. Those students awarded a 100% bursary will receive additional support and benefits as outlined in the School's Bursary Programme – details of which are available from the School's Admissions Office on registration.
- 2.4 Bursary awards are reviewed on an annual basis to allow changing financial circumstances to be considered. Bursary awards may go up or down as a result of the review and subject to the availability of sufficient funds.
- 2.5 Due to the limited resources and the School's desire to support as many families as possible, only one bursary award per family will be awarded at any one time.

Hardship Awards

- 2.6 Hardship awards may be available in circumstances where parents of a current student are experiencing short term financial difficulties and to assist in allowing the student to reach the next stage of her education.
- 2.7 Hardship awards are not intended to fund gaps between employment. In such circumstances consideration will be given to allowing more time to make fee payments as a first line of support.
- 2.8 Hardship awards are reviewed on a term-by-term basis and granted up to a maximum of one school year's fees per family during the student's education. Families who are unable to afford the ongoing payment of fees, having exhausted their entitlement to hardship award support,

may need to give careful consideration to alternative arrangements for education. In the event of notice of withdrawal being necessary, parents will be required to give the requisite full term's notice to avoid liability for fees in lieu.

- 2.9 Parents are not entitled to appeal against the level of bursary or hardship awarded (either initially or in subsequent annual/termly reviews) and are asked to respect the decision of the School in relation to the award made.

3. **Criteria**

- 3.1 Applications for either a bursary or hardship award are means assessed on their own merits and awards are made accordingly, within the limitations of the funding available.

- The School aims to build up a comprehensive picture of family financial circumstances and due to the complex and varied nature of each assessment, St Helen's does not publish detailed criteria for the allocation of funding. However, as a starting point, the following information is assessed:

- Income and outgoings
- Assets, including property, savings and pension funds
- Liabilities, including mortgages and loans
- Fees paid and financial awards received for siblings at other private schools

- 3.2 It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal to that family. However, as well as the information in 3.1 above, the School considers other factors including, but not limited to:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning capacity of the family. For example, where there are two parents, both would be expected to be employed unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity or the need to care for children under school age.
- The opportunities available to release equity, capital, savings or pension funds to finance school fees either in whole or in part.
- In cases of separation, any contribution made by the absent parent.

- 3.3 In addition to financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:

- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
- Where a parental bereavement may result in the student having to be withdrawn from the school.

- 3.4 The School considers that the following are examples of circumstances that would not usually be consistent with the receipt of a bursary or hardship award:

- Total family annual income over £75,000
- Significant capital savings and investments
- Significant equity values in owned properties
- Frequent or expensive holidays
- Investment in major home improvements
- A second or multiple properties and/or land holdings
- New or luxury cars
- Siblings at other private schools

3.5 The School does not provide information as to why a bursary or hardship application has either been declined or set at a lower level on review. All decisions are final and there is no right of appeal.

4. **Responsibilities**

There is usually a greater demand for bursary and hardship awards than the School has the funding to support. If this is the case, in respect of bursaries, reference is also made to the results of the entrance examination and the potential contribution of the student to the wider fabric of School life.

- 4.1 Any student who receives a bursary or hardship award is required to work hard, contribute positively to the life of the School, be a credit to the School and set a good example to other students.
- 4.2 Parents are expected to support and encourage the student and uphold the aims and the good name of the School. Parents are also required to pay the balance of the account by the first day of term.
- 4.3 The bursary or hardship award may be withdrawn by written notice sent to a parent if, in the opinion of the School, the student or a parent has not complied with the obligations mentioned above. Withdrawal of the bursary or hardship award shall take effect from the start of the following term.
- 4.4 All parents receiving a bursary or hardship award, regardless of its value, and who wish to remove their daughter are bound by the School's Terms and Conditions and must give a full term's notice in writing or become responsible for payment of the full term's fees. For the purposes of clarity, any fees in lieu that are payable will not be reduced by the value of the bursary.
- 4.5 Parents are obliged to inform the School immediately of any favourable change in their financial circumstances so that the necessary adjustments can be made to the award. Failure to do so could result in the award being withdrawn and the School seeking to recover the excess value of the award made.

5. Application Process

5.1 All applicants for bursary or hardship awards must complete a Financial Assessment through the School's online portal. No consideration will be given to an application unless all the necessary sections have been completed and supporting documentation uploaded. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

5.2 Bursary applications:

For new students registering to apply for a place at the School in Years 7 and 12, a request for bursary support must be indicated on the Registration Form (available via the School website) at the time of registering and will not be considered retrospectively.

For existing students, bursaries are only available to students moving into Year 7 or Year 12. Requests must be made whilst the students are still in Year 6 or Y11, via email to bursaries@sthelens.london. Requests will not be considered retrospectively.

5.3 Hardship applications:

To apply for a hardship award, a request must be made via email to bursaries@sthelens.london 10 working days before the first day of the term for which the hardship award is requested. The email should contain details explaining why the hardship award is needed. This will be assessed and a link to the online Financial Assessment portal will be provided as appropriate.

5.4 The School may ask bursary and/or hardship award applicants to provide additional information to that already uploaded on the online Financial Assessment portal and may also extend an invitation to attend an interview at the School, virtually or at the applicant's home to discuss the application in more detail.

5.5 Questions about the Financial Assessment Form or any aspect of the bursary or hardship application process can be addressed to the Head of Finance on 01923 843224 or at bursaries@sthelens.london

6. Confidentiality

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

6.2 Bursary information is shared with staff with the proviso that the confidential nature of this information is respected at all times. All bursary recipients are encouraged to take a full part in the school's Bursary Support Programme. In order to be able to benefit from all elements of its comprehensive bursary provision including specialist mentoring and coaching if appropriate, the School advise that students are aware that they are in receipt of a bursary. However, the school appreciates that all parents reserve the right to opt out of those aspects of the bursary programme with which they are less comfortable.

7. **Review**

7.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Business Director on an annual basis.

Authorised by:	Business Director
Effective date of the policy:	1 st September 2023
Date of Next Review:	Annually