



# **Bursary and Hardship Policy**

**June 2024**

# Bursary and Hardship Policy

<b>Policy to be reviewed triennially</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Reviewed	Bursar (Stephen Coles)	June 2024	✓
Reported	Head (Sandrine Paillasse)	June 2024	✓
Approved	Finance Committee	June 2024	✓

Date of next review: September 2026

<b>To be published on</b>	
School network	✓
School website	✓

## **Accessibility notice**

To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request.

## Introduction

St Christopher's School is a registered charity and is committed to broadening access to the School by offering eligible parents / guardians means tested financial support in the form of school fee discounts through the Bursary and Hardship Bursary Policy. This provision is one of the key strands of the School's public benefit activities.

- **Bursaries:** Bursaries are awarded to families whose financial circumstances mean their daughters would not otherwise be able to attend St Christopher's. The school welcomes applications for bursaries on entry at Reception, Year 1 or at any other occasional entry at the school's discretion.
- **Hardship Bursaries:** Hardship bursaries are awarded to parents of existing pupils whose financial circumstances have changed and where, in the opinion of the Governors and the Head, it would be in the best interests of the pupil to continue her education at St Christopher's.

All bursaries including hardship bursaries are means tested. The Bursar will provide the parents / guardians with a confidential application form for completion. All bursary applications are assessed independently by a third party (Bursary Administration Ltd – "BAL") who helps to assess the level of school fees that could be supported by the parents / guardians.

The bursary assessment considers a wide range of appropriate matters including (but not limited to), parental / guardian income (from all sources), assets (including savings, investments and realisable assets), and other matters such as family circumstances. The assessment process will usually include a home visit.

## The Application Process

### New Applicants to the school

New school applicants should fill in a Registration form and the Bursary Application Form. For children applying for Reception / Year 1 places, the independent bursary assessment will take place in November / December prior to your child's Assessment. Parents/guardians will be asked to update in the bursary application form at this point and to provide updated supporting documentation. This information should be sent to the Bursar. Parents/guardians will be contacted by BAL who will conduct a home visit and review the information parents/guardians have provided. Following the receipt of BAL's report, the Bursar makes a recommendation to the Partnerships and Public Benefit Committee who approves bursary awards.

If the child is successful in their admissions assessment and is offered a place at the school, the level of fee discount or bursary award will be disclosed. Parents must sign a letter accepting the place at the school and acknowledge in writing the conditions relating to the bursary award.

## Applications for Hardship Bursaries

Applications for Hardship Bursaries can be considered for existing pupils. The bursary application form and the required supporting information should be submitted to the Bursar. Subject to initial clearance by the Governors and the Head, parents/guardians will then be contacted by BAL who will conduct a home visit and review the information parents/guardian have provided.

Following the receipt of BAL's report, the Bursar makes a recommendation to the Finance Committee, who approve all bursary awards within delegated parameters.

## The Case for Assistance

**Discretion:** School places are offered and bursaries are awarded at the sole discretion of the School which is under no obligation to explain or give any reasons for a decline of a place, the level of fee discount offered or the decline of a bursary.

**Factors:** The School will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the school.
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g.: may be suffering from bullying at their present school).
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
- Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the school adding to the stress of coping with the parents/guardians separating.

**Suitability:** Bursaries will only be considered for a child that has passed the normal school assessment process.

**Financial limitations :** The amount of the bursary award is determined by the extent of financial need. 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 what is viable 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 personal. However, the school has a duty to ensure that all bursary grants are well focused 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, 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 significant, realisable equity values in houses.
- The value and council tax band of the family home
- 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.

- The size of the family - where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the bursary will consider all these outgoings. It would be expected that applications for financial aid had been made to those organisations.

Acknowledging that others might 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.

### **Annual Review**

All bursaries are reviewed annually and may be adjusted upwards or downwards depending on the level of need and parental circumstances.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **Data Protection**

Bursary applications are processed on behalf of the School (the data controller) by Bursary Administration Limited (the data processor) in accordance with the (Data Protection Act 2018 which gives effect to the General Data Protection Regulations. Bursary Administration Limited has provided the School with its data protection policy. A copy of Bursary Administration Limited's data protection notice for applicants is provided to parents and guardians with the bursary application form(s). Parents and guardians should be aware that the Information Commissioner's Office has advised that the report produced by Bursary Administration Limited for the School is exempt from Subject Access Request provisions.