

# LEICESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL TRUST

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### MEANS-TESTED BURSARY POLICY AND GUIDANCE

#### GENERAL

The Trustees are committed to broadening access to Leicester Grammar School (“the school”) by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and bursaries 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.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances. Awards are made on the basis of the confidential Leicester Grammar School scale of awards which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The scale of awards is reviewed and revised annually by the Business Director to reflect any changes in fee costs. The process by which bursary applications are assessed and monies awarded is reviewed and approved by the Trustees. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents'/guardians' circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent 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 to fund the 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parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

Applicants are required to provide complete and accurate information to the school to enable the family's financial circumstances to be properly assessed. If a parent/guardian knowingly provides inaccurate information or withholds relevant information the bursary (if awarded) may be withdrawn or reduced and in certain circumstances past payment reclaimed.

#### 1. NEW APPLICANTS TO THE SCHOOL

Information provided by the school alerting the parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees is included in the school prospectus and on the school website.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year group from Year 7 to sixth form, at Leicester Grammar School. Bursaries are not available to applicants wishing to join the school at or before Year 6. (See also the school's Admission's Policy). Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Trustees and the Headmaster and Business Director are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **Step one** - parents/guardians complete a standard Application Form to apply for a place at the school and tick the box asking to be considered for the award of a means tested bursary place. Applicants are then sent a bursary assessment form ("SB1") which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to the Business Director no later than the last day of the Advent term in any year for bursaries to start the following September, where the applicant is sitting the school's January Entrance Examination.
- **Step two** - the Business Director with support from the school's Finance staff 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 Business Director or her representative visiting the parents'/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.
- **Step three** - the Business Director prepares a recommendation in accordance with the school's confidential scale of awards which is considered with the Headmaster and a joint recommendation is then reached, with reference to any limitations imposed by the overall bursaries budget.
- **Step four** – the process by which bursary applications are assessed and by which the available funding is awarded, is reviewed annually by the Bursaries Scholarships and Public Benefit subcommittee of the Board of Trustees to allow the Trustees to satisfy themselves that all applications are treated fairly and according to identical procedures.
- **Step five** - the parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the bursary offer should it be possible to make such an offer.
- **Step six** - parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the school and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary.
- The recipient is sent a repeat means-testing form ("SB2") at the start of the Trinity term, the term before the bursary is due to commence. This is an opportunity for the school to assess whether there has been any significant change in parental circumstances since the initial bursary award was confirmed. If there has been a significant change in parental circumstances the value of the award may be varied up or down. See also 'Annual Review' below.

## THE CASE FOR ASSISTANCE

The Headmaster and Business Director will consider a number of factors when making 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 the academic assessment result of each applicant but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmaster, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the school. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the school's normal academic requirements. 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 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 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.
  - 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.

## 2. EXISTING PUPILS - CHANGE IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

Within overall budget funding, the school will in normal circumstances set aside each year a hardship fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for bursary submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/guardians with a child at the

school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply to the Business Director for a bursary, explaining their situation and completing a bursary assessment form which will be sent to them by the school's Finance team. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Awards are not applied retrospectively and only in exceptional circumstances will an award commence during the academic year.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW**

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 at the beginning of the Trinity term each year for return by May half term. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Business Director have the discretion to reduce or 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.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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