

Procedure

Finance

PROCEDURE - BURSARY

PURPOSE

The Governors of Downe House are committed to broadening access to the School by allocating funds to be able to offer appropriate means-tested financial support for the payment of all or part the School's fees. Such support is known as a Bursary and these are awarded in the form of a sliding scale discount on the fees that depends on the financial, compassionate or other relevant circumstances of applicants. A limited number of Full Bursaries are available that are designed to allow suitable applicants to benefit from attendance at the School, irrespective of their circumstances, by allowing for essential extras as well as basic school fees. The school partners with the Spring Board organisation to offer a maximum of a limited number of Spring Board Bursaries.

Awards are made on the basis of the Downe House Scale of Awards, which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial situation, in combination with consideration of individual parents/guardians' circumstances and other relevant factors including available School resources for bursaries. The Headmistress and the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) are responsible for managing the process for awarding Bursaries, however final decisions are at the discretion of Governors. The decision of Governors to award, or not award, a bursary will be final. Once awarded, Bursaries are reviewed annually in order to take account of any changes in circumstances and to ensure that Bursary support is being used to best effect.

PROCEDURE

APPLICATION PROCESS

All bursaries are means tested. Parents /Guardians who wish to apply for a Bursary are asked to formally register their interest when they receive the invitation to assessment. After successful entrance test results and interviews, selected applicants will be required to submit further details of their household's total income, expenditure and assets. For 13+ candidates applying early in year 6 and 7, potential bursary pupils will be identified at this point and financial disclosures will be requested in the year prior to entry. Failure to disclose material information will result in the withdrawal of any Bursary that may be awarded subsequently.

All applications will be assessed in accordance with the Scale of Awards and other criteria. A financial recommendation will then be made. The Headmistress will consider the financial recommendation and add relevant educational and pastoral comments.

Where a Means Tested Bursary is not deemed appropriate by the Headmistress and the DFO, parents will be advised in writing. Governors will, if necessary, consider any appeals from Parents. The decision of Governors will be final

Review Date: January 2026 – DF&O

Successful applicants wishing to take advantage of the award will be required to agree to the terms and conditions relating to the Bursary. All bursaries are subject to the pupil being formally offered a place at the School following successful completion of appropriate examinations.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Suitability. When making a judgement regarding the justification for support, the Headmistress and the DFO will consider a number of factors. A girl's suitability for the School will be the first consideration, and, as Bursary funds are limited, those judged most suitable will be given priority as being most likely to gain from the education offered by the School. In assessing suitability, due emphasis will be given to the academic assessment result, but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement to date. Every girl to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmistress, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and benefit from participation in the wider cocurricular activities on offer at the School. Bursaries for new Pupils should be for exceptional pupils who can enhance School life and gain the most from limited bursary resources.

Criteria. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within 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 expenditure is well focussed and so, as well as current earnings, other factors that will be considered in determining the level of Bursary support required will include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family.
- The level of assets in a household. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity values in houses above a certain amount.
- In cases of divorce or separation, the contribution made by any absent parent or new partner.

EXISTING PUPILS – CHANGE IN FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

Within overall budget funding, the School will set aside a Hardship Bursary allocation for cases of sudden unforeseen need. Parents/guardians with a girl at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a Bursary at any time using the standard application process and explaining their situation. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. A Bursary will not normally be considered where significant arrears of fees are outstanding.

ANNUAL REVIEW

All Bursaries are subject to review of parents/guardians' means every year, and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on any changes. Existing Bursary holders will be expected to re-submit Bursary applications before the end of the Lent Term, and failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of the Bursary. After the assessment process has been completed, the Headmistress has the discretion to recommend to Governors the reduction or withdrawal of a Bursary where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory, or 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.

The academic and pastoral progress of those receiving a bursary is reviewed every half term by the Housemistress. This process is in line with the school reporting and grading process for all pupils. An outline of each student's progress is retained in the pupil tracking team and overseen by the Deputy Head (Academic). The outcome of each review cycle is reported to the Headmistress.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The School respects the confidentiality of all information concerning Bursary applications and the award of a Bursary, and expects recipients to do the same.

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	January 2015	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2016	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2017	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2018	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2019	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2020	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	January 2021	Reviewed. Amended 24/2/21 – Point 12 added.	Colin Cockburn
	July 2022	Reviewed	Colin Cockburn
	September 2023	Reviewed and updated – amendments	Kevin Elliott and Tara Reeve
	January 2024	Reviewed	Kevin Elliott
	February 2025	Reviewed	Julia Burnett
	August 2026	Reviewed and minor changes to bursary process	Julia Burnett & Tara Reeve

Reviewed Leader: Director of Finance and Operations
Reviewed: August 2026
Next Review: August 2027