

LONDON STEINER SCHOOL

Bursary Policy

1. Bursaries

London Steiner School is committed to providing children with an inspiring alternative education for a changing world. The School expects all parents/guardians, staff, volunteers and our extended community to share this commitment.

One of the ways in which we do this is by providing a **bursary** to those who may otherwise not be able to afford the education. The collective contributions made by the school community enable us each year to provide a total discount (bursary + siblings, staff and loyalty discounts) of up to 20% of the school's annual net fee income to children at our school.

1.1 Authority

This policy has been authorised by the Trustees and the College of Teachers of the School and contains an overview of the Bursary Scheme which is in operation at the School. Ancillary documentation includes a financial means questionnaire (Bursary Application Form), which is made available on request to the Bursar.

1.2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- a) to widen pupil access to the School and ensure that Steiner/Waldorf education is provided to children from as broad a spectrum as possible from financial, ethnic & religious backgrounds within society;
- b) to continue the School's long tradition of providing public benefit;
- c) to meet the Charity Commission's public benefit requirements

1.3 Introduction

The School has a long history of providing financial assistance to pupils and their families. While the costs of running the School require that those who can pay full fee contributions must do so, every year the School foregoes fee contributions through bursaries.

The School's Bursary Scheme is limited. It is **not available to Kindergarten pupils or to new families in the middle school in their first academic year**. In very

exceptional cases variations to this may be considered. Any decision made by the College of Teachers and Finance Group Members is final.

The School works with local authorities where they provide Nursery Funding for a limited number of hours per week for children between the ages of 3 & 5 years. On the child's 5th birthday this currently ceases. This provision is subject to the implementation of any changes instigated by local and central government that the School has no control over.

The School's Bursary Scheme is designed to assist parents on low incomes who, for financial reasons, might otherwise be unable to continue to send their child to the School. Bursaries for pupils of parents experiencing financial hardship or whose financial position worsens unexpectedly once their child is already at the School can apply, when – only if there is adequate Bursary Funding still available - their request will be considered.

Bursaries are entirely means-tested and are awarded on an annual basis to parents who are financially eligible and who meet the application requirements set out below in full. There are times when applications may not be successful due to a full allocation of bursary funding. Any decisions by the College of Teachers and Finance Group Members are final.

All bursary applications are treated in the strictest confidence. Pupils will not be made aware that they benefit from a bursary unless informed by their parents.

There is a Bursary Cap in place for families with multiple children in attendance at the School. Sibling discounts are currently given, with 10% discount for the 2nd child and 25% discount for the 3rd and any subsequent child's fee contributions. A family may receive up to 75% bursary in total for multiple children, currently capped annually at £7,500 in bursary per family, subject to eligibility and approval from the School's Finance Group. This figure is reviewed annually to ensure that the cap is relative to any increases/decreases in school contribution limits.

1.4 Eligibility and Procedure

Subject to 1.3. above all parents/guardians of pupils at the School are eligible to apply for a bursary and should contact the Bursar at the School in the first instance for more information. The deadline for Bursary applications is the **end of the spring term** in the school year prior to that for which the bursary is requested and must be made in writing with a completed Bursary Application Form together with all supporting documentation.

Step One

All applicants for a bursary need to complete a Financial Means Questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to provide a full picture of the income, assets, outgoings and liabilities of applicants so that the Bursar can make recommendations to the Finance Group to determine those to whom an offer of a bursary would be appropriate. **Please note that families who may be classified as 'low income' but have substantial assets may be ineligible to receive a bursary.**

Step Two

The Bursar 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. After consideration of the application, an interview with the parents/guardians with a member of the College of Teachers and the Bursar may be requested. Copies of the full supporting documentation for the bursary application needs to be provided before it will be considered.

Step Three

Upon completion of the interviews, the Bursar prepares a recommendation for the College of Teachers' and Finance Groups' consideration and a decision on the application will be made.

Step Four

The school will try to write within 21 days of the interview to notify applicants whether they have been successful but please bear in mind this may not always be possible.

Step Five

Successful applicants are required to confirm the acceptance of a bursary by completing, signing and returning an acceptance form to the School within 7 days. An acknowledgement/Commitment Form agreeing to any conditions relating to the Bursary must also be signed. N.B. This may be at the interview in anticipation of a positive decision from the School.

IMPORTANT

Each Bursary offer will reflect the particular circumstances of the recipient and be expressed as a percentage reduction of requested fee contributions. **All Bursaries are awarded for one academic year** only and remain subject throughout that period to the conditions of award provided with the letter of offer. It is incumbent on the parents or guardians to advise the School immediately if their financial position improves or changes when they might be able to reduce their bursary for the benefit of other children that may be in need. Failure to do so could result in the withdrawal

of part, or all, of the family's bursary.

1.6 Financial Limitations

The amount of the Bursary award is influenced 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 overall Bursary budget. It is recognised that judgments about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal to that family. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all bursary grants are allocated appropriately and so, as well as current earnings, other factors will be considered in determining the level of any bursary grant to be awarded. These will include (but are not limited to):

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning capacity 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 dependants, or the requirements of their partner's work.

- The opportunities available to release any capital to fund school fees.
- 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, any contribution made by the 'absent' parent.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities), the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings.

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
- Investment in significant home improvements / significant purchases of luxury items
- A second property/land holdings

1.7 Other Factors

It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the School.

- Where the social needs of the child need to be taken into account.
- Where a parent/guardian is unable to secure permanent employment due to health problems or disability within the family.
- Where a parental separation or parental bereavement may result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School.
- The way the family supports the school life by communicating with teachers and, for example, writing notes for absences;
- The willingness of a family to commit additional hours of work/assistance to the school, as and when required.

1.8 Change in Family Circumstances

Within the overall Bursary budget, the School will under normal circumstances endeavour to assist in cases of sudden, unforeseen need. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints. Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change are advised to discuss the matter with the Bursar. Such awards are always subject to the availability of the funding and cannot be guaranteed.

1.9 Review

All bursaries are subject to annual means-test review and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on financial circumstances. Nevertheless, should any of the information disclosed in response to the questionnaire change at a later date, the School must be informed without delay. For example, should the financial position of parents/guardians worsen unexpectedly, such that they will be unable to pay the contributions, they should contact the Bursar as soon as possible so that a way forward can be agreed (**see Contributions Policy for details**).

London Steiner School

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Owner of policy: Desiree K. Ickerodt (bursar)

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