



GUIDANCE FOR MEANS - TESTED BURSARY APPLICANTS

General

The Governors of Epsom College are committed to broadening access to the College to gifted and talented boys and girls from a broader social and financial background by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a Bursary Award and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% on fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other relevant 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 a number of different factors and will depend on individual parents/guardians' financial circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, other dependents and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the College, where parents/guardians would be unable to fund the fees if a place were to be offered.
- Existing pupils, where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting fees and may result in the child having to be withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

New Applicants to the College

Awareness

Information is provided by the College by way of the College website and correspondence from the Admissions Department, alerting the parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees.

The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering any year-group at Epsom College. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors, and the Head and Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **STEP ONE.** Changes in financial circumstances are usually quite unpredictable but it helps significantly if the completed forms, together with the necessary supporting documentation are submitted to the Bursar before the deadlines noted on the Bursary Application Form. Nevertheless, families should not hesitate to appeal to the Bursar directly when their financial circumstances change for the worse.
- **STEP TWO.** The Bursar assesses all applications in order to establish the College's view of the likely level of support which will be required to enable the child to attend the School. This may involve the Bursar, or 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 Bursar prepares a recommendation for any Bursary Award. It is considered by the Head and members of the Governing body as appropriate.
- **STEP FOUR.** Bursaries will generally be offered after the 16+ assessments in November or the 11+/13+ assessments in January. Parents/guardians are usually advised as to whether their application has been successful at the same time as they are notified that their son or daughter has been offered a place.
Please note: significant bursaries are generally only awarded to those pupils who are able to demonstrate strong academic, sporting or performance skills, and who, in the opinion of the College, would benefit from an education at the College. In the case of 13+ applicants, a final decision as to whether the College is able to offer a bursary may therefore be deferred until the 13+ scholarship assessments have taken place in February of Year 8.
- **STEP FIVE.** Parents/guardians are required to sign a letter accepting the place at the School and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary.

The Case for Assistance

The Head and Bursar 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 success and/or extra curricular contribution potential of each applicant. 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 Head, 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, co-curricular activities on offer at the College. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the College's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **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 College's ability to fund these within the context of what is viable and within its overall budget.

It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make in order to pay school fees will be personal. However, the College has a duty to ensure that all bursaries are allocated to those families with a proven financial need and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant will include:

 - o The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, one might expect both 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.
 - o 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.
 - o In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent. Where parents are separated, the expectation is that both parents would submit a bursary application form, either jointly or separately.
 - o Contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
 - o Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the College will take into account all these outgoings.
 - o Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the College 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 or land holdings.
- **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:
 - o Where the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g.: may be suffering from bullying at their present school).
 - o Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
 - o Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the College adding to the stress of coping with the parents/guardians separating.
 - o Where a child has siblings at the College and/or close family members who are Old Epsomians.
- **SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT.** As noted above, given the limited availability of bursary funds the College would generally expect those pupils seeking a significant level of support (usually over 50% of the day fees) to be in receipt of a scholarship or exhibition, i.e. to have a particular talent that has been recognised by the College.

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the College 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 College whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary to the Bursar, explaining their situation and using the relevant form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

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 a letter during the Lent term each year and are asked to complete an annual declaration, detailing any significant changes in their financial circumstances.

For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head and Bursar, in making their joint recommendation to the Governors, have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of 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 College respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families and recipients are expected to do likewise.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the College's bursary Fund, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees. In the majority of cases, these are to assist children who are already attending a fee-paying school and due to a change of circumstances may be unable to remain. Epsom College encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information on how to pursue such assistance may be obtained from the Bursar.



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