THE DOWNS
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
BRISTOL

The Downs School – Bursaries and Discounts Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a benefit to those parents who would find it very difficult to access or continue educating their children in the independent sector without financial support, as part of the School's on-going public benefit commitment. In addition, this policy outlines the approach taken for other non-means-tested forms of fee discounts.

Objectives

- To support those current parents who fall upon financial difficulties
- To support those prospective parents who would not be able to access independent education without the financial help of the School
- To assess the level of financial support the School might be able to offer fairly and thoroughly
- To enable current pupils to continue their education at The Downs until such time as there occurs a natural break in the education process.

Types of awards

Bursaries

Bursary Awards are granted, after means-tested assessment, to families who would not otherwise be able to educate their children at The Downs. The awards are a means of financial assistance.

Bursary Awards range in values from 100% to 10% of the basic tuition fee. A wide range of factors are considered in granting the awards. These are judged against a consistent set of criteria. These factors include the size of the family, the level of income and expenditure, capital, debt and asset values.

The number and size of bursaries awarded each year can and does vary. The circumstances of those parents benefiting from a Bursary Award are re-assessed on a regular basis, usually biennially. Where circumstances have not changed, then the School will normally continue the existing arrangement.

Discounts

Headteacher's Discretionary Discounts represent a small reduction of the basic fee which are awarded at the discretion of the Headteacher. In some circumstances these Discounts will apply for the full period of time that the pupil is at the School, although they may alternatively apply for a shorter period of time such as a single academic year.

In addition, further discounts are available as a consequence of a parent having more than one child in the School (Sibling Discount) or in the event of a teacher having a child in the School (Staff Discount).

The discount awards are not subject to means-tested assessment.

Bursary Awards or other Discounts are deducted from the tuition fees and shown on the fee invoices sent out by the School each term. No actual payment is made to the parent.

The Process of Granting Bursaries

Bursary Awards – Eligibility

Bursaries are awarded according to need and are not dependent on academic performance, before a place is offered. However, the pupils must satisfy the School's standard entry requirements and continue to work to a satisfactory standard whilst in the School.

Bursary applications are considered from both external and internal parties, the children being of any age and number. The number and size of awards depend largely on the School's financial circumstances; nevertheless, the School is committed to enabling as many pupils as possible to benefit from an education at The Downs, irrespective of financial circumstances.

A limited number of awards are granted at other stages of the School year, which are determined by the availability of bursary funds at the time. Some of these awards are intended to assist existing pupils where there has been a change in financial circumstances which threatens the continuation of the pupil attending the School.

Bursary Awards - Application procedure for new parents

The bursary application process has been designed to run as seamlessly as possible alongside the normal admissions process. Parents considering a place for their child at The Downs can register their child by contacting our Admissions Manager, Georgia Pierce. As part of the process parents should indicate whether or not they believe financial support will be required.

Bursary applicants are required to provide certain information relating to their financial circumstances via an online portal. The purpose of this is to provide a clear and consistent picture of the family's financial position. The portal also includes a space for applicants to upload supporting documentation. The School

uses a third party provider, Bursary Administration Limited, to undertake a review of the information provided, which will also include an online meeting. Applicants are expected to make themselves available for this. A confidential report is prepared to support the School's decision-making process.

The process is designed to ensure consistency and fairness of approach. The decision whether or not to award a bursary is taken by a Bursary Committee, consisting of the Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee, the Headteacher, the Group Finance Director and other Governors or senior staff that have no conflict of interest in the decision-making process.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the process either directly by the Group Finance Director, or otherwise within the context of the normal admissions process. The value of any bursary would normally be set out in any offer letter.

Bursary Awards - Application procedure for existing parents

The process for existing parents is broadly the same as set out above. However, rather than following the admissions process, applications can be made at any time. Parents who may be experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to reach out to the School on a confidential basis via the Admissions Manager, Group Finance Director or Headteacher.. The application process is likely to focus on the change of circumstances giving rise to the financial difficulties.

For transparency, applications from existing parents are unlikely to be successful where it is apparent that the financial circumstances giving rise to the application were already in place before an offer of a place was originally made, and the existing parents accepted the original offer knowing that they were unlikely to be able to afford the fees.

Bursary Awards – Other matters

All information provided during the course of an application is treated as entirely confidential. For further information on how the School handles your personal data please see the School's Privacy Notice.

Unfortunately, the School is not in a position to provide applicants with feedback on why they were not successful or, if successful, the basis of the value of any award. In line with the admissions process generally there is no mechanism for appeal, although the School welcomes feedback on the process.

In all cases awards are conditional upon the pupil making reasonable academic progress and maintaining good standards of behaviour. An award may be withdrawn in the event of consistent breach of School rules or serious misconduct, either by the pupil or the parents. In all cases, awards are conditional upon the arrangement remaining entirely confidential to the two parties and the parents must sign a written agreement to this effect.

Funding of bursaries

Unlike some independent schools, The Downs does not have substantial endowment funds and the School funds all bursaries from its own budgets. Although there is no specific quota for the number of awards that may be made, the bursary fund is limited and it may not be possible to meet all requests for financial support, even if the applicants are otherwise eligible. The School welcomes bursary applications from any family, recognising the importance of diversity in its School community.

Other sources of bursary assistance

There are a number of educational and charitable trusts which may be able to provide assistance with school fees. The funds of many grant-making bodies are limited and there are sometimes restrictions on who may apply for support. The School encourages parents to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. The following may be a useful source of information and advice: *The Educational Trusts' Forum: www.educational-grants.org*

Sibling Discounts

In appreciation of the financial commitment made by parents in various circumstances the following discounts are offered without condition:

1st Sibling	5%
2nd Sibling	10%
3rd Sibling	15%

Parents with an elder sibling at another school within the Pembroke Education group will continue to receive the Sibling Discount.

Terms & Conditions

With the exception of Sibling Discounts, all bursaries and discounts are offered on a confidential basis and parents are required to sign an agreement to this effect, acknowledging that disclosure may lead to its withdrawal.

They are also required to confirm their understanding that their child must adhere to the School's rules of conduct and that they will work hard and contribute positively to the School. Parents must adhere to the payment terms agreed for

their fee account. Where they do not so adhere, the financial support provided may be withdrawn with no notice, at the discretion of the Group Finance Director.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy is reviewed by the Group Finance Director as required, at least every two years. Recommendations for change are presented to the Bursary Committee, debated and implemented if appropriate.

Last updated: September 2026
(to be reviewed by the Bursary Committee at their next meeting)