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<h1>Bursary Award Policy</h1>	
Owner: Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Author: Operations Bursar

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Executive Summary

This document is for staff, parents, and prospective parents. It sets out the School's policy on the allocation of financial support (bursary awards) for new applicants and current pupils. The application process for general and transformational bursaries and guiding principles to which the School adheres in its allocation of financial support are outlined within the document.

Supporting documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School documents:

- Admissions policy
- Credit Control policy

To request a copy of any of the documents listed above please contact the Policies, Inspection and Strategy Coordinator:
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1. General

In line with the objectives of the Charity, the Governors of Sherborne Girls are committed to offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees to enable a pupil to attend Sherborne Girls who otherwise would not be able to do so. Such support is known as a bursary and may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% of school fees depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are made on the basis of a means-tested assessment of a family's financial circumstances, including their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and other similar factors. Awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances and the availability of funds.

The Governors are committed to the principle of public benefit and to broadening access to the School through the application of bursary funds and, in particular, through the Candlelight Bursary scheme. Bursaries are also available to scholars and other award holders and for existing pupils where a change in parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting termly fees and may result in the pupil being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

2. New applicants to the School

Candlelight Bursaries are awarded to candidates for whom the experience of boarding will be transformational and who qualify for 100% support. Candidates are usually identified via the [Royal National Children's Springboard Foundation \(RNCSF\)](#).

General bursaries may be awarded to candidates who require further financial assistance with termly fees in order to take up their place at Sherborne Girls but would nevertheless benefit from the rich academic and co-curricular experience of a full-boarding school.

Candidates may apply to the Old Girls Bursary Fund for additional support as part of a general bursary if their mother, grandmother, or aunt was an Old Girl.

Information provided by the School to draw the attention of parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees is included:

- in the School's prospectus;
- on the School's website; and
- during admissions events.

3. The application process for Candlelight Bursaries

Candlelight Bursary candidates are usually identified by recommendation from a third party, for example the [RNCSF](#). Candidates will be invited to the School and the assessment and entry procedures will be tailored appropriately.

Candlelight Bursary candidates are supported by the fundraising efforts of The Sherborne Girls Foundation.

4. The application process for General Bursaries

General bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governors. The Head and Executive Team are responsible for the management and coordination of the process in accordance with "the case for assistance" as set out below. Pupils must be registered for a place at Sherborne Girls before a bursary application can be considered.

Parents who are likely to require assistance with the payment of school fees should contact the Operations Bursar and submit an application in accordance with the time scales set out on the School [website](#).

Sherborne Girls employs Bursary Assessment Associates (BAA) to collate the financial circumstances of bursary applicants on behalf of the School. Parents/guardians are invited to complete an application for bursarial support via a secure portal, administered by BAA.

Bursary applications for scholarship candidates should be submitted before the scholarship assessments. This will then enable decisions on bursaries to be made at the same time as scholarships are awarded.

Bursary applications for all other pupils should be submitted in accordance with the time scales set out on the School [website](#).

The Operations Bursar assesses all applications for bursaries in order to establish the eligibility for financial support; this may involve visiting the parents'/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and that the basis of the financial assessment is fair. The Operations Bursar prepares a recommendation based on the family financial circumstances which is considered with the Head and Chief Operating Officer. A recommendation is then reached.

The Head will review the outcome of the tests and interviews in accordance with the criteria set out under "The Case for Assistance". They will prepare a short list of pupils who will be selected to receive a Bursary subject to final checking of the financial circumstances.

Applications for Old Girls Bursary Funds will be reviewed by the Trustees of the Sherborne Girls Bursary Fund.

Parents/guardians will be advised of the outcome. 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.

5. The case for assistance

A number of factors will be considered when assessing and judging the justification for support, and the extent of such support. In the main, a child's suitability for the school is the first consideration in granting support.

In assessing a pupil's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential will be considered as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged likely to gain most from the School's educational provision and contribute to the School will be given priority. 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 their work. She will be expected to benefit other pupils through her participation in the wider, co-curricular activities on offer at the school. Previous school reports may be consulted for evidence of good behaviour. Any pupil in receipt of a bursary will be expected to abide by all the School's policies and to meet its academic expectations.

The amount of any bursary award is not influenced by the academic ability of the child, but by the degree 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 its overall budget. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will vary. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all bursary funds are used effectively and fairly.

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 each parent;
- contribution to household costs by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources;
- 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;
- new or luxury cars;
- investment in significant home improvements;
- a second property/land holdings.

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 already has some form of award, such as a Scholarship;
- where a child has siblings at the School or within the Sherborne Schools Group;
- where the social needs of the child are relevant;

- where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.

6. Current pupils – Change in family circumstances

Within overall budget funding, in normal circumstances the School will 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 for a bursary explaining their situation and by submitting an application. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. It is unlikely that funding in such circumstances will be available for pupils currently in the lower years or for those moving into the Sixth Form as priority is given to pupils who are studying for public exams.

The Old Girls Bursary Fund is also able to make small awards under these circumstances.

7. Annual review

All bursary awards are subject to an annual full application and analysis of parental/guardian means. This is usually carried out across the Michaelmas and Lent Terms for the following academic year. As a result, bursaries may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on family circumstances and the level of demand on the available funds. All current bursary holders will be issued with bursary application forms at the beginning of October each year for return of fully completed and supported applications by the end of December.

Parents/guardians will be notified, normally by the end of the Lent term, whether their reviewed application has been successful or the level of award varied.

The School has the discretion to reduce or withdraw a bursary, 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.

Prospective parents should not assume that an award made before entry will last throughout their child's time at Sherborne Girls. However, provided that subsequent full and means-tested applications show no notable change in circumstances, parents can assume that an award will not change from year to year.

8. Confidentiality

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

9. Other sources of bursary assistance

In addition to the School's bursary funds, 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. Sherborne Girls 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 Operations Bursar or from the Independent Schools Educational Grants Advice helpline 01932 865619.

Further information may be obtained from the RNCSF: www.royalspringboard.org.uk

Appendix 1 - Summary of Changes in Issue 3

- Minor stylistic improvements throughout.
- Procedure updated to reflect the employment of BAA in the assessment process.
- Procedure for scholarship candidates updated.