

### General

The governors of St Gabriel's are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support for the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Bursary awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year. Awards may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents/guardians' circumstances (for example, their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- Applicants to a new stage of education at the school, where a place has been offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn at a critical point in a stage of education.

### Applicants to a New Stage of Education at the School

Parents/guardians of potential pupils can find information on the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of schools fees by looking at:

- St Gabriel's prospectus
- [www.stgabriels.co.uk](http://www.stgabriels.co.uk)
- Scholarship & Bursary Awards prospectus

Bursary awards may be made available to parents/guardians of children entering Year 7 and Year 12 at St Gabriel's. They are known as Montagu Awards and are named after the famous 18<sup>th</sup> Century Elizabeth Montagu, resident of Sandleford Priory and member of the "bluestockings", who worked so hard to establish intellectual emancipation for women. Montagu Awards are awarded at the discretion of the governors, and the Principal and Bursar are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **Step One.** Parents/guardians seeking a bursary are required to complete a Montagu Award application form, which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, may be found on the website, [www.stgabriels.co.uk](http://www.stgabriels.co.uk), or may be requested from the Admissions Office, [admissions@stgabriels.co.uk](mailto:admissions@stgabriels.co.uk), and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed form, together with the necessary documentary evidence, should be submitted to the Bursar no later than the **date of the Entrance Exam** in any year for a bursary to start the following September.
- **Step Two.** The Bursar assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support required in order to allow the child to attend the school. This may involve the Bursar, or a

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 in accordance with the St Gabriel Schools Foundation confidential scale of awards.
- **Step Four.** The pupil will sit an entrance exam and attend an interview with the Principal and Vice-Principal. The candidate may also be invited to attend a scholarship day.
- **Step Five.** The Bursar and Principal meet to match any appropriate financial award to suitable candidates.
- **Step Five.** Following the entrance exams, towards the beginning of December, parents/guardians are advised as to whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of the bursary offer.
- **Step Six.** Parents/guardians are then required to sign an acceptance form, accepting their child's place at the school, and are asked to acknowledge and agree to any conditions relating to the bursary.

### The Case for Assistance

The Principal 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 assessment result of each applicant, but potential will also be considered as well as actual achievement. 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 Principal, 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 school. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **Financial Limitations.** The amount of the bursary award is not influenced by the level of the academic ability of the child but 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 context of what is viable 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 grants are well focussed and so, 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 value in property.
  - In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent.
  - Contribution to household costs by other, wider, 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 bursary will take some account of 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.
- **Other Factors.** It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other exceptional circumstances which should be considered. These include:
  - Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to chronic health conditions
  - Where extreme social deprivation or family collapse can only be relieved by attendance at the school.

### **Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances**

Within overall budget funding, the school will in normal circumstances set aside a small sum each year as a hardship fund for cases of sudden, unforeseen need 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 to the Bursar for a bursary, explaining their situation and using the Montagu Award Application Form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and will be restricted to critical points in a child's stage of education: GCSE and A level exam years (Year 11 and Year 13).

### **Annual Review**

All bursary awards are subject to repeat annual testing of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of February each year for return by the end of the month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Principal and Bursar, in making their joint decision have the discretion to reduce or withdraw 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.

### **Effect of an Award on the Acceptance Contract**

The award of a scholarship or bursary does not affect any of the Standard Terms & Conditions. It should be noted that such an award is designed to support attendance at the school, and not subsidise withdrawal, so any fees in lieu specified in the Terms & Conditions must be paid gross.

### **Confidentiality**

The School 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 school, 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.

St Gabriel's encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance.

**A Montagu Award Application Form may be downloaded from the website, [www.stgabriels.co.uk](http://www.stgabriels.co.uk), or requested from the Admissions Office, [admissions@stgabriels.co.uk](mailto:admissions@stgabriels.co.uk).**

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