



## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

As a charity, Manchester High School for Girls (MHSG) is committed to providing education to academically gifted girls, regardless of circumstances, and offers financial assistance, through a small number of part or full fee bursaries, to pupils who can demonstrate the need for financial support. Bursaries can be worth up to 100 per cent of fees – and in some cases even more if they cover trips, lunches, travel grants and uniform (grants for uniform are only available at the beginning of the first year in school). MHSG also offers financial assistance in the form of scholarships to very able pupils and those talented in Dance, Sport and Music. Financial hardship awards may be given to those who experience a sudden and unexpected, temporary change to their circumstances. Such support is given for a maximum of one term and is awarded at the discretion of the Head Mistress.

### **Bursary Policy and Procedures**

#### **I. Key Principles**

- Bursaries are granted at the discretion of the Head Mistress, as delegated by the Governing Body
- The Director of Finance and Operations is responsible for the management and coordination of the bursary assessment process alongside the Head Mistress. As part of the process of assessing bursary applications, the Bursary Manager may visit the home of the parents/guardians or invite applicants for interview in order to discuss their financial situation
- Bursaries are awarded for pupils joining in Year 7 and Sixth Form. Applications for pupils in other years are considered at the discretion of the Head Mistress.
- All bursaries are means tested
- Owing to a high demand and a limited number of bursary places available, for those eligible, bursaries will be awarded on the basis of academic achievement
- Parents/guardians wishing to apply for bursaries will be expected to be honest and transparent so that the School can ensure that bursary awards are distributed fairly and ethically. All parents, as a result, will be expected to sign a 'Statement of Truth' when applying for a bursary
- The system of assessing whether parents/guardians are eligible for a bursary should be simple and transparent; straightforward to understand for those applying and for School staff to administer
- All documentary evidence must be submitted in accordance with the deadlines outlined by the Finance Department for parents/guardians to be considered eligible
- Although details of expenditure are not required in the application process, those applying for bursaries will need to submit bank statements and will not be considered eligible if it is judged that their lifestyle is incompatible with receipt of a bursary (e.g. they are able to afford expensive cars or pay for expensive annual holidays)

- Once fee assistance, in the form of a bursary is offered for any given academic year, it will be honoured, even if there is a change in the financial circumstances of the parents/guardians during the same academic year
- When in receipt of a bursary, parents/guardians must agree to the 'Conditions of Award' which accompany the letter confirming the award
- The financial situation of the parents/guardians in receipt of a bursary will be reviewed annually to ensure that money is being allocated appropriately and in accordance with Charity Commission regulations
- Applications should be made to the Head Mistress if extra grants (travel, uniform etc.) are required or if reimbursements are required for travel passes
- Financial support for lunch costs will be provided to the same level as the bursary award for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Those pupils in Years 9 and above who are eligible for free school meals (in line with government criteria) will receive appropriate lunch costs credited to their lunch cards.

## **2. Means Testing**

Two tests will be applied to establish whether an applicant is eligible for bursary assistance and, if so, how much assistance will be provided. The first test considers the disposable assets available to the household. If an applicant's disposable assets are above the threshold of seven years' worth of fees, they will not be eligible for assistance. If disposable assets are below the threshold of seven years' fees, the household's annual income will also be considered.

### **2.1 Disposable Assets Test**

A household's disposable assets are a measure of the amount of savings and investments they have that could be applied to school fees.

These include:

- money in ISAs and any other savings accounts
- joint savings accounts that are shared with a partner
- fixed rate or investment bonds
- any lump sum (for example, a redundancy payout)
- stocks and shares
- trust funds (or any other kind of fund)
- value of second homes
- any money or property outside the UK
- equity in a home above £300,000
- equity in private business above £75,000
- other assets of value

It does not include:

- wages or benefits
- personal pensions
- the value of any vehicle which would leave the applicant or their partner without motor transport if sold
- loans
- awards or compensation from courts or statutory schemes

## 2.2 Annual Income Test

The second test will consider whether parents/guardians who passed the Disposable Asset Test should receive a full bursary, pay a contribution towards their fee or pay the full fee. A full bursary could be granted if the applicant can demonstrate that their total annual household income is below £30,000. Above this threshold the applicant would be required to pay a contribution towards the fee, based on the table below, or the full fee where their total annual household income exceeds the higher threshold.

The higher threshold for consideration of bursary assistance will be based on the total gross annual household income of £70,000. The following bursary assistance could be provided based on the total annual household income:

Income of up to £30,000	100% fee remission awarded
Income from £30,001 to £40,000	80% fee remission awarded
Income from £40,001 to £50,000	60% fee remission awarded
Income from £50,001 to £60,000	40% fee remission awarded
Income from £60,001 to £70,000	20% fee remission awarded

If the parents/guardians applying for bursary assistance have more than one dependent child, then the relevant amount of income to qualify for fee assistance will be what is specified above plus £3,145 for each additional dependent child. For these purposes, parents/guardians will be defined as having a dependent child if a child lives with them and / or they pay child maintenance for a child.

Total income includes:

- gross wages (that is before any tax or National Insurance payments have been taken off)
- net profit from self-employment
- benefits (including non-taxable benefits)
- pensions (state, work or private)
- rent from anyone living with the applicant and other properties that the applicant owns
- regular payments from relatives or friends (not loans or one-off gifts)
- maintenance payments, for example, from an ex-spouse
- income from selling goods publicly or privately, including over the internet
- dividend income

## 2.3 Documents Required

- At least three months' most recent financial bank statements. These should show income, including any benefits, as well as the name, address and bank account number of the parent/guardian applying for the Bursary
- The most recent original payslip and / or Week 52 or Month 12 payslips from all jobs
- The most recent P60 and/or P45
- Self-employed parents/guardians must provide their most recent tax return (Self Assessment), the last set of accounts (less than 18 months old) and either their most recent HMRC Self-Assessment Tax Calculation or other proof of current income

### **3. Application Process**

Step one: Parents should apply for a bursary when they confirm that their daughter will sit the entrance examination. There is one application form, completed before the end of the Autumn Term (Year 7 entry) or before the end of the Spring Term (Sixth Form entry) which will establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requests details of income and capital, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence and the signed Statement of Truth. All of this information should be submitted to the Director of Finance & Operations for the Bursary to start in the following September.

Step two: All applications will be assessed to establish the likely level of support required to enable the child to attend the School. This may involve the Director of Finance & Operations, and/or the Bursary Manager, visiting the parents' / guardians' home or interviewing the parents / guardians to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.

Step three: The Director of Finance & Operations, and/or her representative, will prepare a recommendation which is considered by the Head Mistress, and a joint recommendation will be reached.

Step four: Parents will be advised whether their child will be offered a place at the School, and whether or not fee assistance will be available.

Step five: Parents will be required to sign a letter accepting the place at MHSG and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the Bursary. All parents will be required to pay a deposit when accepting a place at MHSG. Where pupils are awarded bursary assistance, the deposit will be discounted, based on the level of the award.

### **4. The Case for Bursary Assistance**

The Head Mistress and Director of Finance & Operations will consider a number of factors when making the judgement for support. In the main, the child's suitability for the School is the first consideration in granting support.

#### **4.1 Suitability**

In assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment results of each applicant, but potential will also be considered. Bursary funds are limited; therefore awards will be made on the basis of the applicant's performance in the entrance examination and interview for Year 7 entry and GCSE results for Sixth Form entry. In the opinion of the Head Mistress, each pupil to whom support is offered must be considered likely to make sound academic progress following admission, possess the potential to develop the quality of her work, and benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular activities on offer at the School.

#### **4.2 Financial Limitations**

1. The amount of bursary assistance awarded is not influenced by the level of the academic ability of the child but by the extent of the need.
2. 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.
3. 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 focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, within reason 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
- Eligibility to work in the UK
- 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 siblings are at other fee paying schools or places of education, it would be expected that such organisations were offering bursaries of a similar value to those of MHSG

#### **4.3 Other Factors**

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

- A child has siblings at the School
- A separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the School adding to the stress of coping with the parents separating

#### **4.4 Annual Review**

All bursary assistance is made subject to repeat testing of parental means each year, and may be increased or decreased depending on parental circumstances. Those in receipt of bursaries will be issued with repeat means-testing forms at the beginning of April, for every year they are in receipt of bursary assistance (other than the year of application), for return by the end of that month. For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head Mistress and the Director of Finance & Operations 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 have defaulted, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees or not returning the application form before the deadline.

### **5. Confidentiality**

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

Prepared by: Helen Jeys, Head Mistress (October 2022)

Reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Body 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Reviewed by Helen Jeys, Head Mistress (May 2023)

Reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Body June 2023.

## **Scholarships Policy**

MHSG is committed to providing non means-tested scholarships to those who demonstrate excellence in academic achievement, sport, dance and music. The management of the awards is delegated by the Governors to the Head Mistress.

A scholarship is generally a percentage of fees paid. The maximum award is 50% of full school fees but most are substantially less than this.

### **1.1 Academic Scholarships**

One or more academic scholarships, per year, may be awarded by the Head Mistress for:

- excellence in performance in the entrance examination, taken at the age of 10 or 11, for admission to the Senior School in September
- excellence in performance in GCSE examinations, for admission to the Sixth Form

Academic scholarships are awarded for the entire school career of the pupil.

### **1.2 Music, Sport and Dance Scholarships**

Scholarships for Music, Sport and Dance may be awarded to pupils joining the School in Year 7 and remain in place until the end of Year 11. One or more Music Scholarships may also be awarded to pupils joining the Sixth Form. Applicants should note their interest in applying when they complete the registration form.

For the Music Scholarship, for pupils entering Year 7, applicants should have reached ABRSM Grade 4 or equivalent and, if chosen for audition, be prepared for sight-reading and aural tests as well as a performance on their choice of two instruments (or one instrument plus voice). For the Sixth Form Music Scholarship, pupils should have reached ABRSM Grade 8 or equivalent and, if chosen for audition, be prepared for sight-reading and aural tests as well as a performance on their choice of two instruments (or one instrument plus voice).

For the Dance/Sports Scholarships, girls may be invited to come for an assessment where their performance will be evaluated against their peers. A written recommendation is required from a dance teacher or sports coach along with copies of any awards or certificates achieved.

### **1.2 Joint Application for a Scholarship and Bursary Assisted Place**

A student may be in receipt of a scholarship and bursary. However, if a joint award is made, the total value of the support provided will not exceed the value of a full fee place, had a scholarship not been awarded.

Reviewed and amended by: Helen Jeys, Head Mistress (October 2022)

Latest amendments approved by the Full Governing Body 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Reviewed by Helen Jeys, Head Mistress (May 2023)