

Bursary and Financial Assistance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. About The Stephen Perse Foundation

The Stephen Perse Foundation (the “**School**”) is a registered charity for the advancement of education, encompassing a group of schools and nurseries in Cambridge and Saffron Walden dedicated to providing high-quality education. The School is committed to supporting students who show academic potential and a willingness to engage in the community but require financial assistance to attend our schools.

1.2. Purpose of the Bursary and Financial Assistance Policy

This policy outlines the criteria, application process, and administration of bursaries and financial assistance to ensure fairness, transparency, and accessibility for all eligible applicants.

1.3. Historical Context

Stephen Perse was a learned philanthropist, Cambridge academic, and medic who believed that education should be a right rather than a privilege. His values continue to guide our mission to provide transformative educational opportunities. We believe that a Stephen Perse education should be available to those with the potential and determination to benefit, regardless of financial circumstances.

2. Bursary and Financial Assistance Objectives

2.1. Access to Education

To provide financial assistance to students from families who cannot afford the full cost of school fees, thereby enabling access to our educational programmes.

2.2. Promoting Diversity and Social Mobility

To encourage a diverse student body, foster an inclusive environment that reflects a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and benefits the whole School, and, in particular, provide life enhancing educational opportunities to disadvantaged children and young people to facilitate their social and economic mobility.

2.3. Nurturing Potential and Aspiration

To support students who demonstrate academic potential and aspiration, extracurricular involvement, and a commitment to personal development.

3. Types of Award

This policy is concerned with awards based on the financial circumstances of the parent(s) or carer(s) (hereafter ‘parent(s)').

Such awards are distinct and very different from scholarships, which reward outstanding achievement or potential in academic work, sport, music, art, drama, or other areas, regardless of financial circumstances.

3.1. Entrance Bursaries

Entrance bursaries are awarded at the time of application and are generally in place until the next significant transition stage, ie the end of Year 6 for pupils in our Junior Schools, the end of Year 11 for students in Years 7-11, or the end of Year 13 for those in Years 12 or 13, subject to an annual assessment of the parents' financial situation as well as the student's satisfactory progress and good conduct. These bursaries are usually awarded for entry in Year 7, Year 9, and Year 12, but in exceptional circumstances, may be considered in other years or for current students whose parents are experiencing a long-term change in financial circumstances.

3.2. Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is awarded to current students whose parents have experienced a sudden and unforeseen deterioration in financial circumstances that is expected to result in short-term difficulty in paying school fees, for example as a result of job loss, a death in the family, or critical illness. Financial assistance awards are subject to conditions, determined on a case by case basis, and periodic review, as agreed with parents at the time that an award is confirmed.

3.3. Named Bursaries

The School has a number of named bursaries, funded by benefactors. For example, the North Cambridge Academy Sixth form Bursaries (for students from North Cambridge Academy only) and the DC James Award for students from Year 7. These bursaries are applied in accordance with the restricted funds guidance and assessed in accordance with separate procedures to those below and therefore fall outside the scope of this policy.

4. Funding for Bursary and Financial Assistance

Whilst the School aims to support as many deserving children as possible, and this is a key focus of our philanthropic purposes, funds are limited and it may not always be possible to provide assistance to all of those who are eligible. Unfortunately, this means that in any year there may be very worthy applicants who do not receive a bursary or financial assistance award.

4.1. Prioritising awards

In circumstances where the School receives more applications for bursaries and financial assistance than the funds available, the School's Bursary Awards Committee will determine how available funds are to be distributed among applicants, in accordance with the objectives, priorities and criteria contained in this policy.

In any year of award, priority will be given to existing bursary students and any current students known to be in need of Financial Assistance (with a priority for any students in a key examination year) before any new Entrance Bursaries are awarded.

When considering new Entrance Bursaries, the siblings of current students will receive priority.

Thereafter, priority will, in general be given (in the following order) to applications for Entrance Bursaries as follows:

- Exceptional circumstances, consistent with the eligibility criteria, that in the view of the Bursary Awards Committee warrant immediate prioritisation.
- Applicants for places in Year 12, then Year 9, then Year 7, then Year 10, 8, 11 and 13, then Junior School, then Early Years. Within each year group, priority of applications

will be determined by the Bursary Awards Committee, in accordance with the objectives set out above and taking account of all of the evidence and circumstances presented.

5. Eligibility Criteria

5.1. Contingent Criteria

Any award is contingent upon academic merit, commitment to school values, and financial need as defined below.

5.2. Academic Merit and Commitment to School Values

Applicants must demonstrate strong academic performance and potential and a bursary will only be considered where a student has already met the admissions criteria and received an offer of a place.

Students must also exhibit a commitment to the values and ethos of the School, including participation in school activities and a positive attitude towards learning.

5.3. Financial Need

Bursaries and financial assistance are awarded based on a detailed assessment of the family's financial situation, including income, assets, liabilities, and any other pertinent financial commitments, including fees which are already being paid for siblings at the School. Families are expected to be doing everything they can to maximise their income or liquidate disposable assets before applying to the School for help.

5.4. Additional Considerations

In addition to the contingent criteria, eligibility for a bursary or financial assistance may also depend on compassionate grounds or other pertinent or exceptional circumstances of applicants. These may include, but are not limited to:

- **Death of a Close Relative:** Loss of a parent, sibling, or other close family member.
- **Single Parent Family:** Situations where only one parent is responsible for the child(ren).
- **Severe Illness or Disability:** Either a family member or the student suffering from a severe illness or disability that incurs additional costs.
- **Domestic Violence:** Situations where there is domestic abuse impacting the family's stability.
- **Foster Care or Adoption:** Children in foster care or those who have been recently adopted.
- **Caregiving Responsibilities:** Students or parents who are primary caregivers for disabled or elderly family members.
- **Refugee or Asylum Seeker Status:** or those children or families otherwise displaced by conflict in their home country.

Please note that no priority order is implied by the list above. Each application will be considered on its own merits by the Bursary Awards Committee, which will exercise its discretion in determining each bursary and financial assistance award, in accordance with the objectives set out above, and considering all of the circumstances and evidence presented, and the funding available.

6. Application Process

6.1. Entrance Bursary (prospective and new students)

Prospective applicants can apply for an entrance bursary at the point of application, though a bursary assessment will only be completed once a student has been found to have met the academic entry requirements for admission and been offered a place.

6.2. Financial Assistance (current students)

Financial assistance is reserved for families who already have children attending the School who find themselves in the circumstances described in paragraph 3.2 above.

The assessment process and methodology are the same for Entrance Bursaries and for those applying for Financial Assistance.

6.3. Application Form

Families must complete the official bursary and financial assistance application form, available from fees@stephenperse.com, providing accurate and comprehensive financial information for the Bursary Awards Committee to consider.

6.4. Supporting Documentation

Applicants must submit supporting documentation, which may include:

- Recent tax returns
- Bank statements
- Investment statements
- Proof of income
- Any other relevant financial documents (such as property valuations)

6.5. Home Visits

The School may, at its discretion, use an independent company to review and assess bursary applications. Shortly after receipt of the application form, a home visit may be arranged with this company to talk through the financial circumstances and discuss the application. These visits are conducted sensitively, and all information is treated with strict confidentiality. The School reserves the right to send its own representative to attend the home visit.

7. Assessment and Award

7.1. Assessment Procedure

The Bursary Awards Committee will confidentially review all applications that meet the criteria set out in section 5 and that are received in time during the standard application window (end of January to beginning of March). Applications received outside the standard application window will be considered if there are sufficient funds remaining.

7.2. Award Decisions

Bursaries and financial assistance are awarded at the discretion of the Bursary Awards Committee. The Committee's decision is final in all circumstances.

The level of support provided will be determined based on the family's financial circumstances and the available bursary and financial assistance fund.

7.3. Notification

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing. Successful applicants will receive details of the bursary awarded and any conditions attached.

8. Conditions of the Bursary

8.1. Duration and Reassessment

Bursaries are typically awarded for one academic year and are subject to annual review and reassessment. Updated financial information and supporting documentation will need to be submitted each year that a student is in receipt of a bursary.

Continuation of a bursary award is contingent upon a satisfactory reappraisal and validation of financial circumstances, as well as the student's satisfactory progress and good conduct.

If the financial circumstances of the parent(s) are unchanged year on year, then a bursary will remain at a similar level. If the income or assets of the parent(s) increase during the student's time at the School, the bursary may be reduced or, where appropriate, withdrawn altogether. On the other hand, if the income reduces, other than through personal choice, the bursary award may increase.

8.2. Changes in Financial Circumstances

The parent(s) must inform the Bursary Awards Committee of any significant changes in their financial circumstances whenever that change occurs, even if this is outside the annual reassessment period. The Committee reserves the right to review and adjust bursary awards accordingly.

8.3. Withdrawal of a Bursary

The School will not normally withdraw a bursary for any reason other than a substantive improvement in the parent's/(s') financial circumstances, or for the exclusion of the child for some other reason. Please refer to the terms and conditions within the Stephen Perse Parent Contract.

8.4. Confidentiality

All bursary applications and awards are treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Information provided will be used solely for the purpose of assessing bursary eligibility.

8.5. Misleading Information

Providing misleading or incorrect information, failure to pay the element of fees that are payable, or failure to engage with the annual reassessment process may lead to the withdrawal of a bursary award.

8.6. Additional Support

100% bursary recipients are also given additional pastoral support from experienced tutors. The School works closely with them and their families to ensure they thrive.

9. Governance

9.1. Bursary Awards Committee

The Bursary Awards Committee (hereafter 'The Committee') will be responsible for determining and reviewing any awards. The Committee consists of the Principal, Chief Financial and Operating Officer, Executive Director, Head of School (11-18), Head of Finance, and Director of Development and Communications. The Committee may temporarily co-opt other senior members of the School's staff (such as, for example, the Senior Deputy Head in the absence of the Head), at the discretion of the Principal. A member of the School's Governing Body may from time to time attend meetings of the committee as an observer.

In the event of a disagreement among the Committee a decision will be carried by a majority vote. In the event that a majority vote cannot be reached, the Principal's vote will be determinative.

9.2. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure it remains effective, fair, and aligned with the School's charitable objectives.

9.3. Budget

The budget for bursaries and financial assistance is set each year through the School's budget-setting process, as approved by the Governing Body.

9.4. Reporting

The Committee will report (at least annually) to the Operational and Educational Executive and the Governing Body. The report will cover the breakdown of spend by bursary type and split by restricted and unrestricted funds and the impact of the funds allocated: numbers of bursaries, the student activities they have helped to fund, as well as academic and other outcomes.

10. Additional Information

10.1. Boarding Fees

Financial assistance for boarding fees will not normally be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances negatively impacting the student's learning.

10.2. Day Pupils Converting to Boarding

The parents of day pupils who wish to become boarders can apply for financial assistance, but there is no guarantee that provision will be made and applications will only generally be considered where exceptional circumstances apply (see 5.4 above).

10.3. Terms of Bursary Provision

The School reserves the right to change its bursary and financial assistance scheme in light of changing financial or other circumstances. Demand for bursary support may exceed availability, and bursaries will not necessarily be available to all who meet the criteria. Any terms on which a bursary is made to an individual will be set out as part of the offer of a place and will generally continue for the child's duration at the school and between the schools of the School, subject to annual review.

10.4. Extras

Bursary awards generally apply to tuition fees, essential school equipment and core curricular activities (including all UK-based school trips and activities; the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is included). Optional extras must be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of the School.

A limited number of overseas travel, equipment and uniform grants are available on a discretionary basis to pupils who are already in school. Applications for these grants must be made via fees@stephenperse.com as far in advance as possible.

11. Appeals Process

11.1. Right to request a Review

Awards are discretionary and so there is no automatic right to an appeal. Financial awards also sit outside of the scope of the School's complaints policy and procedures.

Applicants who believe a mistake or oversight has been made in a bursary or financial assistance decision may, however, request a Principal's Review of the decision. A request for such a review must be made in writing to the Principal within 15 days of receiving the decision, setting out the reasons for requesting the review.

11.2. Review

The Principal will review the decision in light of any points raised by the applicant and may request additional information or a meeting with the applicant.

Following the review, if appropriate, the Principal may, at his sole discretion, direct the Bursary Awards Committee to re-consider the application in light of the information apparent from the review. Thereafter, any further decision of the Bursary Awards Committee will be final.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1. Annual Review

This policy and our procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective, fair, and aligned with the objectives of the School.

12.2. Feedback

Feedback from applicants and recipients will be considered as part of the review process to continuously improve the bursary and financial assistance scheme.

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