FARNBOROUGH HILL

WHOLEHEARTEDLY

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (BURSARY AND HARDSHIP AWARDS) POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions Policy

The aim of this policy is to explain how bursaries are allocated and distributed by the School. In accordance with the Charities Act 2011, government guidelines, and the ethos of the School, the Governors of Farnborough Hill are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents/guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and is awarded in the form of a discount on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate, or other pertinent circumstances of applicants. Bursary awards are entirely subject to the Governors' discretion. Bursary awards vary in value and range from 5% to 100% of tuition fees; very few full bursaries are offered each year with priority being given to practising Roman Catholics.

Awards are made dependent on individual parents'/guardians' circumstances such as income, savings, investments and realisable assets, family size and dependants, together with compassionate and other pertinent considerations. Repeat assessment for awarded bursaries will usually take place, during June and July each year, whereby bursaries may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances.

For any application for financial assistance, applicants are required to disclose all information that may be relevant to the application. Should the family's financial circumstances change between annual assessment reviews, parents are required to update the Bursar accordingly, which may trigger an extraordinary review of the award. The process relies on full disclosure and if this has not occurred then the School reserves the right to withdraw and reclaim all or part of the award granted, for a period of up to one year following the award.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

Bursary Applications: awarded to new applicants to the School where a place may be offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.

Hardship Awards: awarded to 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parents'/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education. Hardship awards would therefore typically be awarded to see the pupil through to the end of the academic year or to cover to the end of the two GCSE years or Sixth Form.

The Initial Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents/guardians of pupils entering the School at any point of entry including the Sixth Form. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governors; the Bursar is responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

- **Step One** Parents/guardians are made aware of bursary awards during the admissions process. If parents/guardians believe that they may be eligible for a bursary, then a Bursary Application Form will need to be completed to establish the financial circumstances of the household. In the case of separated parents, each parent with parental responsibility should complete the bursary

application. The Form, which requests details of income and capital, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence and can be completed electronically or by hand. The completed Form, together with the necessary documentary evidence, is to be submitted to the Bursar no later than the date stated in the registration process. Late applications may be considered but depend on the availability of grants; parents/guardians are advised that availability is likely to be limited.

- **Step Two** The Bursar assesses all applications, then passes those which may be eligible to Bursary Administration Limited (BAL). BAL will then conduct a home visit and produce a report for the Governors giving an indication of the likely level of support needed to allow the child to attend the School.

- **Step Three** After the relevant entrance examination has been passed, the Governors' Bursary Awards Sub-Committee will meet to make the final assessment of bursaries. Parents/guardians are then advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and the outcome of the bursary application. If a significant bursary is required but not awarded, it is likely that a place will not be offered. At 11+ it is the School's intention, where possible, to announce the bursary award in conjunction with the offer of a place.

- **Step Four** All bursary places should be acknowledged and accepted/declined by mid-February to allow for any unaccepted funds to be redistributed to other applicants. At this stage parents will also be asked to declare if they remain on the waiting list for a place at another school/or for consideration of an award elsewhere.

The Awards Sub-Committee 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. 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.

- **Academic Ability** Academic ability will be tested by means of the appropriate entrance examination. Bursary funds are limited and those judged likely to gain most from the educational provision will be given priority. A contribution to the extra-curricular programme will be expected. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission, possess the potential to develop the quality of her work, and be willing to participate in the wider, extra-curricular activities. Applicants must meet the School's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour and a written reference will be requested.

- **Financial Limitations** 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-focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant. These 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 dependants, or the requirements of his/her 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 the absent 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 Farnborough Hill and other schools the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings. However, the school will not award a bursary if a sibling is at another independent school and not in receipt of a bursary.

- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that the following would not normally be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
    - Frequent or expensive holidays or attendance by pupils on extracurricular residential trips organised by the School (in the UK or abroad).
    - New, luxury or superfluous 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 the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g., may be suffering from bullying at her present school).
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health.
- Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from the School adding to the stress of coping with the parents/guardians separating.

Hardship Awards for existing pupils - change in family circumstances

Parents/guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply to the Bursar for a Hardship Award, explaining their situation and using the normal Bursary Application Form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and all the conditions previously mentioned. Applications may be made at any time of the school year and Hardship Awards will generally be granted to see the pupil to the end of the academic year or to cover to the end of the two GCSE years or Sixth Form. In these circumstances a visit from BAL may not be required.

For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Head and Bursar in making their joint recommendation to the Bursary Awards Sub-committee, have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of an award. This may happen 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.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, 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. Farnborough Hill encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance.

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

This policy is reviewed annually by the Bursar.

The next review is due in November 2023.