READING BLUE COAT

Bursary Policy

Background

The Governors 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. A Bursary may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to
100% of tuition fees depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of the applicant.

Bursary awards are subject to annual testing of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Awards are made on the basis of an assessment by a company called Bursary Administration Limited (BAL) of the family's financial circumstances. This assessment is made on individual parents circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realizable 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, and on the resources available to the School. The assessment involves a home visit by BAL.

Data Protection and the Privacy Policy The application process is clearly confidential in nature and applicant need to agree to the School who is the data controller, sharing their personal information with its data processor, Bursary Administration Limited. This is further explained in the School's Privacy Policy which is available on the website at **https://www.rbcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Privacy-Notice-for-Parents.pdf** and on the application form.

Introduction

This document describes Reading Blue Coat School's (the School) policy and practice in awarding Bursaries. There are two types of bursary available at RBCS and they are:

1. **Bursaries** Bursaries are awarded either:

   To assist children attend the school whose parents might not otherwise be able to fully afford a place at the School. The school aims to increase accessibility through the provision of bursaries of up to 100% of the tuition fees. Or:

   To provide a "hardship" fund to assist current parents who find themselves in severe financial difficulty.

2. **Foundation Scholarships** Foundation Scholars are admitted at Year 7, aged 11 and receive 100% bursaries. Additional assistance is available to cover uniform and educational trips.

Requests for Assistance

Requests for financial support at RBCS can be made as follows:

By new applicants to the School where parents may be unable to fund the tuition fees in full or in part

By 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 their School career.

New Applicants to the School

Awareness

Information provided by the School alerting the parents/guardians of potential pupils to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of Schools fees is included on the School website under the Admissions tab and on request from the Bursary.

The Application Process

Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Governors or the Foundation Trustees. The Bursar is responsible for the management and coordination of this confidential process. There are five steps to applying for a bursary and they are as follows:

Parents/guardians seeking a Bursary request an Application Form from the Bursar. They then complete the application form, which requests details of income and capital and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. For new pupils the completed form, must be submitted to the Bursar no later than:

31st October for Sixth Form entry.

1st December for Year 7 and Year 9 entry.

After this date the availability of funds may be curtailed.

NB Parents are strongly recommended to apply as early in the year as possible to allow time to process applications.

The Bursar will pass the completed application form to BAL who will assess it. BAL will contact the parents/guardians to arrange to visit them at home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.

The application is considered by the Governors' Bursary Committee.

Following completion of both the Entrance and Bursary Assessment processes the parents/guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and the level of Bursarial assistance offered at the same time.

Parents/guardians are then required to formally accept the place at the School and the conditions relating to the Bursary.

The Case for Assistance

The Bursary Award Committee will consider a number of factors when assessing any request for 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 results in academic assessments and the reference from their Primary/Prep School. The Committee will also assess each child's potential contribution to the wider life of the School. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision. Each child to whom bursarial support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmaster, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work and to benefit from participation in the wider, extra-curricular programme. Each applicant should meet the School's routine academic requirements.

Financial Limitations

The amount of the Bursary award is not influenced by 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 from available resources. The School has a duty to ensure that all Bursary grants are well focused. 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 normally 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 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 both parents.

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, the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings although the Bursar would expect to see evidence that an application for a bursary had been made to another independent school if one was involved.

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/expensive holidays

new/luxury cars

investment in significant/expensive 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 circumstances which should be considered. These may include:

where a child has sibling(s) at the School

where the social needs of the child are relevant (e.g. may be suffering from bullying at their present school)

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

Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Bursaries are available 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. Parents / guardians with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a bursary through the Bursar, explaining their situation. They will be asked to complete the Bursary Application Form. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding.

Annual Review

All Bursary awards are subject to testing each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on changes in parental circumstances. Current Bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms in January each year for return by the end of February in relation to the academic year starting in September.

For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Bursar have the discretion to recommend to the Governors the reduction or withdrawal of 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.

Confidentiality

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

Application

All applications should be made in writing and addressed to: The Bursar

Reading Blue Coat School
Holme Park
Sonning on Thames
Berkshire, RG4 6SU
bursar@rbcs.org.uk

All applications will be acknowledged in writing and parents are advised to ensure that the Bursar or the Secretary to the Bursar acknowledge receipt of their application.

Parents and guardians are reminded that bursary funds are limited.

Allocation is considered based initially on a "means-tested" basis and remains subject to availability.

Foundation Scholarships

Please note that in the case of Foundation Scholarships a senior Member of the Foundation will usually make a home visit to discuss the application with both the Parent(s) and the pupil.

Conditions Applicable to all Awards

Obligations of the pupil: A pupil who is the subject of an Award is required to work hard, to contribute positively to the life of the School, to be a credit to the School and to set a good example to other pupils.

Obligations of the Parents: The parents are expected to support and encourage the pupil to fulfill obligations and to uphold the aims and the good name of the School. The parents are also required to pay the balance of the account by the first day of term.

Withdrawal of the Award: The Award may be withdrawn by written notice sent to a parent if, in the opinion of the Governors acting in good faith, the pupil or a parent has not complied with the obligations of the Award or otherwise the pupil has fallen below the required standards of conduct and progress and in the further opinion of the Governors there has been no significant improvement following consultation with a parent and/or the pupil and a written warning. Withdrawal of the Award shall take effect from the start of the following term.

The Award may be withdrawn by written notice if the balance of the account remains unpaid
28 days after a written reminder has been sent to the parents.

Repayment events: Parents shall be required forthwith upon written notice to repay all or part of the benefits they have received under the Award in any of the following circumstances:

up to three terms' benefits (if received): if the pupil has engaged in serious misconduct or has been permanently excluded or otherwise removed for reasons of misconduct by the requirement of the Headmaster acting in good faith

up to three terms' benefits (if received): in a case of the pupil being withdrawn for any reason during a School term without a term's written notice having been given.

Fees in lieu of notice: For the avoidance of doubt, the benefits payable under an Award do not apply to any term for which the School has required payment of fees in lieu of notice.

Standard Terms and Conditions

These Conditions of Award take precedence over any of the School's standard Terms and Conditions which are inconsistent with them but in all other respects the standard Terms and Conditions as amended from time to time shall apply and these Conditions of Award shall be interpreted in accordance with them.

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