

GSAL Bursary Policy

Rationale for the Policy:	This policy explains how the school's means-tested bursaries are made available for external candidates joining GSAL Senior School in Year 7 and 12.
Policy aim:	

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The Grammar School at Leeds

Bursary Policy 2023-24

1. This policy has been developed in accordance with the FREDIE principles of; Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement as part the National Centre for Diversity's framework.
2. The Grammar School at Leeds (the "school") is committed to providing financial support for academically talented children from low income backgrounds through means-tested bursaries. The school does not make financial awards solely on the basis of academic ability; instead it seeks to direct bursary funds to those families most in need, to allow their child to fulfil his/her academic potential. However, the Principal reserves the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances.
3. On average, more than £1m per annum is spent supporting over 80 children with means-tested bursaries, which range in value from 100% to 5% of the full fee, depending on the family's financial circumstances. A small number of bursaries are awarded each year to families whose net assets are less than £70k per annum, which takes into account household income and savings. All bursaries are funded from donors, charities, trusts, foundations and school funds and as a full bursary is worth more than £120k [over 7 years] a rigorous process is in place to identify which families should be awarded bursaries.

Eligible pupils

4. The school's means-tested bursaries are available for external candidates joining our Senior School in Year 7 and Year 12.
5. As our funds are limited priority is given to pupils who are UK residents or who have the right to remain.
6. Demand for bursaries is high, with typically 10 applications for every bursary place.
7. A bursary application will only be successful if both of these criteria are met:
 - The child is of exceptional academic ability, as demonstrated by their performance in the bursary exam and entrance exams (Year 7) or their GCSE grades (Year 12) **and**
 - It is proven that the family is in financial need.

Academic criteria for Year 7 candidates

8. As a general rule a pupil 'meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths' should be able to pass the entrance exam for Year 7, however, our bursary pupils are typically achieving at a 'higher standard in reading, writing and maths'.

The means-testing criteria: Year 7 and Year 12 candidates

9. Full or partial bursaries are offered according to a family's financial circumstances, and final decisions are based on a family's net disposable income which is the amount of money that families have available for spending or saving after they have paid their direct taxes and other relevant expenses. We only offer a small number of full bursaries and for families to qualify their income and savings have to be less than £25k per year. As a guide to qualify for a partial bursary gross income and savings from all sources can't exceed £70k per year. Please note that demand greatly exceeds supply and we cannot meet all requests for bursary support, even if the eligibility criteria have been fulfilled.
10. In order to ensure impartiality and good governance, the school uses an independent company who meets with families to assess the circumstances of any bursary candidate to whom we are considering making an offer. In preparation for the meeting families will be asked to provide relevant financial records and respond to questions about their financial history, current situation and on-going commitments. A confidential report will be sent to the school. The school does not have any input into, or control over, the findings of the independent financial review.

Bursary offer principles

11. The amount of the bursary award is determined by the extent of financial need, and not the child's academic ability. Each bursary application is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the funds available each year. Our overriding principle is to support families who are doing everything within their means to make a contribution to school fees, however small. The school has a duty to its donors and other supporters to ensure that all bursaries are focussed on those in greatest need. We will take into account a number of factors in determining the level of financial support we can offer, including but not limited to:
 - Current earnings (if any)
 - The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two parents, both would be expected to work unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for 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 surplus equity values in properties
 - In cases of separation, the contribution made by the absent parent
 - Contribution by others to household costs, for example by extended family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources
 - Payment of fees to other schools
 - If the family have received a bursary for another child to attend GSAL or another school
 - Lifestyle of the family

12. In order to ensure that we are adhering to the principle of supporting families who are doing everything they can to contribute to school fees, we consider the following to not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:

- Significant savings
- Second property or land holdings
- Frequent or expensive holidays or trips
- Expensive cars
- Investment in significant home improvements
- Sizable remittances
- Significant charitable giving
- A child at an independent school (including GSAL) on a full fee place

13. We recognise that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, other circumstances may be relevant including but not limited to:

- Where a child has siblings at the school on a bursary
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment

Assessment process for Year 7 bursary applications

Stage 1 – bursary examination

14. Our bursary examination for entry in September 2024 will take place on 2 November 2023. All candidates will sit an online cognitive abilities test, for which no special preparation is necessary as it is designed to assess children individually.
15. The results of this examination will be used to create pupil rankings and the highest performing pupils will be invited to continue with their bursary applications and attend the main entrance examination and interviews held in January 2024. Those who do not meet the academic criteria for a bursary will not have their application to the school progressed.

Stage 2 – school reference, main entrance examination and pupil interview

16. The highest performing pupils in the bursary examination will be invited to attend the main entrance examination and interviews in January 2024. Additionally, following the bursary examination, we will contact pupils' current schools for confidential references. The aim of the interview is to help us get to know the pupil, understand his/her interests and pastimes, and assess his/her suitability for The Grammar School at Leeds. There are no right or wrong answers and we realise that children may not tell us everything of relevance in the unfamiliar setting of an interview, so we look carefully at the findings of the interview and school report together to help us build the clearest picture we can of each applicant. We are looking for children who will be actively engaged with school life and are keen to learn. We also obtain a report from the pupil's current school which provides an overview from the child's current school of his/her academic achievement, behaviour, and wider contribution to school life.

Stage 3 – family meeting with the independent assessors

17. We aim to make a range of bursary offers to ensure that we are helping as many children as possible, so we will consider both the means-testing criteria and the ranking when deciding which candidates

should have a meeting with the independent assessors to verify their financial eligibility. The independent company will meet with the families we are considering for a bursary.

Stage 4 –family meeting with the Principal or Vice Principal

18. Following the receipt of their report the Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School) will meet with the families.

Stage 5 – offer

19. We will rank the candidates according to their performance in the bursary examination and the main entrance examination, taking into account their school report, interview performance and financial report and the feedback from the meeting with the Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School). The highest ranked candidates will receive an offer.

Timeline for Year 7 bursary candidates for September 2024 entry

Date	Activity
30 September 2023	Closing date for submission of Year 7 bursary application form
2 November 2023	Year 7 bursary examination
Friday 19 January 2024	Main entrance examination
Saturday 20 January 2024	Entrance interviews
February 2024	Independent financial assessors meet the families being considered for a bursary, and send a confidential report to the school.
	Virtual family meetings with the Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School)
Early-March 2024	Bursary offers distributed
Mid-March 2024	Deadline for accepting the place

Academic criteria for Year 12 candidates

20. External candidates looking for entry into Year 12 need to achieve a minimum of the equivalent of 6 GCSEs at grade 6 or above. As our bursaries are oversubscribed we prioritise support for those candidates who are predicted to achieve mainly 7+ grades, in addition many A-level subjects have specific entry requirements. Any bursary offer is subject to a home visit and interview by an independent company to verify eligibility for financial support and a meeting with the Principal or Vice Principal.

Assessment process for Year 12 bursary applications

Stage 1 –entrance examination

21. All Year 12 candidates will be invited to attend our Year 12 entrance examination on Saturday 20 January 2024. The examination will cover maths and English. The results of this examination, in addition to the school report previously provided by the family, will be used to create pupil rankings and the highest performing pupils will be invited to continue with their bursary applications and attend the interviews held in February 2024.

Stage 2 – school reference and interview

22. The highest performing pupils in the entrance examination will be invited to attend the entrance interviews and we will also contact progressing pupils' current schools for confidential references. Following the interviews, we will use each candidate's examination scores, interview performance, confidential reference and school report to rank candidates and determine who should progress to the next stage of the process.

Stage 3 - family meeting with the independent assessors

23. Candidates will have an independent financial assessment to determine their financial eligibility.

Stage 4 – family interview with the Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School)

24. The Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School) will meet with the candidate and their family.

Stage 5 – offer

25. We will rank the candidates according to their predicted and mock grades, examination scores, school report, confidential reference, interview performance and financial report and the feedback from the meeting with the Principal or Vice Principal (Senior School). The highest ranked candidates will receive an offer.

26. All sixth form offers are conditional on students achieving both our general entry criteria, and the specific subject entry requirements.

Bursary decisions

27. The demand for bursaries exceeds the supply of funds therefore even if candidates achieve our academic criteria and have demonstrated that they meet the financial requirements, they may not be offered a bursary.

28. The school's decision on bursary offers is final; there is no appeals procedure as it is the responsibility of applicants to provide true and accurate information through the application process.

Timeline for Year 12 bursary candidates for September 2024 entry

Date	Activity
31 December 2023	Closing date for submission of Year 12 bursary application form
20 January 2024	Main entrance examination
Throughout February 2024	Independent financial assessors meet the families being considered for a bursary, and send a confidential report to the school
W/c 12 February 2024	Entrance interviews
Mid-March 2024	Family interviews, following which bursary offers will be distributed
Early-April 2024	Deadline for accepting the place

Bursary terms and conditions

29. When accepting a bursary award, parents are bound by the terms and conditions for a bursary award which will be sent out with the bursary offer. Bursary awards may be withdrawn or reduced if there is any breach of these terms and conditions or if, in the opinion of the Principal and after appropriate consultation and support, the child's progress, attendance, attitude or behaviour no longer merits the continuation of the award.

30. All bursary awards are subject to an annual review to ensure that our funds are being awarded to those families in greatest need. Each spring, parents of bursary holders will be asked to complete a means-testing form to reflect their financial circumstances and may receive a home visit by an independent company to verify all the information provided. This review process may lead to the bursary payment being amended to reflect the family's circumstances and their ability to pay.

31. The school reserves the right to review a bursary award at any time, for example if information comes to light indicating that a family does not meet our bursary criteria. In this situation the school may seek to recover any bursary funds awarded.

32. The bursary awards only cover school fees, therefore, families are responsible for all other costs associated with attending the school including but not exclusive of transport, lunch and uniform costs.

August 2023