THE PERSE SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Applying for a bursary at The Perse School

Frequently asked questions

What is a bursary?

A bursary is means-tested help towards the payment of school fees.

Bursaries are awarded by the school from its bursary funds to pupils who have been offered a place at the school but who would not be able take up the place without financial support. A bursary is awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% of tuition fees, depending on the circumstances of applicants.

As part of the school's commitment to broadening access, the school offers bursaries to new pupils applying for entry into Year 7 through to Sixth Form. For more detailed information please refer to the school's bursary policy.

Can I apply for a bursary if my child is already in the school?

Entrance bursary funds are allocated at the application stage. If you accept a full fee-paying place but subsequently decide that you cannot afford the fees, you will not be able to apply for a bursary.

However, we know that families sometimes experience a change in their financial circumstances which is outside their control. This can be a worrying time, especially where pupils are in public examination years. Where possible, we aim to minimise any disruption to a pupil's education and have hardship bursary funds for this purpose. The assessment process and methodology are the same as for entrance bursary awards.

Hardship bursaries are reserved for families whose change of circumstances is outside their control. You would not qualify for assistance where a reduction in income results from a personal choice you have made.

We accept applications for hardship bursary assistance for pupils in the Prep and Upper schools, who have already been in the school for at least 12 months. In exceptional circumstances we may consider applications during a child's first year in the school.

No hardship bursary funds are available for pupils at the Pelican school.

If you have experienced a change in your financial circumstances please contact the School Accountant for additional information or advice, and to discuss your eligibility.

What costs will be covered by the bursary?

If your child is offered a Perse School bursary, you will receive a percentage reduction against:

- The **securing and induction fee** payable on acceptance of a place (entrance bursaries only);
- Termly **tuition fees;**
- Termly **school lunch charges** (where taken - lunches are compulsory for Years 7 and 8, and optional from year 9 onwards); and
- Termly **middle school device charges** for pupils in Years 9-11.

You will be advised of the level of the bursary in the bursary offer letter.

For children awarded higher levels of bursary support, additional funding may also be offered to assist with the cost of certain extras.

Is there a maximum income for bursary applicants?

The school does not have an income scale linked to bursary awards. Everyone's circumstances are different and the school does not want to deter applicants.

When assessing a bursary, we consider the applicant's broader financial circumstances, including income, savings and other investments such as the value of any property.

Will I qualify for a bursary?

We cannot provide a pre-estimate of the level of any bursary which may be available before the completion of the full bursary assessment process, including a home visit.

However, if after making an honest assessment of your income, outgoings and savings and looking at making reasonable adjustments to your spending, you decide that you cannot afford to pay the full fee then you should apply for a bursary.

Will making a bursary application affect our child's application to the school?

Absolutely not. The school offers places to children based on the criteria contained in the school's admissions policy. The bursary application process is separate and will not affect the outcome of your child's entrance assessment.

When will we hear about the outcome of our bursary application?

You will be informed about the outcome of your bursary application at least one week prior to the deadline for you to accept the place offered to your child.

What if we've been offered a bursary but think we still can't afford the fees?

The offer of a bursary is discretionary and final.

The bursary assessment process looks in detail at your ability to pay fees. The school will base the award it offers your child on its assessment of what you can afford. If the school makes a bursary award, you may find that in order to take up the place you will need to make some adjustments to your spending, use some savings or realise the value of some assets. It is up to you to decide if you are willing to make those adjustments.

If my child is awarded a bursary will they automatically qualify for a bursary for the rest of their time at the school?

The school reassesses existing bursaries every year and you will need to submit updated financial information and supply supporting documentation each year that your child is in receipt of a Perse School bursary.

Bursary awards are also subject to an ongoing duty of disclosure. Parents are therefore required to inform the school of any improvements in their financial circumstances whenever the change occurs, even if this is outside the annual reassessment period.

Our expectation is that a bursary, once awarded will remain at a similar level if your financial circumstances are unchanged year on year. If your income or assets increase during your child's time at the school, the bursary may be reduced or in some cases withdrawn altogether. On the other hand, if your income reduces, other than through personal choice, the bursary award may increase.

Can a bursary be withdrawn?

It is very rare for the school to withdraw a bursary for reasons other than an improvement in a family's financial circumstances. However, deliberate provision of misleading or incorrect information, or a sustained failure to engage with the annual reassessment process is likely to lead to the withdrawal of a bursary award.

When do we need to apply?

Entrance bursary applications must be made on the registration form. Please tick the box indicating that you wish to apply for means-tested assistance with school fees.

The registration deadline is published in the admissions areas of the school's website.

Hardship bursary applications should be made direct to the School Accountant.

What is the deadline for submitting our bursary application?

The deadline for submission of your detailed bursary application will always be before your child sits the entrance test (typically the Friday beforehand). You will be told the submission deadline when you are asked to provide your financial information.

You must submit your bursary application by the deadline as late applications cannot be accommodated within the application process.

What if we are applying for a place outside the published admissions timetable?

If you are applying for a place at the school for your child outside the published admissions timetable, you may apply for a bursary award on the registration form by ticking the box indicating that you wish to apply for means-tested assistance with school fees.

You should bear in mind that the school usually allocates its bursary funds at the time of the main entrance testing in November (Sixth Form) and January (Years 7 and 9) and there is no guarantee that bursary funds will be available for out of cycle applicants.

If you wish to discuss the availability of funds please contact the School Accountant.

How does the application process work?

We use an independent company, Bursary Administration Ltd (BAL) to assist us with the bursary assessment process.

The financial information that you provide in your application is used to establish the level of assistance that you will require to be able to accept a place at The Perse for your child.

The assessment process includes a home visit by Bursary Administration Limited which is an integral part of the assessment process. It is an opportunity for us to ensure that we have correctly understood your application and for you to provide any further information or explanation that you feel would add to your application. Your child is not involved in this visit, or in the bursary application as a whole.

The timing of the home visit will be as follows:

- **Published admissions timetable:**
    - ***Entry to Years 7 - 10***: Home visits will take place in February shortly after offer letters have been sent. Only parents of children who are offered a place at the school will be visited.
    - ***Sixth form entry***: Home visits will take place in November between the date of the entrance tests and the issue of offer letters. All parents will be visited irrespective of whether their child is ultimately offered a place at the school.

- **Entry outside the published admissions timetable / hardship bursary applications**: the home visit will take place as soon as possible after the application has been submitted with the exact timing being subject to BAL staff availability.

It is important that you make yourself available for the visit as you will not be able to proceed with your application if you are not able to attend the appointment.

More details of how the bursary application process works can be found in the school's bursary policy.

How do we provide our financial information?

Your financial information will be submitted using the school's online bursary application portal. You will be sent an email inviting you to set up an account and provide information about your income, expenditure, assets, and liabilities. You can save your application at any time and return to it later by logging back in to your account.

Once you have submitted your financial information, you will be asked to upload your supporting documentation. A list of the documents you will need to provide such as recent payslips, P60s, business accounts, and bank and credit card statements is included in the guidance notes on the portal. Applications are not complete until the documents have been uploaded.

The invitation email will include the submission deadline which will always be in advance of the published date of the relevant entrance test. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

What should we do if we have applied for a bursary but have not received a link to the online bursary application portal?

We cannot accept responsibility for administrative errors or emails going astray. If you applied for a bursary but have not received a link to the online application portal at least one week after the published closing date for applications, please check in your email spam folder in the first instance and contact the School Accountant urgently if necessary.

What if we have questions about making our application?

Making a bursary application can be intimidating and there is a lot of information which needs to be provided. Whilst we cannot complete the application for you, we can provide advice and guidance. If you have any questions about completing your application please email the School Accountant.

Which parent should make the application?

We require full financial information from all those with legal parental responsibility for the child, including details of ***anybody else contributing financially to the household***. Where applicable, the assessment process considers the cost of maintaining two households and any maintenance paid for children of a previous marriage.

- Where both parents live at the same address you should complete a single application.
- Parents who are separated or divorced will be asked to submit separate applications. The parent registering the child for entry should inform the other parent that they will be party to a bursary application as the bursary cannot be assessed until both applications have been submitted.

  To enable the assessment process to run smoothly, it is important that parents are in agreement about making the bursary application so it is advisable to discuss this between yourselves before registering your child for entry.

  The parent registering the child for entry will be sent a link to the online bursary application portal. As part of the initial account set up, details of the second parent including an email address must to be provided. The second parent will then be sent an invitation to set up a separate account linked to the child. Information provided by one parent will not be visible to the other.

Can I make an application as a single parent?

We want to encourage access to a Perse education and welcome applications from single parents with sole legal parental responsibility for their child.

We do not usually accept bursary applications from a single parent where both parents have legal parental responsibility for a child, even if one has been awarded sole custody. The school's expectation is that each parent will contribute towards school fees to the best of their ability and will be willing to provide a full financial disclosure. In very limited circumstances, we may consider an application from a single parent, in which case you will need to provide evidence as to the reasons for the absence of the other parent and why it is not reasonable to assess their financial circumstances.

You should discuss this with the School Accountant at the time of making the bursary application. We appreciate that these discussions can be intrusive and difficult and aim to handle things in a sympathetic way, whilst at the same time ensuring that the school's bursary funds are awarded in an appropriate manner.

Who has Legal parental responsibility?

Legal parental responsibility is automatic in the case of:

- Birth mothers
- Fathers married to the birth mother prior to the child being born
- Unmarried fathers who are registered on the child's birth certificate
- Civil partners and partners of birth mothers registered as the child's legal parent on the birth certificate.

Parental responsibility can also be acquired eg by adoptive parents or step-parents.

Where custody of a child is awarded to one parent, the other parent will retain legal parental responsibility unless this is specifically terminated or restricted by the Court. This is a highly unusual and a very serious step and is reserved for exceptional cases.

What do we need to include on the online bursary portal?

You will need to provide details of your current income, a detailed breakdown of your expenditure, and details of your assets and liabilities including your family home and mortgage, any other properties owned, current bank balance and savings accounts and loan agreements.

If you run your own business we will also need information about your income from that business using your latest available accounts or tax return (unless you know that the current year will be very different).

You must be as accurate as possible on the form so that we can make a fair assessment of the amount of financial support you need. If you underestimate your income based on last year's tax return and you are awarded a more generous bursary, the school reserves the right to claim back some or all of the bursary award. *(see bursary awards: conditions of award).*

You can provide either monthly or annual figures for your income and expenditure. Please make sure your figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

What if we own property jointly or have joint income?

If you own property jointly, have joint bank/savings accounts or joint income and expenses, you can either put the full value under one parent and zero under the second parent, or split the value between you.

Do we need to get a formal valuation of our property?

No you do not need to get a formal valuation. If you have had a recent valuation for other purposes you can use that. We will also accept your own valuation of your property if you also submit evidence to support your valuation e.g. using a property valuation website.

What supporting documentation is required?

A full list of the supporting documentation required is contained in the guidance notes on the online portal. These include such items as recent payslips and P60s, business accounts, bank statements, credit card statements and loan agreements.

You **do not** need to attach receipts of all your household expenditure.

What if we cannot provide all the supporting documentation by the deadline?

You must still submit your form and the supporting documentation which is available by the deadline.

You should use the explanation boxes on the online portal to explain what documentation is missing, the reason for this and when you expect to submit it. The School Accountant will contact you to agree a final deadline for you to provide the missing items.

Your application will not be treated as complete until all necessary documentation has been supplied.

How long does it take to prepare an application?

The form is detailed and asks for a lot of information. It cannot be completed in a few minutes. You also need to leave sufficient time to gather the necessary supporting documentation. How long it takes to complete will depend on how complicated your financial affairs are. But the more information and documentation you provide, the easier it is for us to make an accurate and fair assessment of your means.

You can save your application at any time and return to it later by logging back in to your account.

It is very important that you check your form is complete and accurate before submitting it. We may not be able to make an assessment if your information is incomplete or does not make sense. If you provide false or inaccurate information which results in your child being awarded a bursary, the school may be able to claim that money back under the *bursary awards: conditions of award*.

How do I contact the School Accountant?

The School Accountant, Mrs Holmes, is available to provide further advice and can be contacted by email (bursary-application@perse.co.uk) or telephone (01223 403892).