

Norwich Steiner School

Reduced Fees Policy

Revised August 2012

Reduced fees are available to children attending or applying to attend Norwich Steiner School and may be awarded where financial need is demonstrated and the child would otherwise be unable to enter or remain in the school.

Norwich Steiner School is committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a reduced fees, which may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 75% (in exceptional circumstances) on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other circumstances of applicants.

The concession to full fees may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents/guardian's 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.

Norwich Steiner School does not currently generate a surplus, so it is not possible to establish a proper 'bursary fund'. However, the school is still able to offer reduced fees to families want their children to have a Steiner Education and where there is clearly a benefit to the child/children in attending this school.

The School also benefits by ensuring that class sizes do not grow too small, which can be difficult socially for the children and the teachers, and it ensures that Steiner Education remains open to a wider income bracket.

In small classes in particular, the class in turn is likely to benefit socially from having additional children. So the school is very open to working with parents to find a fee that is affordable for them, although the school must always be sure that it is rigorous in ensuring reduced fees are necessary.

The Case for Assistance

A number of factors will be considered when making the assessment of the requirement for support. These are as follows:

- **Suitability of the child** – this is an overriding and principle requirement. Reduced fees cannot be offered on a limitless basis and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those most likely to gain most from the educational provision provided by the school. Where the pupil is already attending the school, a report will be sought from teachers as to the child's progress and a decision will also take account of the child's behaviour record.
- **Financial limitations** – the amount of the Bursary award is determined by need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the school's ability to fund these within the overall Bursary budget. It is recognized that judgments about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal to that family. However, the School has a duty to ensure that it is not subsidizing a family's life choices for lifestyle and so a number of factors will be considered in determining the level of any reduction in fees. These will include (but are not limited to):
 - The ability to improve the financial position or earning capacity of the family.
 - The opportunities available to release any capital to fund school fees. 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, any contribution made by the absent parent
 - Possible contributions by other relations, for example grandparents, who have a family interest in the future and wellbeing of a child
 - Where fees are being paid to other schools or universities or out-of-school activities

Other factors – it is recognized that, in addition to financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:

- The social needs of the child
- For new children, whether they already have siblings at the school;
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health
- Where a parental separation or parental bereavement may result in the child having to be withdrawn from the school through inability to pay fees.

Please note that in assessing the application, the school may request a home visit and will also expect to be provided with evidence concerning a family's finance, such as bank statements for the previous 6 – 12 months.

Non-financial contribution

For the school to run sustainably we require parents to pay the full fee wherever possible and voluntary help is also much welcomed from any parent who can offer it.

For families who require a concession, we will specifically address this subject with you in a meeting, as it may be that you have skills or time to offer which would ease the pressure on resources elsewhere in the school. There are a whole range of tasks and circumstances where this might be the case, including the following:

- Setting up an e-bay shop to sell items no longer required by the school, or items that have been offered to us for raising funds;
- A commitment to regular maintenance – e.g a morning a week helping with grounds or building maintenance (painting, cleaning windows, sweeping tarmac areas, weeding trees etc.)
- Helping to raise money through organizing jumble sales;
- Offering volunteer classroom assistance on a regular basis to help the teacher provide some one-to-one support for children who need it;
- Helping with administration on a regular basis, e.g. taking responsibility for some aspect, with guidance.

We will always take into account your personal circumstances in our request for your help. So for example, if the reason you are struggling to pay fees is because your health is poor or you are caring for an elderly or sick relative at home, we appreciate your time and energy will be at a premium and would not wish to create additional strain in your family.

Annual Review

All reduced fees are subject to a review of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances.

For those already in receipt of a concession, the finance team has the discretion to reduce or withdraw an award where a pupils attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory, particularly in circumstances where there the school is of the view that there has been insufficient parental support or backing to address the behaviour or attitude.

Confidentiality

The School respects the confidentiality of families on concessions and we ask families that receive reduced fees to reciprocate this confidentiality over any agreement we reach.

Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, we understand that there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees. In the majority of cases, these appear to have been set up to assist children who are already attending a fee-paying school and who, due to a change of circumstances may be unable to remain.

Norwich Steiner School is investigating these sources further and will encourage parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information can be obtained from the finance team in due course.