

Norwich Steiner School

Reduced Fees Policy

Revised August 2022

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 broaden access to the school by offering to eligible parents/guardians financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 70% (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 parent's/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.

The school is 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 are available on a limited 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. Suitability is decided on the basis of a number of factors, including:
 - The educational and behavioural needs of the child – if a family is offered a concession in principle, but then at a trial it is found the child has needs that require more support than the school can provide, the offer of reduced fees may be withdrawn.
 - Where the pupil is already attending the school, and a family's financial circumstances change so that they need to apply for a reduced fee, the decision to offer a concession will take account of the child's behaviour record.
 - Where behaviour is consistently poor, the concession offered to the family is likely to be withdrawn at the annual review or before if a child's behaviour is particularly unacceptable.
 - Attendance and punctuality must be very good. Reduced fee places are privileged and limited and must be put to excellent use, or they will be withdrawn. Therefore, if attendance in any half term drops below 90% without very good reason, a warning will be issued and if attendance stays below 90% in the following half term, the concession will be withdrawn completely. Likewise with punctuality, if a child arrives after 9.10 on more than 5 occasions in one half term,

a warning will be issued and unless the punctuality issues are remedied, the concession will be removed.

- **Financial limitations** – the percentage reduction in fees that may be offered 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 School finances. 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):

- o The ability to improve the financial position or earning capacity of the family.
- o 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.
- o In cases of separation, any contribution made by the absent parent
- o Possible contributions by other relations, for example grandparents, who have a family interest in the future and wellbeing of a child
- o Where fees are being paid to other schools or universities or for 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 and mortgage/rent 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, whether they pay full fees or whether they are on a concession.

However, for families on a reduced fee, once an amount has been agreed, we will specifically ask whether there are additional voluntary contributions you can make, in terms of skills or time that might support the school and ease pressures on resources elsewhere in the school.

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 pupil's attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory, particularly in circumstances where 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 Financial Assistance

In addition to the School's reduced fees policy, 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.

Important: Communication and Responsibility

The school considers it to be the responsibility of the family seeking or benefitting from a concession to ensure that they are proactive in communicating with the school.

A family's right to a concession will be forfeited if the parents fail:

- To complete and submit a new concessions application form when requested to do so;
- To inform the school about any improvement or change in income or other aspects of their financial circumstances;
- To pay the agreed amount;
- To arrange a meeting with the concessions officer in a timely manner at the time of review

In any of the above circumstances and at any point in the academic year, the school will terminate any existing agreement and issue an invoice for full fees.