



Financial Assistance with School Fees

Bursary Applications for 11+, 12+, 14+ and 16+ 2024 entry and 13+ 2026 entry

The Headmistress and Governing Council of Benenden are committed to provide a Complete Education to girls from a wide variety of backgrounds. This includes enabling girls whose families may not otherwise be able to meet the cost of fees with the opportunity to attend the School through the provision of bursary support.

Removing the link with scholarship awards

Benenden is proud to offer bursary support to ensure that all those worthy of a place at the School have the same opportunities regardless of their financial circumstances. For entry to the School at all levels, candidates no longer require the award of a scholarship to access bursary support. Benenden's scholarship programme no longer awards fee remission as part of any scholarship award.

The families of girls who require financial assistance to attend the School are encouraged to apply for a means-tested bursary. Bursary application forms are available from the Registry and must be submitted to Bursary Administration Ltd, our nominated assessor, **no later than 1 September in the academic year in which the prospective pupil is to sit the entrance examinations or pre-test, or 1 March 18 months prior to entry for 13+ applications.** The application timetable is detailed below.

Application deadline:

11+, 12+, 14+ and 16+ entry in September 2024	1 September 2023
13+ entry in September 2026	1 March 2024

Bursary funds are limited, and applications received after the deadline are unlikely to be considered.

Financial Assessment

Financial assistance may cover up to 100% of the fees and may, in addition, include an allowance towards School extras. The level of support is dependent on assessment of the current and future financial circumstances of parents. Any bursary award is subject to periodic review and may increase or reduce in accordance with changes to parental circumstances.

Through our nominated assessor, Benenden School will undertake a financial assessment which will consider the income, expenses and the value of assets held by applicant parents. Such assets include the family home, savings and investments, pension provision and other realisable assets, as well as income, the size of the family, and any other dependents. The assessment will also include any assets held by the applicant, for example savings or trust funds in the applicant's name.

A family with a joint net disposable income of less than £30,000 may be eligible for a bursary award of up to 100% of fees. Alternatively, a family with a combined income of over £120,000 is unlikely to qualify for any support.

Bursary support is not available to candidates who are resident outside of the United Kingdom.

The School also offers additional assistance to recipients of full fee bursaries to cover the cost of co-curricular activities, uniform costs and educational trips. The number of awards made by the School is dependent on the funds available at the time.

Types of Bursary Award available

1. 11+ Fourths Award programme

Each year Benenden School can offer one or more places for a girl to enter the Fourth Form (11+ or Year 7). Each place may be fully funded – up to 100% of school fees, subject to means-testing and may be offered for a boarding or day place. In addition to covering fees, if necessary, all school uniform costs would be covered, and an allowance paid to cover two extra activities per term, e.g. musical instrument tuition, sports coaching, or extra drama, etc. The successful candidate would be expected to complete her education with us.

Any candidate should be capable of achieving a good pass in Benenden's entrance examinations, but there are other criteria too, which will form part of the decision-making process.

The 11+ Fourths Award is open to girls attending one of the following local primary schools, located within a 7.5-mile radius of Benenden School.

Benenden CEP	Headcorn Primary	Sissinghurst CEP
Colliers Green CEP	High Halden CEP	Smarden Primary
Cranbrook CEP	Horsmonden Primary	St Michael's CEP (Tenterden)
Frittenden CEP	John Mayne CEP	Staplehurst School
Goudhurst & Kilndown CEP	Rolvenden Primary	Tenterden CEJ
Hawkhurst CEP	Sandhurst Primary	Wittersham CEP

Registration 18 months ahead of entry is essential if the candidate is to be considered.

2. 16+ Founders Award

Each year Benenden School can offer one or more places for a pupil to enter the Sixth Form (16+ or Year 12) as a boarder or day pupil. Each place may be fully-funded – that is to say up to 100% of School fees, subject to means-testing. In addition to covering fees, if necessary, all school uniform costs would be covered, and an allowance paid to cover two extra activities per term, e.g. musical instrument tuition, sports coaching, or extra drama, etc. The successful candidate would be expected to complete her education with us.

Any candidate should be capable of achieving a good pass in Benenden's competitive Sixth Form entrance examinations, but there are other additional criteria, which will form part of the decision-making process. Candidates should be UK-resident pupils. If a full bursary award is not made, candidates may be considered for the general bursary award – please see (5) below.

Applicants for the 11+ Fourths Award and 16+ Founders Award do not need to pay the Registration Fee. Details of the 11+ Fourths Award and 16+ Founders Award programmes and assessment timeline can be obtained separately from the Registry.

3. Continuity of Education Allowance supplement Bursary Award

Candidates who are in receipt of the UK government Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for Service or Diplomatic children may seek additional bursary support from Benenden via a means-tested bursary application. Bursary awards in these cases may typically be worth 10% of fees, subject to assessment. To assist with forward planning, we will be pleased to consider such bursary requests at any time after Registration.

4. The Seniors' Fund

The School welcomes applications for bursary support for daughters/granddaughters of Benenden Seniors (former pupils) joining the School and applications for these bursaries will follow the School's Bursary Application process (see section 5, below).

In addition, limited financial support is available to daughters/granddaughters of Benenden Seniors who are current pupils via The Seniors' Fund, administered jointly between the School and the Benenden School Seniors' Association (BSSA). A range of financial support may be available following an application:

- Awards of up to £15,000 will require means-testing via a comprehensive financial statement to be submitted to the Director of Finance and Operations at Benenden;
- Support over £15,000 will require a fully means-tested application via the School's bursary award programme, as outlined in section 5 below. Support of up to 100% of fees may be available.

Applicants from Benenden Seniors for the School Bursary programme will be assessed in the same way as all other applicants, as set out below.

5. Benenden Bursary Awards at 11+, 12+, 13+, 14+ and 16+

Our general Bursary award programme is open to all UK-resident candidates. Awards are subject to means-testing and the eligibility criteria set out below.

The Application Process

New Applicants to the School

Bursaries may be awarded to parents of girls entering Benenden at 11+, 12+, 13+, 14+ or 16+. They are awarded at the discretion of the Governing Council (the School's Governing body), and the Headmistress, Director of Finance and Operations and Director of Admissions are responsible for the management and coordination of the process.

12+, 14+ and 16+ entry intakes are smaller and more competitive and those achieving the highest scores in the entrance exams and at wider assessment will be offered places. There is no certainty how many places will be available at each of these points of entry and places will be offered when they become available.

1. Bursary Application Form

Parents/guardians of candidates who are registered for entry and who are seeking bursary support are required to complete a Bursary Application Form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the family. The form, which requests details of income and capital, can be obtained by contacting the Registry at Benenden School. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted to Bursary Administration Ltd, our nominated assessor, no later than the 1 September 2023 for those seeking entry in September 2024 (or 1 March 2024 for 13+ 2026 applicants).

2. A home visit or video call will be made by an external company appointed by the School to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. Consultants employed by the School will then submit a confidential financial report to the Director of Finance and Operations.

3. Following the initial admission process the Headmistress, Director of Finance and Operations and the Director of Admissions will review all applicants based on their assessment reports.

4. The applications are then put forward to the Bursary Committee for approval.

5. The parents/guardians are advised whether their daughter is to be offered a place at the School and separately, whether they have been successful with their application for a bursary. Please note that if a candidate has passed the entrance requirements but is unsuccessful with the application for a bursary, a place may still be offered. Depending on the funds available it is likely that not all successful candidates will be offered a bursary.

6. Parents/guardians are then required to sign a letter accepting the place at the School and an acknowledgement agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary. Please note that payment of the School deposit will be reduced by the level of bursary awarded. For example, a 50% bursary award would reduce the deposit payable by 50%.

7. 13+ applicants are advised that bursary support notification may not always be possible at the same time a place is offered and some delay in notification of bursary support should be expected. Places may be held open until the outcome of the bursary support decision is known.

Existing Pupils

All bursary awards are reviewed periodically and may be increased or reduced to reflect changes in the family financial circumstances. The review entails the completion of a Bursary application form along with submission of all necessary documentary evidence. The Headmistress and Director of Finance and Operations have the discretion to recommend to the Council the reduction or withdrawal of an award to an existing bursary holder if a girl's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory and/or the parents/guardians have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

Limited financial support is available to daughters/granddaughters of Benenden Seniors who are current pupils via The Seniors' Fund, administered jointly between the School and the Benenden School Seniors' Association (BSSA). A range of financial support may be available following an application: see section 4, above.

Change in Family Circumstances

The School makes provision, where possible, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need for existing pupils or where applications meriting bursary assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle. Parents/guardians with a daughter at the School who unexpectedly fall into financial difficulty may apply for a bursary to the Director of Finance and Operations. Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Eligibility

Bursary awards are only made to children of parents resident in the UK.

The Bursary Panel considers several factors when assessing whether and to what extent any support will be awarded. The principal consideration will be a candidate's suitability and the likelihood of her thriving at the School.

Suitability

At Benenden we believe in providing 'A Complete Education', which combines a strong academic programme, with wide-ranging co-curricular opportunities and a programme of personal and professional development. Any applicant must be willing to participate fully in our programmes in order to flourish. In addition, candidates must meet the School's academic requirements and perform well in the School's assessment process. As with all applicants, a confidential report from the candidate's current Headteacher and recent school reports will be consulted. Sixth Form entry is highly competitive, and applicants should expect to be among the highest performing applicants in the examinations to be considered for a place. Sixth Form applicants' predicted GCSE grades and most recent school reports, including CAT or MidYIS scores will be requested.

Bursary funds are limited, and those candidates judged most suitable for entry to Benenden School by the Headmistress will be given priority.

Financial Limitations

It is important to underline that the level of the bursary awarded to an applicant is determined by the assessment of financial need and the availability of bursary funds. Each application will be assessed on its own merits and awards will be made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within the context of its overall budget. In assessing ability to pay fees, we realise that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be subjective. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all bursary awards are considered alongside a full financial assessment.

Other factors that will be considered in determining the level of bursary assistance may include:

- Whether the family is in a position to improve its current financial position. For example, where there are two partners, both would be expected to be earning 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.
- Where siblings are at other fee-paying schools or places of education, it would be expected that applications for financial assistance have been made to those organisations.
- Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity values in houses.

- Where parents are separated the financial means of both parents are normally considered unless there is a court order to the contrary, or one parent is absent.
- Whether any contribution to household costs is made by other family members, including any adults unrelated to the child or from outside sources.
- The School considers that high levels of personal expenditure or a second home or significant home improvement expenditure would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary.

Other Factors

It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances that should be considered. These include:

- A sibling already at the School
- The social needs of the child
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to poor health
- Where a parent/guardian is deceased, or
- Where a separation may result in the child having to be withdrawn from the School, adding to the stress of coping with the parent/guardians separating.

Separated Parents/Guardians

We recognise that the financial arrangements of and between parents/guardians who live separately can be complex. However, in general, the financial circumstances of both parents/guardians will be assessed. If either of the applicant's parents/guardians is absent, the School will decide to what extent the absent parent's/guardian's financial circumstances should be assessed.

In all situations, the financial information collected from each parent/guardian will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed without explicit consent. In the case of divorce, court orders and financial agreements regarding the care of dependents must be submitted with the application.

Siblings

Siblings do not automatically qualify for a bursary.

Confidentiality

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

Benenden School
June 2023