

Assisted Place Policy

Introduction and Background

The Governors of King's House Moorlands are committed to broadening access to the school by offering eligible parents/ guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as an Assisted Place. Assisted Places may be awarded in the form of a discount on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

Parents should read this policy carefully before submitting an application for support, and in particular, the part of Section 1.2 'The Case for Assistance'. For example, a family income of >£85,000 p.a., significant savings or investments, and the ownership of property other than the home in which the child resides, are very likely to disqualify from assisted place applications and parents in these circumstances should not apply.

All awards are conditional, and the award letter is clear about these conditions. If these conditions are breached, the award may be withdrawn by the school.

Assisted Place awards are subject to detailed initial testing of parental means which will be repeated every year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on any changes in parental financial circumstances. This testing may include a home visit made by the school or its representative. Awards are made on the basis of the confidential scale of awards which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The scale of awards is reviewed and revised annually by the Director of Finance to reflect any changes in fee costs.

Requests for financial support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the school where a place has been offered but parents/ guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a significant or material change in parents'/ guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

Part 1: New Applicants to the School

1.1 The application process

Assisted Places may be made available to parents/ guardians of children entering the school at any usual point of entry. They are awarded at the discretion of the Chief Executive in accordance with the policy agreed by the Governors.

1. Parents/ Guardians seeking an Assisted Place are expected to have read this policy before entering the process and to confirm they have done so. Parents will subsequently be asked to complete an application form which seeks to establish the financial circumstances of the household. The form, which requires details of income, expenses, assets and liabilities, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. The completed forms, together with the necessary documentary evidence, are to be submitted by the specified date in any given year. In the event both parents are separated and/or divorced, financial information from

both parents should still be provided, as should the financial information of any other adults in the same household as either of the parents.

2. The school assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the school. This may involve the Director of Finance, or a representative, visiting the parents'/ guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair. In considering applications, the Director of Finance reserves the right to research publicly available information from external organisations, such as Land Registry and Companies House.
3. The Director of Finance prepares a report in accordance with the confidential scale of awards which is considered by the Chief Executive and a joint decision is then reached in accordance with the Assisted Place Policy agreed with the Governors.
4. The parents/ guardians are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the school and of any Assisted Place offer. Where the available Assisted Place funds are insufficient to enable an award despite the evidence of the means-test process, the parents/ guardians will be asked whether they wish their son/ daughter to be placed on a waiting list in the unlikely event that further funding becomes available or other awards offered are declined.
5. Parents/ guardians are then required to sign the Acceptance form accepting the place at the school, the acceptance of which is explicitly deemed as agreement to the conditions relating to the Assisted Place.

Parents/ guardians should note that the bulk of assisted places are allocated on entry; if an assisted place is not granted on entry to the school, a subsequent grant of an assisted place is highly unlikely unless there is a significant, material and demonstrable change in circumstances (see section 3 below). **Parents should not take up a place if they feel that they cannot afford to pay the fees, nor should they have an expectation that once a pupil has joined the school, the decision not to award assisted place funding might be reversed.**

1.2 The Case for Assistance

The Chief Executive and Director of Finance will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support and the extent of such support. These factors include:

- **Suitability** – in assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment results of each applicant, but potential and educational background will also be considered as well as actual achievement. Assisted Place funds are limited, and priority will be given to those judged most likely to gain most from the educational opportunity. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the School's normal academic requirements. Previous school reports will be consulted for evidence of good behaviour.
- **Financial limitations** – the amount (i.e. the % of the fee remission) of the assisted place award is not influenced by the level of the academic ability of the child but by the extent of the 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 context of what is viable within its overall budget. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal. However, the school has a duty to ensure that all Assisted Place grants are well focused and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of grant include:
 - The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, both would be expected to be employed

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.

- Opportunities to release capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees as would equity values in property. Ownership of second properties (other than the residence in which the child resides) is likely to disqualify applicants from financial support. Assets owned abroad must also be disclosed.
 - In cases of separation, the ability of both natural parents to support the child's education. It is unlikely that the school will provide assisted place support for a child whose parents, through divorce or separation, do not co-operate to contribute jointly and appropriately, in whatever proportion necessary, to the child's welfare, including school fees. The school will also take into account the wider financial circumstances of new family arrangements.
 - Contribution to household costs and school fees by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
 - Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) the school's grant will take into consideration all these outgoings, and consideration will also be given to the level of support provided by those other institutions; for example it is unlikely to be fair for Moorlands Grammar School to provide a large assisted place for one child to allow parents/ guardians to pay a full fee at another independent school for a sibling.
 - Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the school considers that the following would be inconsistent with the award or ongoing receipt of an assisted place:
 - Frequent or expensive holidays;
 - New or luxury cars;
 - Investment in significant home improvements;
 - Property/ land holdings other than the property in which the relevant child lives;
 - Attendance on discretionary, non-educational school trips such as ski trips etc. These must be discussed with the Director of Finance prior to committing.
- **Other factors** – it is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:
 - Where a child has siblings at the school, noting also that the school is unlikely to provide more than the equivalent of one full assisted place for that family;
 - Where the social needs of the child are relevant;
 - Where a parent/ guardian is terminally ill or is unable to secure permanent employment due to ill health; and
 - Where a separation has resulted in the child having to be withdrawn from school adding to the stress of coping with the parents/ guardians separating.

2. Existing Pupils – Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the school will in normal circumstances set aside each year a modest hardship fund to provide for cases of sudden, unforeseen need or where applications meriting assisted place assistance are received out of the normal calendar cycle for assisted place submission, scrutiny and award. This sum will be set within budgetary constraints.

Parents/ guardians with a child at the school whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for an Assisted Place to the Director of Finance, explaining their situation. ***This must be a significant new situation that has emerged since the child started at the school, such as illness, death or redundancy. Parental divorce/ separation is unlikely to be a good reason, on its own, for a hardship award.*** Such awards are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed. It is likely that any such hardship awards will be time-limited usually to the end of the academic year or some other natural break-point in the pupil's education, such as after important public examinations or at a natural point of entry into another key stage of the school.

3. Annual Review

All assisted place awards are subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on changes in parental financial circumstances. Current assisted place recipients will be issued with repeat means-testing forms, and these must be returned within the specified timescale. If completed forms are not completed by the required deadline and no satisfactory explanation is received, the award will cease at the end of the term. For those previously in receipt of assisted places, the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, in making their decision in accordance with the policy agreed by the Governors, have the discretion to withdraw or reduce an award not only where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents/ guardians have failed to support the school, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees. The school may require parents/ guardians in receipt of an assisted place to submit additional mid-year information when more up to date financial information/ details become available, such as a P60 issued by an employer post April year end.

4. Withdrawal by Parents

In all circumstances parents/ guardians are bound by our Terms and Conditions including the requirement to give a full term's notice of withdrawal from the school before the normal leaving date.

The school also reserves the right to withdraw any award **retrospectively** if the pupil is withdrawn prior to their normal leaving date, which would normally mean Year 11.

5. Confidentiality

The school respects the confidentiality of Assisted Place awards made to families, and recipients are expected to do likewise. The obligation to make full disclosure of any change in circumstances pertinent to eligibility for the existing award is binding upon signing the acceptance form. If the school becomes aware or is made aware that the information provided is not accurate, the assisted place award may be amended or terminated the following term.

6. Final Remark

There are limited funds available for assisted places, so in order to allow the school to offer financial assistance to future applicants, we hope parents/ guardians who have benefitted from funding will

consider repaying all or part of the grant received, when and if their circumstances allow. Furthermore, we trust those who benefitted from assisted place support will want to contribute to the funding of future assisted places via donations to the school's assisted place fund.

Date of policy	Jan 2026
Ratified by	Finance & General Purposes Committee
Review due	Jan 2027

Assisted Place Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Assisted Place?

An Assisted Place is an academically competitive means tested award offering financial contribution towards school fees. Every year we are able to offer assisted place funding to a limited number of successful applicants.

How are the applicants academically assessed?

Internal and external applicants sit age appropriate assessment papers during the main assessment period, external candidates will also be invited to attend an interview. Those who have applied for an assisted place who meet the financial criteria and perform in the top of academic assessments are put forward for consideration for an award.

How do I apply?

External candidates are required to firstly register by completing the school's registration form and paying the school's registration fee.

Candidates will need to be available to sit the relevant school's assessments.

If I fulfil the financial criteria will I automatically receive an award?

Neither the offering of a place, nor meeting the eligibility criteria for financial assistance, mean that an award will necessarily be made. The school has limited funds available from which to make awards.

Assisted Places are popular and therefore as demand will exceed availability it is not guaranteed that every family who applies and meets the criteria will receive an award.

Is my application confidential?

Yes. All information in an assisted place application is treated in strict confidence both for internal and external candidates.

If I am successful how much am I eligible to receive?

All awards are subject to means testing of family income and capital. It should be noted that the concept of assessable income includes both earned income and notional income based on assets.

When will I find out if I have been awarded an assisted place?

Decisions on assisted places are made during the Spring term, during the main assessment and offer period. All families who apply for an assisted place are notified in writing. Please note that the value of any offer is initially provisional and based on the financial information you have supplied. The assisted place amount will be finalised once the provided financial information has been conformed and supporting documentary evidence has been provided.

If I am awarded an assisted place do I have to re-apply each year?

No. However you will be required to update the assisted place form with your annual tax year figures. The amount of the assisted place funding may be adjusted, increased or reduced, if your financial circumstances alter.

Every assisted place is a discretionary privilege, subject to high standards of attendance, diligence and behaviour on the pupil's part.

Are any extras included in the assisted place?

There is no financial support available for extras such as any transport, school trips, extra-curricular activities or lunches.

If I am applying for more than one child will I need to complete more than one application?

Yes. You will need to complete an application for each child that you wish to be considered for an assisted place.