

**HEATHWOOD HALL EPISCOPAL SCHOOL**  
**Financial Aid Guidelines**  
**Effective School Year 2010-11 and 2011-12**

**Financial Need and Student Merit**

Financial aid decisions at Heathwood Hall occur following a determination of a family's demonstrated need by the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey. A family's most recent federal tax returns with all attachments are required to be submitted to complete the aid application. In addition, the School may request other documentation to properly complete its analysis.

While calculations supplied by SSS offer important guidelines for student assistance, rulings on final awards ultimately rest with the school's Financial Aid Committee.

The purpose of the financial aid program is to lower financial barriers to enrollment, not to create enrollment incentives. While all awards are based upon demonstrated need, the School does not have unlimited resources, thus priority for awards is given to the following groups:

- Children receiving aid in prior years
- Returning students who have not received aid in prior years
- New siblings to Heathwood Hall of current students already receiving financial aid
- Faculty and Staff children
- Children of Heathwood Hall Alumni
- Children of Episcopal Clergy

**Admissions and Financial Aid**

Students earn acceptance to the School by demonstrating that they will contribute ability, commitment, and compassion to the community. Financial aid decisions are based on a family's need as calculated by the School and the School's ability to support that need.

Once the School accepts a student, the family may be considered for a financial aid award provided that the family files all of the necessary documentation in a timely manner. That way, financial need shall not and does not affect the applicant's chances for admission.

When accepted applicants demonstrating financial need outnumber those whom the School can support or a family's calculated need is greater than existing resources, some students will be placed in a wait pool for financial aid. A place in the financial aid wait pool does not guarantee that aid will become available or

that the school will be able to meet an applicant's demonstrated need should additional funds actually become available. Although it may be difficult for an applicant to receive an admission letter and a letter denying financial aid, it is the School's strong belief we cannot presume a family will not find another way for the applicant to attend Heathwood Hall. Denying admission to a student because of a shortfall in the financial aid budget would imply a connection between the admission process and financial aid process that does not exist.

**EXCEPTION:** When considering applicants who have been placed in the admission wait pool because there is not an available space in class, financial need is taken into account. The Director of Admission will contact the parents of wait-pooled applicants who qualify for financial aid before a final acceptance decision is made if the School will be unable to meet their calculated need.

For returning students, matters of student achievement and deportment are the purview of the division principals and the administration. While continued enrollment at Heathwood Hall may be affected by a student's failure to meet either academic and/or behavioral expectations, these are not matters relating to the financial aid process.

Despite Heathwood's strong commitment to its financial aid program and to enrolling an economically diverse student body, each year the number of accepted applicants who qualify for financial aid is often more than the School's budget can support. The distribution of funds to new families may be made according to the following criteria:

- Heathwood's current enrollment needs (gender balances, grade levels, etc.)
- the current distribution of financial aid by grade
- the current distribution of financial aid by the size of the award
- strength of applicant/student

### **Minimum Contribution**

All families receiving financial aid from Heathwood Hall are expected to pay tuition commensurate with their demonstrated ability to do so, as calculated by a detailed analysis of the family's income, assets, and lifestyle choices. All families are expected to participate at some level in their child's tuition expense. It is the School's belief that families who make a financial investment in their child's education are more likely to feel empowered to exercise their rights as vested members of the Heathwood community.

### **Parents who separate, divorce, cohabitate or never marry**

As stated previously, financial aid at Heathwood Hall is determined by a family's ability to afford tuition at the school; it is based on need, not a willingness or unwillingness to pay. It is the policy of Heathwood Hall that birth parents who are

divorced, separated or never married retain the obligation to contribute to the education of their children whether or not there is a legal agreement to do so.

Some divorce settlements stipulate the exact amount each parent must contribute toward educational costs. Because Heathwood Hall's interests and policies were not represented when such settlements were made, the School does not excuse either parent from its financial aid process, requiring both birth parents to participate and contribute as much as calculations show they can afford. While the court's decision may serve as an agreement between the parents, it does not serve as the determining factor in calculating or awarding financial aid.

The School must be provided with the financial information and documentation of both birth parents unless one of the parents has been emotionally, physically, and financially uninvolved in the child's life for an extended period. If this is the case, the family must provide the School with written statements to this effect from a lawyer **and** either a member of the clergy, school official, or third party who is aware of the situation in a professional capacity. If a parent's health is cited as the reason for unemployment or underemployment, the family must provide a doctor's written confirmation of the medical condition before a review for aid can proceed.

If either or both parents remarry, the financial information of the stepparent(s) must be included in application material for financial aid. If one or both birth parents live with another adult, the School will make an award only after considering the income, resources, and assets of all adults living in the households.

The School will take into consideration individual relationships and financial agreements as well as obligations of the parent and stepparent to their other children as financial information is processed. If a stepparent refuses to provide financial information, the School may refuse to continue its review or will add an estimated annual salary as a lump sum to the family's total income.

Married couples and other involved adults as described above must participate fully in the application process by completing a Parents Financial Statement (PFS) and providing the school with copies of tax returns or other required documentation. Decisions by the School are mailed directly to custodial parents, who then are responsible for sharing that information with any non-custodial parents or other involved adults.

### **Voluntary Reductions of Income**

The School maintains a policy of not subsidizing with financial aid any parent's voluntary reduction of income (e.g. voluntarily terminating employment, separating from employment to become self-employed, choosing to work part-

time rather than full-time hours, etc.). It is assumed that the parents have given consideration to the impact such decisions may have on their ability to afford the costs of independent school education and that a separation of the child from the School could occur for financial reasons. A voluntary reduction of income would call for a recalculation of the PFS and the resulting report from Princeton. In these cases, the School imputes the parent's previous salary and reevaluates the family's ability to pay tuition.

Similarly, if a parent leaves employment to pursue an academic degree or professional certification/license, that decision also is considered a conscious voluntary reduction of income that may have potential impact on the family's ability to afford tuition. Though it would reduce parental income and increase financial need, Heathwood is not in a position to subsidize such a decision. Under these circumstances, there is also not an allowance for tuition paid on behalf of the parent other than that for circumstances stipulated in the SSS guidelines.

Finally, each applicant parent who is able to work and who is not staying at home with pre-school age children is expected to be employed in a full-time job. This demonstrates the parent's commitment to doing all he or she can to support the child's enrollment at Heathwood Hall. It is presumed that any able bodied parent or parents applying for financial aid are employed at an income level commensurate with their education level and work experience, even if that employment is outside their normal profession or line of work.

### **Rescinding Financial Aid**

Financial aid awards are based on the financial resources of the family, the limited financial aid resources of the School, and the required expenses. Determination of the grant is based on information provided by the family directly to Heathwood Hall and on the PFS. If Heathwood determines at any time that information submitted was materially inaccurate or in any way misleading, the School reserves the right to rescind a financial aid grant.

### **Failure to Meet Deadlines**

Families who have received financial aid in prior years are required to complete the necessary information and documentation each year. Failure to meet a published deadline could result in a family losing its preferential status as a returning family and its placement in the wait pool for available aid. Families need to pay close attention to the return date on their aid award letters and be aware that their failure to return the letter to the Office of Admission by the deadline could result in a forfeiture of their aid award.

### **School Account in Arrears**

Returning families who do not keep their account current with the school will have to wait to have their aid application processed for the following year until their account is brought up to date. This may result in a delay in processing and the possibility that aid funds will not be available for the family. Families are encouraged to maintain strong communication with the Business Office to insure that there is no confusion about their account balance.

### **Students on Academic or Disciplinary Probation**

Financial aid applications for returning students who are either on academic or disciplinary probation (hold) are delayed until the appropriate division principal has cleared the student in question. This may result in a delay in processing and the possibility that aid funds will not be available for the family.

### **Appeals Process**

Parents who are denied financial aid, or who receive an amount that they question, may make their concerns known in writing to the Director of Admission, stating clearly their case for a review by the School. The Director of Admission will refer the correspondence to the Financial Aid Committee and, subsequently, will inform the parents of the final decision.

### **Hardship Awards**

Returning families may find themselves in unexpected circumstance that suddenly and adversely affect their finances. Often, these situations occur just before or during a school year and long after the financial aid budget for the year has been depleted. In such cases, the School may consider hardship awards to current Heathwood students, provided the family can submit the necessary documentation to prove sudden and critical financial need. Awards beyond the financial aid budget will be made on a case-by-case basis within the confines of the school's total budget.

### **Confidentiality**

The School is opposed to any practice that publicly identifies recipients of aid or distinguishes them from others. Information received by the School is treated with strict confidence. Staff who may know who is receiving financial aid each year include the Director of Admission, the Business Manager and the Director of Development (names only). Financial information is not shared with donors, Board members, or faculty members or among parents who maintain separate households. When financial information is distributed, those receiving the information are reminded to safeguard the confidentiality of the information.