



READING BLUE COAT

Foundation Awards Policy

General

Reading Blue Coat School was founded by Richard Aldworth in 1646 with the aim of improving the lives of young people in the Reading area through education. Whilst the School now charges fees, the School remains true to this original aim by awarding two Foundation Awards every year, which provide fully funded places to students who would not otherwise be able to attend the School. Such support within the independent school sector is often referred to as a means-tested bursary.

Eligibility

Reading Blue Coat focuses on providing financial support with fees to those for whom an education at the School will be transformational. Successful applicants will be those that the Foundation Award Committee believes will benefit greatly from, and contribute to, the environment at Reading Blue Coat, but for whom education at an independent school is not accessible owing to their family's financial circumstances. Foundation Awards are primarily awarded to applicants for Year 7 entry, although strong applicants at other entry points will be considered. Every application will be considered on its own merits, however, as a guide it is expected that applicants will:

- Live within the Borough of Reading, with preference given to those in the most deprived areas of the Borough;
- Have been educated at a state primary school in the Borough of Reading;
- Be from a low socio-economic background.

The award of a Foundation Award is dependent on the parent's financial circumstances; this is assessed through a means-testing process.

Application Process

Parents should register their child on the School's website and indicate that they wish to be considered for a Foundation Award. Applicants follow the same admissions pathway as all other applicants. See the School's *Admissions Policy* for further information on the School's entry criteria. However, concurrently, the School will ask parents to participate in a means testing process in order to assess a family's financial circumstances.

The means-testing form requests details of all income, savings and capital and must be accompanied by full documentary evidence. All individuals with parental responsibility are required to complete the means testing form. If parents are separated and/or divorced, financial information from both parents should still be provided, and two separate forms may be completed. We may ask for the financial information of any other adults in the same household of either of the parents who may be able to contribute towards the student's school fees.

The completed Application Form must be submitted no later than 31 October. Unfortunately late applications cannot be accepted.

Selection Process

Applicants for Foundation Awards will be assessed in the same way as all other applicants to the School at the assessment days in the Autumn Term.

The Foundation Award Committee decides on which applicants will be awarded Foundation Awards. The Committee reviews the means-testing report on the family's financial circumstances, and the results from the candidate's Selection Day, as well as reports from the applicant's current school.

The Foundation Award Committee consists of the Headmaster, Bursar, Second Master, Deputy Head (Pastoral), a Governor from the School's Finance & General Purpose Committee and at least one representative of the Reading Blue Coat School Charitable Trust. The Committee is supported by the PA to the Bursar. Meetings are also attended by the Director of External Relations and the Foundation Director as observers.

Applicants are informed of whether or not they have been awarded a Foundation Award at the same time as being informed as to whether they are being offered a place at the School. Those applicants who meet the entrance criteria, but are not awarded a Foundation Award, may still choose to accept their place at the School, however full fees will be payable.

The Committee's decision is final, and there is no right of appeal. The School reserves the right to amend the way in which this award is assessed.

The Case for Assistance

The Foundation Award Committee will consider two primary factors in considering a student's suitability:

1. **The student's suitability for the School.** Each student to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Headmaster, be likely to make good academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of their work, benefit from participation in the wider co-curricular activities on offer and to contribute positively to the life of the School. Where available, previous School reports will be consulted for evidence of the student's attainment, progress, engagement, curiosity and behavior.
2. **The family's circumstances.** Successful applicants are likely to be from low-socio economic backgrounds, live in the vicinity of Reading, and have no ability to pay independent school fees. Priority will be given to students who have attended a state primary school in the vicinity of Reading. Both parents are expected to be working to the maximum of their economic capacity (unless undertaking caring responsibilities for dependents). The following are not consistent with the award of a Foundation Award (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Ownership of more than one property;
 - Savings or investments of more than £10,000;
 - Significant equity in a high value property;
 - Full fees paid to other independent schools or universities;
 - Frequent or expensive holidays;
 - New or luxury cars;
 - Investment in significant home improvements;
 - Discretionary support to other family members.

Any individual with parental responsibility for a child must be assessed as part of the means testing process, regardless of who the child lives with in the case of divorced or separated parents. The School is happy to manage separate means testing processes for parents who are divorced or separated, with information remaining confidential.

Other factors that may be considered are:

- The number of school aged children in the household.
- Contribution to household costs including school fees by other family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by third parties / outside sources.
- Siblings at the School
- Parental ill health or bereavement
- The social needs of the student

Annual Review

When the School awards a Foundation Award, it does so with the intention of financially supporting a student through their whole career at Reading Blue Coat. However, all awards are subject to a review of a family's circumstances every year and could be removed if the family's circumstances have significantly improved to a point that full fees could be paid.

In addition, the Headmaster has the right to recommend to the Committee that a Foundation Award is removed where the student is not making satisfactory progress, and / or contribution to school life. A Foundation Award can also be removed if parents do not act in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

Bursary Administration

This policy is to advise you that your data will be shared with our data processor, Bursary Assessment Associates (BAA) who we use to ensure that we administer this process fairly and professionally. BAA is a professional and confidential service recognised by the Independent Schools' Bursar's Association. You can obtain further information on BAA from <https://www.bursaryassessmentassociates.co.uk>.

When BAA receive your application, they will be in touch to meet with you and report back to the School's Foundation Award Committee.

Failure to provide full disclosure along with the relevant documented evidence will result in the application being refused.

If any information provided in the application, or as part of the broader assessment process, is subsequently discovered to be false or misleading or incomplete, the School may withdraw any award which has been made with immediate effect and, depending on the circumstances, may require reimbursement. The School may also terminate its parent contract (Terms and Conditions) and require the removal of the child in such circumstances.

If you have any queries on the progress of your application, please contact Caroline Walsh, PA to the Bursar who can be contacted on cmw@rbc.org.uk.

Confidentiality

Financial information submitted through the means testing process remains confidential to the Foundation Award Committee.


Other Sources of Bursary Assistance

In addition to the School's Foundation Award fund, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees. In the majority of cases, these are to assist children who are already attending a fee-paying School and due to a change of circumstances may be unable

to remain. Reading Blue Coat encourages parents to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance. Further information on how to pursue such assistance may be obtained from:

The Educational Trusts Forum
Website: www.educational-grants.org

Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation
Website: <https://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/>

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Date:	May 2025
Review Frequency:	Biennial
Next Review Date:	May 2026
Agreed by:	 Pete Thomas (Headmaster)
Date of Agreement:	May 2025