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## BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RIYADH

# Fees & Funding in British Independent Schools

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### **Information about boarding school fees and the financial assistance available**

When choosing a UK boarding school for your child, you will need to take into account the fees a school charges. The cost of a UK boarding education may initially appear high, but when you take into account the quality of the teaching, the small classes (the average teacher-to-student ratio in 2006/07 was 1:9.7), the high level of care and supervision, the good accommodation and food, the excellent academic and sports facilities, and the numerous extra-curricular activities, it represents a very cost effective package.

### **School fees**

Fees vary widely from school to school. The 2007 Independent Schools Council Annual Census revealed that the average boarding fee for students at senior schools was 6,678 pounds, with day fees around 3,190 pounds. Preparatory school fees are a little less, at an average of 4,343 pounds per term for boarders, and 2,718 pounds per term for day students.

Fees are payable in advance and overseas account holders may be required to give a substantial deposit, generally one term's fees. Fees are charged per term – invoices are sent out before the beginning of the term, and the fees should be paid in full by the first day of term. Many schools offer a variety of payment methods, ranging from lump-sum payments to monthly direct debit. All schools require at least one term's notice of withdrawal of a child, otherwise another term's fees will be payable.

Fees will usually include tuition and most recreational activities, accommodation and food. 'Extras' will be put on the bill for the next term, so be sure to find out what these may be before you incur additional expenses. Likely extras could be private music lessons, horse-riding, dry cleaning and outings, such as theatre trips. Fees rose on average 5.9% for 2006/2007 and the increase is usually imposed at the start of the academic year. Parents should plan for future annual increases in the costs of educating their child.

### **Financial assistance**

More than one-fifth of all students at independent schools get some form of financial assistance with fees and this worth over 300 million pounds annually. There are various trusts that may help with fees, but under stringent conditions and usually only in special circumstances.

### **Scholarships**

Many senior schools and a few preparatory schools offer scholarships to attract bright or talented students. They are usually awarded, after a competitive examination and interview, for academic, musical, or artistic merit, and normally take no account of financial need. Academic scholarships are the most common, followed by scholarships for Music, Art, Design, and Technology, and Sport.

Gifted children from outside the UK are invited to compete in open scholarship examinations. The schools hold these exams in the September to December and January to April terms of the year before admission. The exam papers can be sent to British Council offices around the world, so that children in other countries are able to sit the examinations locally.

Scholarships will usually be awarded at ages 11, 13, and 16, with students already at the school having the opportunity to sit for awards at 13 and 16. Scholarships at the age of 16 for candidates already at the school are frequently awarded on the basis of GCSE results, with awards for new students being made as a result of an interview and report from the previous school, usually with the requirement to achieve certain grades at GCSE. Competition is a very strong, but, as long as the student makes satisfactory progress, a scholarship is normally held for the duration of his or her time at the school. Scholarships typically cover up to half the fees but they are increasingly being means-tested, so the award may be less.

### **Bursaries**

Many schools also have bursaries, which are grants, from the school to help you pay the fees. These are usually awarded after a 'means test' of family income and are not dependent on examination performance, although some account will be taken of academic ability. Bursaries may be awarded in addition to a scholarship where financial need is demonstrated and the child would otherwise be unable to enter the school.

To obtain a bursary, parents will usually be asked by the school's bursar to fill in an application form, giving details of their financial circumstances, supported by documentary evidence, including capital assets. The application will be considered by the school in accordance with its bursary policy. The award will often only remain in force until the student has sat the next relevant public examination; an award made before GCSE will not necessarily continue into A-level. Most schools will review bursaries annually to ensure that the justification for an award remains.

### **A – Z Glossary**

**The British Council:** A UK organization with offices in 110 countries. It provides information about UK education and advice about studying in the UK.

**Bursar:** A member of staff whose responsibilities usually include management of a school's income and expenditure, and dealing with school fees.

**Bursary:** Bursaries enable students to attend schools who otherwise would not be able to afford the fees.

**Governors:** People responsible for a school's success as a business and ensuring there is enough money to run the school

**Scholarship:** A financial award to a student who shows talent or ability in a particular subject or area.