

Bertschi School Financial Aid Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of the school to provide consistent information to parents, students, faculty, board members, administration and the greater community regarding financial aid. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist Bertschi School in carrying out the tasks associated with the yearly financial aid process.

PHILOSOPHY

Bertschi aims to prepare all students to be citizens of their larger world by embracing diversity.

Bertschi School is committed to attracting and retaining a socio-economically diverse student body. In order to do so, Bertschi has established a program of financial aid for families who might otherwise be unable to consider Bertschi as an option. 10% of tuition and program revenue is allocated annually to financial aid for Bertschi School students. Additionally, specific restricted gifts for financial aid sometimes increase the pool of financial aid assets.

Bertschi School considers all the costs of attending the school when computing financial aid. Therefore financial aid awards are made for tuition, fees, Extended Day, learning services, extra-curricular and summer programs. The financial aid packages are carefully structured to best meet the needs of specific family situations when possible. Attention shall be given to the distribution of aid to maximize the child's success at Bertschi School.

FUNDING PRIVATE SCHOOL EDUCATION

Private school education is a choice for families. Many families make significant financial sacrifices to support this choice. Our policies and philosophy aim to ensure that each family receives full consideration. To that end, we use School and Student Services for Financial Aid (SSS) to independently assess a family's ability to pay school costs. This information is then evaluated in the context of each family's individual circumstances.

Bertschi School recognizes that the primary responsibility for financing a student's independent school education rests with his or her family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Throughout the financial aid process families provide information of such a personal nature that it is imperative that the highest standards of confidentiality be adhered to. Students are not identified as being financial aid recipients by the school. In the case of separated and/or divorced parents, no information will be given by the school to either parent regarding the other parent's financial disclosures.

POLICY

Admissions & Acceptance

Applicants are accepted for admission on a need-blind basis. Once accepted, candidates for financial aid are referred to the Financial Aid office to determine the possible aid award. Accepted applicants demonstrating financial need sometimes outnumber those whom the school is able to support. Although it may be difficult for an applicant to receive an admission acceptance letter and a letter denying financial aid or a lower award than expected, it is our strong belief that we cannot presume that a family will not be able to find another way to attend Bertschi School. Students earn acceptance to the school by demonstrating that they will contribute skills, commitment and uniqueness to the school while financial aid decisions are made based on a family's financial need, resources available to a family and the school's ability to support that family.

Recipients of financial aid are not subject to special standards or other requirements that would treat them unequally or unfairly. They are expected to meet the same standards of performance that all other students are expected to meet. To be eligible for financial aid, and to continue to receive aid, students must demonstrate financial need and remain enrolled at the school by satisfactorily completing the school year.

Returning Students Receiving Financial Aid

Bertschi School will attempt to offer the same percentage of aid to all returning students as long as the need continues. If the family's ability to contribute to the student's education increases, the level of aid awarded will decrease accordingly. If the family's ability to pay decreases, the school will make every effort to raise the level of aid awarded.

Returning Students Requesting Aid for the First Time

Families who have not received assistance previously may apply for financial aid. However, we cannot guarantee that the school will be able to meet the financial need of these families. It is our expectation that families who begin at the school paying full tuition will continue to do so, however the school acknowledges that a family's financial situation can change unexpectedly.

Separated and Divorced Parents

Financial aid at Bertschi School is determined by a family's ability to meet educational expenses; it is based on need, not on a willingness or unwillingness to pay. It is the position of the school that divorced or separated parents retain the obligation to contribute to the education of their children

whether or not there is legal agreement between them to do so. The financial aid committee will consider the assets of both natural parents before making any award, and cannot be held by the assertion that one parent has disclaimed responsibility for educational expenses. If either parent has remarried, we will consider also the assets of the stepparent, always bearing in mind the obligation of that stepparent to his or her own natural children.

Same sex families and parents who have never been married or lived together will be treated the same as all other families when considering the family's request for financial aid. Both parents assets whether married, living together or separated will be used to determine the family's need for aid.

Non-Working Parents

Bertschi School believes private education is a family choice requiring sacrifices from the family. In the case of a parent who chooses not to work and all children in the household are in grade levels above kindergarten, a minimum of \$10,000 of income is imputed in calculating the family's gross income figure for the year. The financial aid committee, at its sole discretion, may decide to impute a higher level of income to calculate gross income. Factors such as prior employment, training, and education degrees may be used to evaluate the imputation of income. The financial aid committee can waive this imputation when there are special circumstances of the family.

Parents in School

Bertschi School recognizes that obtaining a bachelors degree significantly improves an individual's earning power and will not impute income to those parents who are in the process of earning their first bachelors degree. The financial aid committee will generally assess less financial need to families where a parent has voluntarily chosen to change their lifestyle by returning to school beyond the bachelor level, and there will be no allowance for tuition paid on behalf of the parent.

Additional Charges for Other Services

The school recognizes that families may incur charges for Extended Day and Learning Services depending on individual student needs and family work schedules, and the financial aid awards are computed taking these charges into consideration. Because extracurricular and summer programs are elective in nature, the school will provide limited financial assistance toward the cost of these extracurricular activities and summer programs. Families are asked to consult with the Director of Operations about availability of funds for these programs.

FINANCIAL AID AWARD COMPUTATION

The school subscribes to the belief that families who apply for aid and show a demonstrated need should have that need fully funded, if possible. Computation of financial need is an extremely complex issue and involves many decisions regarding income, expenses, assets and liabilities. Each year the school will establish a computation method for calculating financial aid and each family's need will be calculated utilizing that method and the financial aid committee's best judgment. No family should be given more aid than the calculation demonstrates.

Bertschi School strives to evaluate each family's unique financial situation. Factors considered in the evaluation include, but are not limited to: home equity, student assets and income, trust funds, retirement funds, and business assets, income and depreciation.

It is expected that families will apply for financial aid for all children in tuition charging institutions, including secondary schools and colleges. The school seeks an equitable distribution of financial aid resources from all institutions.

Parents are obligated to disclose if they receive any outside financial help for education from relatives, friends or other sources.

DOCUMENTATION

The financial aid committee shall from time to time require various forms of documentation and information from applying financial aid families. All families shall be required to conform to the same documentation and application procedures. Additionally, home equity and business assets and income should be verified through documentation.

Families will provide specific information about their employment when applying for Extended Day financial aid.

APPEALS PROCESS

Once financial aid has been granted families may appeal their awards by contacting the Director of Operations by phone or in writing. The Director of Operations will present the appeal to the financial aid committee. The financial aid committee will assess the appeal in a timely manner and make a decision regarding the appeal.

Changes in an award decision can only be made if new family financial information is gained which was not previously available to the committee. Computation of a new award must meet all financial aid policies.