SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

(This policy relates to the whole College including EYFS)

Responsible person:	Bursar
Last reviewed:	October 2026
Next review date:	August 2027
Approved by:	Governing Body
Related Documents:	Bursary Policy, Admissions Policy, Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions, Privacy Notice)

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1. Purpose and Principles

St Columba's College Scholarships Programme exists to identify, celebrate and support exceptional talent and potential across our school community. Scholarships are a mark of recognition – an acknowledgement that a pupil has demonstrated outstanding ability or promise in a particular discipline or across a range of areas.

Scholarships are awards of honour and recognition, not instruments of financial assistance.

A scholarship should never be offered, withheld or adjusted on the basis of a family's financial circumstances.

Parents requiring financial support should be directed separately to the College's Bursary Policy.

A scholar may hold both a scholarship and a bursary concurrently; these are entirely separate processes.

The Scholarships Programme serves three strategic purposes for the College:

- Marketing and recruitment – distinguishing the College in the independent sector and attracting high calibre pupils who will enrich the school community.
- Retention – incentivising exceptionally talented pupils to remain at or progress through the College at key transition points.
- Community enrichment – ensuring that scholars are visible, active contributors to the life of the school, inspiring peers and raising standards in their area of expertise.

Scholarships are available across the Prep and Senior Schools, with primary entry points at Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+). Internal transitions from the Prep to the Senior School are also considered. Within the Prep School, formal awards with fee remission are limited to the Prep Award and wholly exceptional cases, as set out in Section 9.

2. Scholarship Framework

2.1 Categories of Scholarship

The College offers scholarships in the following disciplines:

- Academic
- Music
- Art
- Drama
- Sport

The table below summarises availability by entry point:

Scholarship	Year 7 (11+)	Year 9 (13+)	Year 12 (16+)	Prep School	Max Award
Academic	✓	✓	✓	Prep Award (Section 9)	Major: up to 15% / Minor: up to 10% fee reduction
Music	✓	✓	✓	Prep Award (Section 9)	10% fee reduction
Art	—	✓	✓	—	10% fee reduction

Scholarship	Year 7 (11+)	Year 9 (13+)	Year 12 (16+)	Prep School	Max Award
Drama	—	✓	✓	—	10% fee reduction
Sport	—	✓	✓	—	10% fee reduction

2.2 Award Values

Scholarship awards are expressed as a percentage reduction against the gross annual tuition fee charged. The following limits apply:

- Music, Art, Drama and Sport scholarships: up to 10% of annual tuition fees.
- Academic scholarships are awarded at two levels: Major (up to 15% of annual tuition fees) and Minor (up to 10% of annual tuition fees).
- A pupil will usually hold one scholarship only. Where a pupil demonstrates excellence in two or more disciplines, the pupil will receive the single award of highest value for which they qualify rather than two separate awards. Excellence in other disciplines may be recognised through non fee benefits only (for example, a performance programme or sport exhibition).
- In wholly exceptional circumstances, the Head has discretion to recommend to the Bursar and Governors a higher award or a scholarship in two areas; any such award must be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and reported to the Governing Body.

The monetary value of the award should not be the primary consideration for families. The College strongly encourages prospective scholars and their families to focus on the honour, recognition and non financial benefits the scholarship confers.

Any family for whom fees remain a barrier should be guided to the bursary process.

2.3 How to Apply

The application process for external candidates is the same across every scholarship category and is coordinated centrally by the Admissions Team rather than by individual subject departments.

Internal candidates apply or are nominated through the relevant Head of Area; their Head of House provides a pastoral and conduct reference.

Admissions and the relevant Heads of Area work closely with the Head of Senior Music, Head of Expressive Arts, Head of Art, Director of Sport and other subject specialists, who lead the discipline specific assessment (audition, portfolio review, video evidence or practical assessment) once an application has been received. Heads of House provide a pastoral and conduct reference for internal candidates. Academic Scholarship candidates sitting the College's Year 7 or Year 9 entrance assessment do not need to submit a separate application, as set out at 4.1 below. Further detail on timing and process is set out in Section 10.

3. Non Fee Benefits of Scholarship

The College is committed to making scholarship recognition meaningful beyond a fee reduction. All scholars benefit from a package of privileges and opportunities tailored to their area of excellence. The Bursar, working with relevant Heads of Department, will maintain and keep under annual review a schedule of non fee benefits.

Current and indicative non fee benefits are set out below. These are reviewed annually and may be adjusted to reflect the College's current enrichment offer:

Category	Example Benefits	Applicable Scholarships
Drama	Subsidised or free 1:1 or 2:1 LAMDA lessons; theatre trips and professional in-house workshop opportunities at no cost; academic support and mentoring from Drama teachers; priority consideration for lead roles	Drama
Music Tuition	50% reduction on peripatetic music lessons at the College; access to practice rooms	Music
Art	Extended studio access; priority access to materials budget; display of work in College public spaces; external exhibitions and creative partnerships	Art
Sport & Development	High Performance Programme access; S&C sessions; nutrition seminars; external visits	Sport
Academic Enrichment	Priority access to extension programmes, competitions and subject trips	Academic
All Scholars	Annual scholars' event; College blazer pocket badge; recognition in school publications	All categories

The College is committed to expanding the range of non fee benefits over time, with a view to ensuring that the scholarship 'package' is a compelling and differentiating offer in the local and national independent school market.

4. Academic Scholarships

4.1 Entry Points and Eligibility

Academic scholarships are available at Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+) for both external applicants and internal pupils. Within the Prep School a formal fee remission scholarship at pre Year 7 entry points will be considered on a case by case basis only (see Section 9).

No separate application is required for academic scholarships at 11+ and 13+. All candidates sitting the College entrance assessment are automatically considered.

4.2 Assessment Criteria – External Candidates

- Outstanding performance in the College entrance assessment.
- Strong academic reference from the current school.
- Evidence of intellectual curiosity and a positive contribution to school life beyond academic attainment.

Awards are communicated with offer letters.

4.3 Assessment Criteria – Internal Candidates (Prep to Senior)

- Excellence in academic performance across the curriculum.
- Attitude to learning and commitment to the ethos of the College.
- Positive contribution to the wider life of the school.
- Recommendation from the Head of Prep.

Awards for internal candidates are communicated at the start of the Trinity term prior to the pupil's transition to the Senior School.

4.4 Assessment Criteria – Sixth Form (16+)

External candidates apply via the Admissions Team when registering for Sixth Form entry. Internal candidates do not apply: the decision is made by the College on the basis of performance in the Form 4 (Year 10) end of year examinations and Form 4 Trinity term reports, together with a positive attitude to learning, high effort grades and wider contribution to the life of the school. Internal awards are communicated in the Michaelmas term of Form 5 (Year 11) and are contingent upon excellent performance in the GCSE examinations.

External candidates are assessed against the following criteria:

- Predicted GCSE performance: as a guide, a minimum average grade of 8.5 or above across at least seven subjects.
- Personal statement demonstrating academic ambition and wider contribution.
- Strong reference from current school.

External Sixth Form academic scholarship candidates will normally be invited for a short academic interview. All Sixth Form awards, internal and external, are conditional on GCSE results.

4.5 Review

Academic scholarships are reviewed at the end of Year 9 (Form 3) and Year 11 (Form 5) for Senior School scholars. Review criteria include academic performance, attitude to learning, conduct and contribution to school life. The Head will write to scholars at risk of losing their award before any decision is taken.

5. Music Scholarships

5.1 Entry Points and Eligibility

Music scholarships are available at Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+). Within the Prep School a formal fee remission scholarship at pre-Year 7 entry points will be considered on a case by case basis only (see Section 9). Choral scholarships may also be available to applicants holding a place in a professional organisation such as a Cathedral Choir. One Organ Scholarship may also be awarded within each entry age band.

5.2 Application and Audition

External candidates submit a completed Music Scholarship Application Form via the Admissions Team; internal candidates submit via the Head of Senior Music, with a pastoral reference from their Head of House. Applications should include a music CV detailing instrumental tuition and involvement in ensembles, and a personal statement. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to audition before the Head of Senior Music. Prep School candidates audition alongside external applicants and are ranked accordingly.

Expected standard at audition:

- Year 7 (11+): Grade 3 or above on primary instrument (or equivalent standard).
- Year 9 (13+): Grade 5 or above (or equivalent).
- Year 12 (16+): Grade 7 or above (or equivalent).

Candidates will perform two contrasting pieces and, where possible, a piece on a second instrument. The audition will include a discussion of musical interests. No formal sight reading or aural test is required, though general musicianship will be considered. A reference from the candidate's current music teacher will be sought.

5.3 Non Fee Benefits

- 50% reduction on peripatetic music lesson fees at the College.
- Priority access to practice facilities.
- Participation in an extension programme devised by the Head of Senior Music, including performances, workshops, masterclasses and trips.
- Organ Scholars additionally receive a 100% reduction in the cost of peripatetic organ tuition and follow a specialist pathway focused on liturgical performance.

5.4 Scholar Obligations

- Active participation in College musical ensembles (orchestras, bands, choirs, chamber groups) as directed by the Head of Senior Music.
- Continuation of instrumental study at an appropriate level.
- Serving as a musical leader and role model within the Department.
- Mentoring younger musicians within the College.
- Good academic progress and conduct across the curriculum.

5.5 Review

Music scholarships are reviewed annually. The Head of Senior Music will provide a report to the Head on each scholar's fulfilment of the above obligations prior to review.

5.6 Performance Programme

Pupils who demonstrate significant musical aptitude, commitment and enthusiasm but are not awarded a Music Scholarship may be invited to join the Performance Programme. Members receive a 50% reduction in peripatetic lesson fees, mentoring, performance and ensemble opportunities and an invitation to the annual scholars' event. The Performance Programme carries no fee remission.

6. Art Scholarships

6.1 Entry Points and Eligibility

Art scholarships are available at Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+) for internal and external candidates. The Art Scholarship recognises exceptional visual creativity, technical skill and genuine passion for the subject.

6.2 Application and Assessment

External candidates apply via the Admissions Team; internal candidates apply via the Head of Art, with a pastoral reference from their Head of House. Candidates must submit:

- A completed Art Scholarship Application Form and personal statement.
- A portfolio of recent work (physical or digital) demonstrating range, technique and creative development.
- A reference from their current art teacher.

Candidates will be invited to meet with the Head of Art for a portfolio review and interview. They may be asked to produce a short observed piece during the visit.

6.3 Non Fee Benefits

- Access to the art studio during extended hours.
- Priority access to materials budget for independent projects.
- Opportunity to display work in the College's public spaces.
- Involvement in external exhibitions and creative partnerships.

6.4 Scholar Obligations

- Active contribution to the life of the Art Department, including exhibitions and open events.
- Continuation of art study and independent practice.
- Serving as a creative mentor and role model to younger pupils.
- Good academic progress and conduct across the curriculum.

6.5 Review

Art scholarships are reviewed annually. The Head of Art will provide a report to the Head prior to review.

7. Drama Scholarships

7.1 Entry Points and Eligibility

Drama scholarships are available at Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+) for internal and external candidates.

7.2 Application and Audition

External candidates submit a completed Drama Scholarship Application Form via the Admissions Team; internal candidates submit via the Head of Expressive Arts, with a pastoral reference from their Head of House. Applications should include a drama CV detailing involvement in productions and organisations, and a personal statement conveying genuine passion for the subject. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to audition before the Director of Drama.

The audition will consist of:

- A prepared monologue of 1–2 minutes from a published, reputable text (details submitted in advance).
- A short interview covering the candidate's choice of piece, preparation, experience and commitment to drama in and outside school.

7.3 Non Fee Benefits

- Subsidised or free 1:1 or 2:1 LAMDA lessons.
- Theatre trips and professional in-house workshop opportunities at no cost.
- Mentoring and academic support from Drama teachers.
- Priority consideration for lead roles in College productions.

7.4 Scholar Obligations

- Active participation in College drama productions, the Whole School Show, Senior Actors Ensemble and the Eisteddfod.
- Serving as a role model and leader within the Drama Department.
- Continuation of drama training at an appropriate level.
- Good academic progress and conduct across the curriculum.

7.5 Review

Drama scholarships are reviewed annually. The Head of Expressive Arts will provide a report to the Head prior to review.

8. Sport Scholarships

8.1 Entry Points and Eligibility

Sport scholarships are available at Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+) for internal and external candidates. Sport exhibitions (non fee recognition awards) are also awarded at Year 9 (13+) entry each year; holders join the High Performance Sports Programme, which is open to pupils in Year 9 and above. These are described in section 8.5 below.

8.2 Application and Assessment

External candidates submit a completed Sport Scholarship Application Form via the Admissions Team; internal candidates submit via the Director of Sport, with a pastoral reference from their Head of House. Applications should include a sport CV detailing achievements, representative honours and club involvement, a reference from their coach or sports teacher, and video evidence of their performance in their principal sport. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview with the Director of Sport and, at the Director's discretion, a short observed session.

Assessment criteria include:

- The nature and standard of the candidate's contribution to school sport.
- Achievement at club, county, regional or national level.
- Evidence of performance in the candidate's principal sport, assessed through video evidence, references and, where used, an observed session.
- Leadership, sportsmanship and sophistication in sporting knowledge.
- The particular sport in which the candidate excels – while applications in any sport are welcome, preference will be given to those who can contribute to the College's major sports: rugby, football, netball and basketball.
- Fulfilment of academic entry requirements (particularly relevant at 16+).

8.3 Non Fee Benefits

- Full access to the High Performance Sports Programme (described at 8.5 below).
- Access to strength and conditioning sessions, nutrition seminars and injury prevention support.
- Sport mentoring; off site visits and partnerships with external performance providers.

8.4 Scholar Obligations

- Active and positive contribution to the sporting life of the College, including weekend and evening fixtures.
- Maintaining appropriate training and development in their sport.
- Good academic progress and conduct across the curriculum.

8.5 Sport Exhibitions and High Performance Programme (Year 9 and above)

Ten Sport Exhibitions are awarded at Year 9 (13+) entry each year. Exhibitions carry no fee remission but confer membership of the High Performance Sports Programme, which is open to pupils in Year 9 and above and includes:

- Six sessions per year (one per half-term) covering: technical skills, tactical game awareness, strength and conditioning, nutrition, injury prevention and individual performance planning.
- Seminars from the Institute of Coaching Excellence (ICE).
- Sport mentoring, off-site visits and external performance partnerships.

Exhibition holders are expected to make an active and positive contribution to the sporting life of the College.

8.6 Review

Sport scholarships and exhibitions are reviewed annually. The Director of Sport will provide a report to the Head prior to review.

9. Prep School Scholarship Considerations

The College recognises that talent can emerge early and that identifying and nurturing gifted pupils within the Prep School is important both educationally and strategically.

Formal fee remission scholarships at pre Year 7 entry points (below 11+) present particular complexity, including the difficulty of reliably assessing talent in young children and the risk of placing undue

pressure on pupils and families at an early stage. For these reasons, the default position is that formal scholarships with fee remission are not offered below Year 7, with the exception of the Prep Award described below.

However, the College will:

- Maintain a register of exceptionally talented Prep School pupils identified by class teachers, specialist staff and the Head of Prep.
- Ensure that outstanding Prep School pupils are actively considered for internal scholarship awards at Year 7 transition.
- Consider, on a wholly exceptional and case by case basis, whether a formal award with fee remission is appropriate for a pupil entering the Prep School at a senior year group (Years 5 or 6), subject to prior approval by the Head and Bursar.
- Develop a programme of non fee recognition within the Prep School – for example, subject prizes, public celebration of talent, and enrichment opportunities – to ensure that exceptional ability is acknowledged in ways that are age appropriate and non pressurising.

The Prep Award

In addition, the College offers a named Prep Award at the 7+ entry point, recognising a pupil of exceptional promise joining the Prep School. The Prep Award is separate from the scholarships available at Year 7 and above and is subject to the following principles:

- Only a small number of Prep Awards are made each year; the maximum number is set annually by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- The Prep Award may carry a fee reduction of up to 10% of annual tuition fees and/or non fee benefits; its value is set by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- A Prep Award holder may not hold another scholarship at the same time. The award is reviewed annually and at the Year 7 transition, when the pupil is considered alongside all other internal candidates; it does not carry over automatically.
- The Prep Award is not a form of financial assistance and is not awarded on the basis of family connections or siblings. Families requiring financial support should be directed to the College's bursary process.

The Head of Prep will bring recommendations for any Prep Awards and any other exceptional Prep School awards to the Head for approval. No Prep School award with fee remission will be offered without the Bursar's prior confirmation that the financial implications have been considered.

10. Administration and Process

10.1 Timing

External applications are submitted to the Admissions Team. Internal applications are submitted through the relevant Head of Area. The Admissions Team coordinates the process and the annual timetable in both cases, and Heads of House provide a pastoral and conduct reference for internal candidates. Admissions and the relevant Heads of Area work closely with the Head of Senior Music, Head of Expressive Arts, Head of Art, Director of Sport and other subject specialists, who lead the discipline specific assessment (audition, portfolio review, video evidence or practical assessment) once an application has been received. The annual scholarship timetable will be published on the College website and communicated to prospective families. As a guide:

- 11+ and 13+ scholarship assessments take place during the main admissions round (January–February).
- 16+ scholarship assessments for external candidates take place in the Michaelmas term preceding the proposed year of entry. Internal Academic awards at 16+ are decided in the

Michaelmas term of Form 5 (Year 11), as set out in 4.4. All Sixth Form awards are conditional on GCSE results.

- Internal scholarship nominations (Prep to Senior transition) are confirmed in the Trinity term preceding transfer.

10.2 Number of Awards

The number of scholarships awarded each year is not fixed. Scholarship panels should award only where candidates genuinely meet the standard. It is not appropriate to award a scholarship merely to reach a target number or to fill a place.

10.3 Scholarship Panels

Each scholarship assessment will be overseen by a panel which should normally include the relevant Head of Department and at least one other senior member of staff. The Head and Bursar will have oversight of all awards before communication to families.

10.4 Communication

Scholarship awards will be communicated in writing with offer letters (for external candidates) or in the Trinity term (for internal Prep to Senior candidates) or the Michaelmas term of Form 5 (for internal Sixth Form candidates). Letters will set out the award value, any non fee benefits, the obligations attached to the scholarship, and the review schedule.

10.5 Scholarship Registers

The Bursar's office will maintain an up to date register of all current scholarship holders, showing the award type, value, start date, review date and any conditions. This register will be reviewed at least annually and reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee as part of the Bursar's report. The Bursar will also report annually the proportion of each year group in receipt of any fee remission (scholarship, bursary or other), measured against a threshold set by the Committee, so that the value and prestige of scholarships are protected.

11. Review, Continuation and Withdrawal

11.1 Annual Review

All scholarships are subject to annual review (or at key stage transitions for academic scholarships). The relevant Head of Department will submit a written report on each scholar to the Head in advance of the review point. Reviews will consider:

- Performance and progress in the scholar's area of excellence.
- Fulfilment of the specific obligations attached to the award.
- Contribution to the wider life of the College.
- Academic progress, attitude and conduct.

11.2 Continuation

Where a scholar is meeting all obligations, the award will continue without the need for formal notification. Where there are concerns, the Head will write to the scholar's parents before any decision to reduce or withdraw is taken, giving the scholar an opportunity to respond.

11.3 Withdrawal

The Head has the discretion to withdraw a scholarship in advance of a scheduled review where:

- The scholar has failed, after due warning, to meet the obligations of the award.
- The scholar's conduct has fallen significantly below the standard expected of a representative of the College.

- The scholar has voluntarily withdrawn from the activities for which the award was made.

Any decision to withdraw a scholarship will be made by the Head and notified to the Bursar. Parents will be informed in writing and given the opportunity to appeal to the Head within 14 days of notification.

12. Relationship with Bursaries and Financial Assistance

Scholarships and bursaries are entirely separate processes governed by separate policies.

A scholarship is awarded solely on the basis of talent and potential. A bursary is awarded solely on the basis of assessed financial need. A pupil may hold both concurrently.

The assessment of talent for scholarship purposes must never be influenced by knowledge of, or assumptions about, a family's financial circumstances. Scholarship assessors should not have access to bursary application information.

Where a family receiving a scholarship subsequently experiences financial difficulty, they should be directed to the bursary application process. No scholarship value will be inflated informally to compensate for financial need.

13. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The College is committed to ensuring that the Scholarships Programme is accessible to all applicants, regardless of background, protected characteristic or school type. In particular:

- Scholarship assessments will be designed to identify genuine talent rather than prior coaching or preparation.
- Information about the scholarship process will be communicated clearly and proactively to feeder schools, including state primaries and maintained secondaries.
- The College will consider whether audition and assessment formats inadvertently disadvantage candidates from particular backgrounds and will take steps to mitigate this.
- No candidate will be disadvantaged in the scholarship process on grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.