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Hardship and Discretionary Bursary Policy

Policy Details

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1. Purpose

This policy applies to Taaleem Holdings PJSC (hereafter referred to as "Taaleem" or the "Company") and is designed to guide the process of

- Hardship Bursary: determining financial need for families seeking assistance due to a change in their financial situation. This type of assistance is intended for situations where the hardship is expected to improve or come to an end.
- Discretionary Bursary: providing discretionary discounts that do not fit within the framework of the other discounts offered by the Company

A **'Hardship Bursary'** in most cases would only be honoured for one (1) academic year, although an application can be submitted every year. The goal of the family and the school should be aligned to return to the approved listed fees of the school at some stage, to enable their children to remain at said school.

A **'Discretionary Bursary'** in most cases would also only be for one (1) academic year, although it can be reviewed and granted each year. A discretionary bursary within Taaleem's financial assistance framework allows for ad hoc considerations based on seasonal or discretionary factors such as enrolment incentives in schools with low utilisation, retaining students at risk of moving to competitors, recommendations by members of Taaleem's Board of Directors and / or the Chief Executive Officer etc.

2. Scope

a. Taaleem upholds an ethos of listening to parents, providing flexibility in paying school fees. Transparent communication is maintained regarding school fees, with any changes communicated to parents in advance. Each family's case is treated individually, with the company prepared to discuss and offer solutions based on evidence presented for changes in circumstances.

b. Should a family struggle to pay fees due to changing circumstances, Taaleem is open to discussing and implementing solutions. This may involve agreeing to a payment plan that aligns with the family's monthly income. Additionally, families can apply for a temporary 'Hardship Bursary' from the school to support the payment of their child's school fees.

c. The 'Hardship Bursary' is a percentage of the tuition fees awarded to a student by Taaleem. This discount is determined based on the financial circumstances of the parents.

d. A 'Hardship Bursary' is generally honoured for one academic year, with the option to submit an application annually.

e. Hardship bursary discount situations may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:

   i. A sudden family medical expense related to a long-term illness or injury.

ii. Loss of a job.
iii. Reduction in salary.
iv. Change in company allowances.
v. Unpaid leave
vi. Any other exceptional reason

3. Procedure for Hardship Bursary

a. A Bursary application form is required to be completed by the parents.
b. It is mandatory to obtain the completed application form along with recent salary statements from both parents (if both are employed). The school's approach to determining financial need operates on the principle that both parents share responsibility for supporting their children's educational expenses.
c. Full disclosure of available savings is essential for a thorough assessment of eligibility. These can include:
   i. Recent monthly bank statements for both parent's debit accounts
   ii. Recent monthly bank statements for both parent's credit card accounts
   iii. Recent monthly bank statements for both parent's savings accounts

   Note: The school reserves the right to request information about any recognised fund transfers. Bank statements will be requested for a minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 months.
d. A comprehensive disclosure of all expenses is crucial for an effective evaluation. This may include the submission of information related to:
   i. Mortgage payments
   ii. Loan payments
   iii. Rent for housing
   iv. Any other monthly expenses
e. Parents can also be requested to provide any supporting documents from the following list (including but not limited to) as applicable:
   i. A recent medical report in the event of medical illness
   ii. A recent employer's letter of termination/salary reduction/removal of benefits/unpaid leave
   iii. Deduction of allowances for education etc.
   iv. Evidence of final settlement in the event of job termination

4. Date to apply for a Hardship Bursary

a. The application period for the 'Hardship Bursary' is limited to Term 2, spanning from the first day of Term 2 to the first day of Term 3.
b. Beyond the first day of Term 3, prospective families will undergo continuous review on a rolling basis. 'Hardship Bursaries' may be offered based on approved guidelines and the availability of funds.

c. 'Hardship Bursary' applications for current parents will be closed after the first day of Term 3.
d. Exceptions are made to apply for a 'Hardship Bursary' after the first day of Term 3, for a current parent if the change in financial circumstances occurs after this date.
e. Families benefiting from a 'Hardship Bursary' are required to reapply each year unless a Non-Disclosure Agreement has been signed indicating otherwise.

5. Notification of Hardship Bursary Value

a. Notification of the 'Hardship Bursary' percentage will be communicated to parents on or before April 30th. To formalise the agreement of the 'Hardship Bursary,' parents are obligated to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
b. If, for any reason, parents disagree with the provided 'Hardship Bursary' discount percentage and choose to withdraw their child from the school, a full refund of the re-registration fee will be issued, provided it has already been paid.

6. Accepting or Declining a Hardship Bursary

a. Applying for a ''Hardship Bursary' can be a challenging and often a last resort for families. At Taaleem, we prioritise full confidentiality concerning the personal documents and information parents provide, ensuring that only individuals involved in the approval process have access to this information.
b. The decision to accept or decline a 'Hardship Bursary' and determining the percentage is based on various criteria points, including but not limited to:
   - A sudden change in a family's income due to a change in circumstances.
   - The comparison of a family's monthly income to the termly fees for their child/children.
   - Evidence suggesting that the circumstances may not be permanent and could improve in the future.
   - The number of years the child has attended the school.
   - The year group the child is currently attending, especially if it's a year where they must complete examinations.
   - Consideration of a school's over-subscription and whether there is a waiting list.
c. These criteria ensure a comprehensive evaluation process, allowing us to make informed and fair decisions while considering the unique circumstances of each family applying for a 'Hardship Bursary.'

7. Hardship Bursary Discount Approvals

Varied Bursary Discount percentages are available depending on evidence submitted and budget available.

Approval Process for Budgeted Hardship Bursary Up To 30%

a. All documents are accepted and / or prepared by the school Admissions Manager.
b. The Head of Business Operations (prior to September 2024) or Cluster Finance Manager (after September 2024) recommends a percentage discount and ensures the availability of a budget to meet the parent's requirements.
c. The Principal reviews and approves the final percentage based on recommendations by the Head of Business Operations or Cluster Finance Manager.
d. The documents are reviewed, and the final application is approved by the Head of Admissions & Marketing at Central Office via email.
e. A Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is then signed by the school Principal, Head of Admissions & Marketing and the parents.

Approval Process for Budgeted Hardship Bursary Above 30%

f. All documents are accepted and / or prepared by the school Admissions Manager.
g. The Head of Business Operations (prior to September 2024) or Cluster Finance Manager (after September 2024) recommends a percentage discount and ensures the availability of a budget to meet the parent's requirements.
h. The Principal reviews and approves the final percentage based on recommendations by the Head of Business Operations or Cluster Finance Manager.
i. The documents are reviewed, and the final application is approved by the Head of Admissions & Marketing and Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Central Office. The Head of Admissions & Marketing will share a summary of the hardship bursary case to the COO (justification, documents reviewed, rationale etc) and obtain the COO's approval via email.
j. A Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is then signed by the school Principal, Head of Admissions & Marketing and parents.

Approval Process for Unbudgeted Hardship Bursary

k. If a bursary request falls outside the available budget the school has for this category of discounts, the process will follow all steps mentioned above from 'f' to 'j' and will also require approvals from the Chief Operating Officer, irrespective of the percentage or value involved.
l. Any unbudgeted bursary discounts will also be communicated to the Senior Finance Director at Central Office for his information and reference.

8. Discretionary Bursary Discount Procedure and Approvals

a. The need for a discretionary discount may arise from non-routine circumstances, such as low utilisation in a school, a parent opting to enroll their child in a competitor's school, or a request from a senior member of Taaleem's leadership or Board of Directors for a special consideration.

b. The request should be formalised via email outlining the following (as applicable): details of the specific circumstance, justification for the discount, impact on the school if the discount is not granted etc.
c. Formal email approvals are required from the Head of Admissions & Marketing, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer for any discretionary bursary discounts.
d. A Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is then signed by the school Principal, Head of Admissions & Marketing and parents.
e. Any discretionary discount requests received from Board members or VIPs, as confirmed by the CEO, will not be subject to the annual review process and will remain valid ("grandfathered") for as long as the student remains enrolled at the school. All other discounts will be reviewed annually and will follow the same approval process to ensure they are still valid.

9. Note

a. In exceptional cases, a parent may refuse to sign the NDA with the school. An email trail will be maintained where this is highlighted to the Head of Admissions & Marketing for visibility.

10. Exceptions

a. Each bursary application undergoes the approval process to determine the appropriate Bursary Discount. However, in specific instances where a discount has been pre-approved by the Senior Executive Board at Central Office (prior to this policy being issued) and is recurring, these approvals are accepted annually, with the NDA signed as above by the school Principal, Head of Admissions & Marketing and parents.
b. The Head of Admissions & Marketing, in coordination with the schools, will maintain a list of these pre-approved discounts for visibility and tracking purposes.

11. Non-Compliance

a. Non-compliance with any established corporate policies may result in disciplinary action.

Version Control

Version No.	Date	Details of Changes
4	April 2024	New format and updates in line with the Compliance department
5	Sep 2025	Annual refresh – minor updates made

Disclaimer:

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