

The Attic Learning Community

Tuition Assistance Policy rev. 11-30-2020

The Attic Learning Community believes that families have the primary responsibility for financing their child's education to the extent they can.

The tuition assistance process at The Attic is an independent process from, but occurs in conjunction with, the enrollment process. Admissions decisions are made independently from tuition assistance decisions. Tuition Assistance is an annual process meaning that a family must submit an application each year they want to be considered. Because a family's circumstances can change over time, each year a family applies is evaluated independent of previous years applications. All tuition assistance awards are need based awards.

Purpose of Tuition Assistance; Minimum Obligation

The purpose of tuition assistance at The Attic is to bring socioeconomic diversity to our community, and to make The Attic accessible to any family who is a good fit regardless of their ability to pay. The Attic's tuition assistance process compares families equally, and The Attic does not make assumptions about how a family is or is not willing to pay for their child(ren)'s tuition. Tuition assistance is also available to cover The Attic's optional programs, summer camps, as well as other miscellaneous fees not included in tuition.

The Attic believes all families should have a financial investment in The Attic. All families will pay a minimum of \$1,500.00 towards tuition.

The Attic tuition assistance program is funded through gifts from donors and a portion of our annual budget. We attempt to meet families' needs as our budget allows.

Application Process

The Attic uses Financial Aid for School Tuition ("FAST") to process Tuition Assistance Applications. All currently enrolled families must submit a complete FAST application on or before January 1st for priority consideration. Applications not completed by the deadline will be processed in the order they are completed. All information submitted is confidential.

A Tuition Assistance Application is considered complete by The Attic when (1) an application has been completed and submitted through FAST and (2) all supporting documents have been uploaded to FAST. Completed applications are processed by the Director of Finance and reviewed blindly by the Tuition Assistance Committee. For timely completed applications, Tuition Assistance Awards will be listed on a family's enrollment contract, and the family accepts the tuition assistance award by signing their enrollment contract. For applications completed outside the priority deadline Tuition Assistance Awards will be communicated as an addendum to the enrollment contract and the family accepts the award by signing the addendum.

Appeal Process

Appeals to a Tuition Assistance Award are made through FAST and should be made if a family's financial circumstances have changed dramatically since an application was originally considered or if there was a

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substantial omission of financial information on the original application. A family appealing their award decision or denial of an award must upload financial documents supporting their appeal to FAST along with a letter explaining the reasons for their appeal. The Director of Finance will process the additional documents and submit those to the Tuition Assistance Committee for review at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Appeals are not reviewed blindly.

If a family wishes to appeal the appellate decision of the Tuition Assistance Committee, that appeal must be made to the Executive Director in writing within 5 business days of receiving the appellate decision of the Tuition Assistance Committee. The Executive Director will present the appeal to the Board of Directors at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Some common reasons for appeal are:

- Loss of a job
- Unexpected health issues
- Divorce or separation
- Omission of pertinent information

Special Circumstances

1. Separate Households - parents or guardians in both households must submit a completed application unless there is a no contact order, restraining order, or domestic violence situation. In those situations, The Attic will request copies of such orders or similar documentation.
2. Remarried Parents/Parents Living with Other Adults - all adults living in the household must participate in the Tuition Assistance Application process.
3. Parents Returning to School - if the parent is already enrolled in school when their child enrolls at The Attic, the parent's tuition is treated as an expense; if the parent enrolls in school after their child enrolls at The Attic, the parent's tuition is not an allowable expense.
4. Non-Tax Filers - the Director of Finance will request alternate documentation to establish income and assets.

Requests for Exceptions

Requests for exceptions to these policies must be submitted to the Director of Finance in writing.

Guiding Principles for Families in the Financial Aid Process

The following guiding principles are adopted from the National Association of Independent Schools and are designed to serve as guideposts for families' responsibilities as partners in the financial aid process. Through these guiding principles, The Attic expresses its belief that the purpose of a financial aid program is to provide monetary assistance to those students who cannot afford the cost of attending an independent school.

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Furthermore, these principles reflect the standards of equity and fairness as well as the collaborative nature of the financial aid process for yielding the best result that works for families and The Attic.

1. The family seeks to apply for aid only after it has determined its own resources are insufficient to cover school costs and has exhausted the potential resources and options available to it.
2. The family is proactive in seeking information and answers to questions related to the financial aid process directly from the school(s) to which it is applying.
3. The family is open and honest when completing financial aid applications and when providing any supporting documentation.
4. The family adheres to school deadlines and documentation submission requirements.
5. The family submits true and accurate tax related documentation, such as the 1040, when required by the school.
6. The family is responsive to school requests for additional information to support the application.
7. The family understands that the school is not obligated to provide financial assistance, even if the family shows eligibility for it.
8. The family is respectful in communications with the school's financial aid staff and administrators.
9. The family uses school-established channels for disputing or appealing a financial aid decision.
10. The family is discreet about disclosing its financial aid outcomes.
11. The family respects the privacy of other families who choose not to disclose their financial aid details or outcomes.
12. The family works to the best of its ability to arrange its financial resources to pay any determined family contribution in the timeline prescribed by the school.