

What Every Family Applying for Tuition Assistance Should Know

We know that education is one of the most important commitments you make for your child. The value of a Waldorf education at Ashwood will extend far beyond the classroom, and will enrich your child's experiences through their lifetime. Ashwood Waldorf School is committed to working with your family to explore every opportunity to make this education possible through:

- Tuition Assistance Program with awards up to 50% of the grade-school tuition
- Tuition Assistance Program with awards up to 10% of five-day early-childhood tuition
- 10- or 12-month payment plans beginning May 2015
- Low-interest loans
- Emergency contract adjustments offered in the case of sudden, rare, and extreme one-time circumstances *

At the same time, we expect that tuition for your child's education will be a high priority in your budget and that, when possible, you will seek help and gifts from other sources, including family members.

Who Determines Tuition Assistance Awards?

The Tuition Assistance Committee (TAC) is appointed by Ashwood Waldorf School's Board of Trustees. The committee is comprised of highly skilled professionals from outside the Ashwood community who volunteer their time and expertise. They review each application in detail and determine tuition assistance awards.

What Is the Application Process?

Awards are only given to students once they have been accepted and have enrolled at the school. The office must be in receipt of a signed enrollment contract and deposit covering each child, and tuition payments for the present school year must be up to date. Once an application has been submitted to the business office and an online application has been submitted to TADS, the business office verifies that the application is complete and then turns it over to the TAC for review and determination.

How Are Award Decisions Made?

In evaluating a family's ability to contribute toward their child's education, a family's income, assets, expenses, and other circumstances, including family size, are taken into account. Awards are given based solely on financial need. The committee takes into account the family's need, the availability of tuition assistance funds, and the family's need relative to the needs of other families. All tuition assistance information is held in strict confidence.

On average, close to 50% of all grade-school families have received assistance that has enabled them to attend Ashwood Waldorf School. In addition to grade-school students, tuition assistance is available for early-childhood students who attend five days per week for the full early-childhood program.

When Are Tuition Assistance Awards Determined?

The school strives to make the enrollment process as smooth and efficient as possible. In order to project near-accurate revenue and staffing requirements, it is imperative that we determine enrollment in the school as close to actual as possible. Please pay close attention to the checklist. Incomplete applications or applications with blank spaces will not be accepted.

Dates to remember:

Jan. 26: Tuition assistance applications are available in the main office

Jan. 26: Tuition contracts are sent to all families with students currently enrolled

March 3: Deadline for completion of application

- Submit completed enrollment contract along with \$250 deposit per student
- Submit completed tuition assistance application forms to the school business office
- Upload 2014 IRS Form(s) 1040, Business/Farm Tax return(s), most recent property tax assessments, and most recent pay stub(s)

April 17: Notification of tuition-assistance award and required parent actions

All applicants will be notified of the Tuition Assistance Committee's decision by April 3. Families will have until April 17 to accept their tuition assistance award. Families who wish to withdraw their child(ren) due to insufficient tuition assistance, (an amount that is less than the amount the applicant indicated they could afford to pay for tuition on the tuition assistance application) and receive a refund of their deposit, must notify the school in writing by April 17. *No deposit refunds will be issued for notifications received after April 17, 2015.*

Enrollment Deposits

New Students

Deposit for new enrollees is \$500 per student.

Tuition assistance applications for new students who are accepted into a class after the above dates will be reviewed on a revolving basis.

Returning Students

Deposit for returning students is \$250 per student up until the reenrollment contract deadline (March 3). After March 3, a \$500 deposit will be required for each student.

Parents are responsible for the \$250 non-refundable enrollment deposit. **This deposit will only be refunded if the family receives an award that is less than the amount the applicant indicated they could afford to pay for tuition on the tuition assistance application.**

GENERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE POLICIES

1. Completed application

All applicants must complete the online TADS application form and the Ashwood Waldorf School tuition assistance application form, and submit all supplemental financial information as listed on the application form.

2. Minimum family income

Over the years, the Tuition Assistance Committee noticed that in some families, both parents worked to enable their child(ren) to attend Ashwood Waldorf School; in other families, only one parent worked. We also noticed cases in which a parent, in his or her own business, earned less than the minimum wage for full-time work. While not trying to dictate what kind of work an individual should be doing, in fairness to all parents, and in order to make the best use of tuition assistance funds, the following policies have been set:

If the major wage earner's adjusted gross income is less than \$16,640, we will substitute \$16,640 for that individual's income. (This works out to be \$8 per hour for 40 hours a week x 52 weeks a year.)

In a two-parent family, the school has the expectation that both parents make an effort to produce income if this income is needed to send their children to Ashwood. If one spouse is not earning a wage, the committee adds an imputed wage equal, to minimum-wage earnings, to the family's income as follows:

- For a family where all children are at least 6 years old, the assumption is that a spouse can work 20 hours a week for 40 weeks during the year. In 2015 the Tuition Assistance Committee will add an additional \$6400 to the family's total income (20 hours * 40 weeks * \$8.00 per hour = \$6,400).
- For a family where all children are 7 years or older, the assumption is that a spouse can work 30 a week hours for 40 weeks during the year. In 2015 the committee will add an additional \$9,600 to the family's total income (30 hours * 40 weeks * \$8.00 per hour = \$9,600).

If a family indicates on their application that they are unable to pay 50% of the tuition, their application will not be considered unless they can demonstrate how they intend to pay the difference between Ashwood's maximum award of 50% and the tuition that the family will owe should they receive the maximum award. The family should specify the sources, and how much of the tuition will come from each of these sources.

3. Establishing home values

For families who own homes, a copy of either the most recent property-tax assessment or a recent appraisal is required with their application. Applicants may choose either document to determine home value. Home equity is calculated by subtracting any liability from your home value. *Example: Appraised value of \$250,000 less mortgage balance of \$150,000 = \$100,000 of equity.*

4. Divorced or separated families:

Tuition assistance at Ashwood Waldorf School is determined by a family's ability to meet educational expenses. In general, Ashwood hopes that divorced or separated parents will both contribute to their children's education, whether or not there is a legal obligation to do so. The school understands that this is not always possible. In such cases, the school requires that the custodial parent and the parent who claims the child on his or her tax forms will each complete the tuition assistance application. When this is one and the same parent, the other parent is not required, but is encouraged, to complete the application.

5. Range of tuition assistance given:

The range of tuition assistance given is a maximum of 50% of the total tuition cost for a given family in the grade school and up to 10% in early childhood. The tuition assistance committee will award tuition assistance with the understanding that the aid will not be issued until any outstanding balance with the school has been settled. Tuition assistance is granted toward the tuition costs of children in the five-day early-childhood program through eighth grade. Tuition assistance is not available for the three day early childhood program, parent-toddler program, or for extra-curricular activities such the extended-day program.

6. Changes in financial circumstances or errors on application:

Reconsideration of the tuition assistance award is made for those individuals whose financial status has significantly changed since the time of the application. In such a case, the family may submit a request based on changed circumstances. Such a request must be based upon new financial information and supporting documentation. There have been times when a family made an error while filling out the tuition assistance application. In such a case, the family has two weeks (10 business days from the date the award letter is postmarked) to make a written request that the application be reviewed in light of the corrected information.

7. Notification of improved financial situation

Parents must notify the school if their financial situation improves significantly during the school year so that a new tuition assistance agreement can be negotiated.

***PARAMETERS FOR EMERGENCY CONTRACT ADJUSTMENTS**

Limited emergency contract adjustments may be available to any family who can document a serious sudden misfortune that affects their ability to pay their current tuition bill. Misfortune includes: serious illness that affects the ability of a tuition-earning parent to work for over three months; death of an immediate family member; an accident that affects the ability of a tuition-earning parent to work for over three months; the unexpected loss of a full time job by a tuition-earning parent; and/or a natural catastrophe (e.g. fire) resulting in a significant loss of safe living arrangements. Emergency funds to pay tuition are extremely limited and will only be made available during one school year. Tuition contract adjustments are at the sole discretion of Ashwood's Board of Trustees and each case will be reviewed thoroughly and individually.

Any family who has suffered a serious misfortune may contact the business manager in writing and request that their situation be considered for a contract adjustment. The business manager will contact the chair of the finance committee. Once the committee has the information they need, they will carefully review the request and make a recommendation to the Board concerning whether an adjustment should be made, what the adjustment should be, and the date that the situation will be reviewed again. Once the Board approves the recommendation, the business manager will notify the family of the decision. The school expects that parents will notify the school if their financial situation improves so that the adjustment may be reevaluated.

Ashwood Waldorf School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, marital status, creed, learning disabilities, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its tuition assistance policies.