

# Tuition Assistance FAQs

## **What is the Tuition Assistance process?**

The GSA is committed to making education accessible by allocating a significant portion of our annual budget to Tuition Assistance. This program allows us to welcome more students into our community while fostering an inclusive environment.

If your family determines that paying tuition requires additional financial support, you are encouraged to apply for Tuition Assistance. The process begins with completing an online application through Clarity, a secure platform that helps us understand your family's financial situation. This application allows you to provide both financial details and a narrative, giving context to your unique circumstances.

Once your application is submitted, GSA's Director of Finance, Melinda Madurai, reviews the information and presents it to the Tuition Assistance Committee after the application deadline. The committee thoughtfully evaluates each application, considering both the financial data and any shared personal family circumstances. Our goal is to bridge the gap between what your family can contribute and the cost of tuition, ensuring that as many deserving students as possible can benefit from GSA's exceptional education.

## **Who determines Tuition Assistance decisions?**

Tuition Assistance decisions are made by a dedicated committee composed of select members of the school's leadership team. This committee carefully reviews each application to ensure that awards are allocated fairly and thoughtfully. The Admissions team remains entirely separate from this process, ensuring that admission decisions are made independently and focus solely on a student's attributes and fit within our school community. We are committed to maintaining the utmost confidentiality throughout the Tuition Assistance process.

## **If we receive Tuition Assistance, who in the school community will know?**

Protecting your family's privacy is a top priority. Only the Head of School and the Director of Finance have access to the names of students applying for Tuition Assistance. Other committee members involved in the process do not see any identifying information. Faculty, members of the Board of Trustees, and the broader school community are not privy to information about who has applied for or received Tuition Assistance.

## **How is the amount of Tuition Assistance determined?**

Tuition Assistance is awarded based on financial need. Families complete an application through Clarity, a trusted third-party platform, which securely analyzes your financial information and provides the school with a recommendation. The school then carefully reviews this recommendation, considering both your family's circumstances and the overall funds available. Our goal is to allocate resources thoughtfully to support as many families as possible while maintaining fairness and transparency throughout the process.

**What does Tuition Assistance cover?**

Tuition Assistance is specifically designed to help with tuition costs. It does not extend to auxiliary expenses such as Aftercare, After School programs, lunch programs, spirit wear, uniforms, or other additional fees. However, families receiving Tuition Assistance may be eligible for discounts on certain community events, reflecting our commitment to ensuring an inclusive and welcoming school experience for all.

**Will I need to apply every year?**

Yes, families must reapply for Tuition Assistance annually since financial situations change over time. Each year, we assess your family's need to determine the appropriate level of support. For some families, this might mean an increase in assistance, while others may be asked to contribute more if their financial circumstances improve. Our priority is to support our current students and ensure they can continue to thrive as part of our school community.

**Can my family apply for Tuition Assistance if we've never received it before?**

Absolutely! We understand that financial situations can change from year to year. That's why our committee reviews each family's circumstances annually, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to apply for assistance if they need help covering tuition costs.

**How many students at GSA receive Tuition Assistance, and how much is given out each year?**

Each year, the percentage of students receiving Tuition Assistance and the total amount distributed can vary based on graduating students and new enrollments. On average, around 15% of GSA students benefit from our assistance program. Our annual budget is strategically designed to meet the needs of families in our community who require assistance.

**What is the maximum amount of Tuition Assistance my family could receive?**

At the GSA, we don't set a maximum limit on the amount of Tuition Assistance a family can be awarded. Our program is needs-based, and award amounts are determined through the application process. We carefully consider each family's unique circumstances, the financial information provided, and the available budget for the academic year.

**When is my application due?**

**1/10/2025** - deadline for **returning applications**

**2/1/2025** - deadline for **new families**

**Will applying for Tuition Assistance impact my child's chances of being admitted?**

Not at all! Our Admissions team makes decisions independently and does not consider whether a family has applied for assistance. Their focus is on ensuring your child is a great fit for our school community and meets our admission standards.

**Does the GSA have a non-discrimination policy?**

Yes. GSA welcomes students of all backgrounds. We admit students regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin, ensuring they have full access to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities offered at our school. We are committed to fostering an inclusive community and do not discriminate in our educational policies, admissions process, scholarship programs, or any school-sponsored activities.

**Does GSA offer merit scholarships?**

No. All tuition assistance at the Girls' School of Austin is based on demonstrated need.

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

Melinda Madurai, Director of Finance at [mmadurai@thegirlsschool.org](mailto:mmadurai@thegirlsschool.org) or (512)478-7678.

All families applying for Tuition Assistance for the first time must schedule an appointment with Melinda to review the tuition assistance process and address any questions. Our goal is to ensure you feel confident and informed about completing your application. Returning families are not required to meet with Melinda but are encouraged to do so if their financial circumstances have changed.

**Should I apply for Tuition Assistance before or after applying for admission?**

We recommend applying for Tuition Assistance at the same time you complete your admission application. This allows us to align the timing of your admission contract and tuition assistance award as closely as possible.

Here are the Tuition Assistance application deadlines:

- **January 10, 2025: Returning families**
- **February 1, 2025: New families**

**How does Clarity make applying for Tuition Assistance easier?**

Clarity offers a streamlined, mobile-friendly application that can be completed in as little as 20 minutes. With your authorization, Clarity directly retrieves your W2 and 1040 information from the IRS, reducing the need for manual data entry. This simplified process helps you complete your application quickly and efficiently.

**Is my financial information secure with Clarity?**

Absolutely. Protecting your personal information is a top priority at the GSA. Clarity is certified for GDPR and SOC2 compliance and uses enterprise-level security standards, including end-to-end encryption for all personal data. For more details, you can review [Clarity's Privacy Policy](#).

**How will the change to Clarity impact my award?**

If your financial situation hasn't changed, you likely won't see a significant difference in your award. If you have questions about your specific circumstances, please contact Melinda Madurai, Director of Finance ([mmadurai@thegirlsschool.org](mailto:mmadurai@thegirlsschool.org)).