Tuition Assistance Policy

Policy Statement
Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School is committed to educating a student body that is diverse in economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds, as well as in interests and talents. The mission of the tuition assistance program is to offer financial support to students for whom Falk School’s educational opportunities would not otherwise be available.

Tuition assistance funding is supported through the annual Falk School operating budget, the Falk School Scholarship Fund, the Roy J. Creek Excellence in Teaching Fund, the School of Education, and funds received through the Pennsylvania Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs.

Tuition assistance is intended to address tuition only and is not available for fees, lunches, school snacks, or extended day programs.

Tuition assistance is need based. Each year families must reapply and submit supporting documentation to the FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment Service. Falk School utilizes this online service to assess a family’s ability to pay for private education and to help families feel confident that their request for financial assistance is being treated objectively and professionally. FACTS services over 2,600 institutions and is known for the excellent customer service it provides via phone or email.

Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School follows the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Principles of Good Practice for Financial Aid Administration (https://www.nais.org/Series/Pages/Financial-Aid-Administration.aspx).

Tuition Assistance Priorities
While remaining consistent with the school’s mission, the purpose of financial assistance, and specific fund restrictions, the granting of financial assistance awards will be guided by the following priorities:

1. Students presently enrolled and receiving financial assistance
2. Students presently enrolled, not receiving financial assistance, needing financial assistance in order to continue their enrollment due to a change in financial circumstance
3. Siblings of current Falk School students who are receiving financial assistance
4. Children of new Falk School families who qualify for financial assistance

Tuition Assistance Committee
The Tuition Assistance Committee provides direction and oversight to the development and administration of the school’s tuition assistance practices and policies. The committee works to balance the need for financial assistance with the economic health of the school. The Tuition Assistance Committee makes tuition assistance awards based on the information submitted to FACTS.

Statement on Confidentiality
Applications for admission are completely separate from applications for tuition assistance. Applying for tuition assistance has no bearing on admissions decisions. No student will be denied admission because of financial need. Falk School will treat all financial information provided by families as confidential and secure.
Tuition Assistance Overview

Overview
1. Any current or new family enrolled at Falk School is eligible to apply for assistance.
2. New applicants to Falk School must be offered a contract for enrollment before a financial assistance application will be considered. The enrollment office will notify the tuition assistance committee when an admissions offer is made so that assistance applicants can receive an estimated award letter and make an informed decision about enrollment.
3. Tuition assistance is not awarded until the assistance application file is complete with all required supporting documentation. A delay with supporting documents means a delay with the award process.
4. Returning families must have all school accounts up to date.
5. Returning families must have a signed contract and deposit received/confirmed by the main office.
6. Tuition assistance is intended to address tuition only and is not available for fees, lunches, school snacks, or extended day programs.

Note: For unique family circumstances, see Appendix A.

Tuition Assistance Process

1. Complete and submit the FACTS online application for school year 2017-2018 at https://online.factsmgt.com/signin/3MW3L. There is a $30.00 fee. Falk School does not offer paper applications. If your family does not have a home computer, we suggest using your local library computer or calling to schedule time on a Falk School computer. New* and returning families must submit the online application by January 31, 2017.

2. Wait to receive an estimated award notice. The estimated award allows you to make an informed decision about enrollment. You will receive a final award amount after all supporting documentation has been submitted to, and verified by FACTS.

3. Upload, mail or fax all supporting documentation to FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment Service. Following are FACTS’ mailing address, fax number and an application checklist. Families must submit supporting documentation by March 15, 2017. FACTS will analyze and verify your information and make a recommendation to Falk School.

4. Make sure you have completed all requirements by the deadlines provided. A family’s file must be complete before a final amount can be awarded. Be mindful of all deadlines and be responsive to emails and letters from FACTS or Falk School.

5. Wait to receive a final award amount. The Falk School Tuition Assistance Committee will review the FACTS report and supporting documentation to make an informed decision about your tuition assistance award. The committee will formally communicate their decision via postal mail.

*New families applying after January 31 should follow the March 15 deadline for both tuition assistance application and supporting documents. After March 15, contact the Tuition Assistance Committee, c/o Haniza Yaacob-Ritz (haniza.yaacob-ritz@pitt.edu, 412-624-1274).
Tuition Assistance Checklist

Appendix A: Special Family Situations and Considerations

Unmarried, Separated, Divorced Parents
In dealing with divorced or separated parents, the goal of the Tuition Assistance Committee is to get as much information as possible from both parties, as well as from the spouse or domestic partner of the custodial parent, in order to make an informed assessment of the family’s ability to pay for tuition. The same documentation is required of both parents/households. When either parent or stepparent refuses to comply, the Tuition Assistance Committee will determine if the family will be considered for tuition assistance.

1. Both the custodial and non-custodial parent needs to complete the FACTS application.
2. Both the custodial and non-custodial parent must provide the FACTS office with signed and stamped tax returns and all schedules and attachments, W-2’s, and other financial information requested.

Unmarried Couples Living Together and Never-Married Parents
If unmarried couples are living together, we require financial information from both parties. If the child is from a former relationship of either party, forms will be required of the current household and the noncustodial parent. The school will consider the circumstances and income of the entire household in determining awards. Amounts of money to be provided for education as stipulated in a divorce decree may provide useful information, but are not controlling as they reflect only a part of the financial settlement, and Falk School is not a party to such proceedings. The requirement of non-custodial parent participation may be waived when it is determined that the noncustodial parent has had little or no contact with the child for a period of at least two years and has not provided more than five percent of the cost of the child’s support during that time. The school may require written documentation from a disinterested third party who is aware of the situation in a professional capacity. This might include a minister, doctor, teacher, lawyer, or social worker.

Dual Household Contributions
Ability to contribute to tuition may require a separate evaluation of each parental household. The sum of these evaluations and the student asset contribution will be used in determining each family’s ability to pay. In calculating ability to pay, the student will be considered a member of the custodial or primary caregiver family. Child support will be considered as income for the payee.

Communication with Dual Households
Notification of tuition assistance will be made to the custodial parents or primary caregivers. In order to provide a breakdown of parental contributions, the school requires written permission from both households. Absent of this permission, only a single figure will be listed as the award amount.

Children Living with Other Relatives or Guardians
Tuition assistance for children living with other relatives or a guardian will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Unemployed or Underemployed Parents
Parents have the primary responsibility for financing their child’s education. Tuition assistance is intended only to supplement the family contribution in cases of demonstrated need (supported with required documentation). In calculating a family’s ability to contribute to their child’s cost of education, an amount equal to a full-time minimum wage job will be imputed as the income of the non-working parent(s). Certain non-working or underemployed parents who are caring for preschool age children, a disabled child, or other relative in the home, or other extenuating circumstances may be exempt from the preceding provision.