

Music and Dance Scheme Awards Funding Policy

These awards, funded by the Department for Education through its Music and Dance Scheme, are designed to ensure that access to excellent training may be given to talented young dancers regardless of their background or financial circumstances. These are means-tested awards and therefore the level of funding is dependent on parental income. Families in high income brackets may not be eligible for assistance depending on the thresholds set by the Department for Education. There is also financial support available for music lessons, RAD lessons, vocational uniform costs and private medical insurance and, in some instances, travel costs and academic uniform costs. It is normal practice for the school to offer the awards to the most talented candidates aged 11, but in some cases an MDS award may be offered to those in Year 8 and above.

The award is offered for one year and is renewable each year depending on progress and achievement and physical suitability for a professional dance career, primarily, but not limited to, classical ballet. Additional information from academic and pastoral areas also form a part of all decisions-making.

In many cases the award ends at age 16 when Year 11 is completed but occasionally the scholarship may be extended for the duration of the Sixth Form. This is decided on a case by case basis using evidence from assessments and faculty consultation with the Principal.

The school has the discretion to give the awards from the Department for Education to the most appropriate children or young persons. This is determined by a rigorous audition procedure, outlined as follows:

Auditioning for an Award

Stage 1:

The candidate auditions for the school and passes the audition for the course based primarily on their physique, and secondly on their technical ability. During this audition the panel make an assessment as to whether the child should be recalled for the second, funding audition. The panel is composed of the Director of the Dance Course, Artistic Director and the Head of Classical Ballet.

Stage 2:

All candidates will be asked to remain for a comprehensive physical screen to assess ranges of movement, injury history and suitability for vocational training. This screen forms an important part of evidence gathering for the final decision. Full disclosure about

any previous issues is important as failure to report something that later becomes evident may result in an award being removed. Any previous history of injury or illness will not necessarily preclude an award, but form part of an understanding of the physical and mental demands of dance training.

Stage 3:

At this stage of the audition process for funding, the panel consists of the Principal, the Director of the Dance Course, Artistic Director, Director of Studies and the Head of Classical Ballet. A dance physiotherapist is often invited to be on the panel and an invited external consultant will be present.

The panel is looking for the most physically suitable candidates for professional training primarily in classical ballet. Candidates are scored on their technical, physical and artistic abilities.

The panel look for a sense of performance, natural musicality, and artistry.

Stage 4:

The panel meet with the physiotherapists to assess every screen individually and discuss the suitability for training, matched with the results of the dance audition. The panel rank the candidates in order of suitability and the list is then discussed with the Principal who makes all final decisions. Letters informing parents and candidates of the results are sent.

No disclosure will be made about the order of rankings of the candidates to parents other than a generalised top, middle or lower end of the ranking. This is in line with all other schools that offer dance scholarships.

Removing an Award

The scholarship is allocated on a yearly basis and parents are written to each year, by October half term, to inform them if there is concern about a child's continued funding for the following academic year. This may be because, as a child grows, it could become evident that their physique has changed during growth and that the potential for a career in classical ballet is unlikely. It may be that assessment marks are below the expected level for someone on this award; the work ethic or performance levels, fall short of what is required for this scholarship; or there is a lack of natural resilience for the demands of training. The removal of an award is discussed by the entire dance faculty based on evidence from teachers, assessments and reports on effort from all areas of the school. Recommendations are made to the Principal and the School will send a letter to the parents inviting them in for a discussion. Parents may have already been alerted about concerns from teachers' feedback in consultations and in reports. Parents will meet with the Director of the Dance Course, The Artistic Director and the Director of Studies who will outline those areas for concern and a date by which time the final decisions will be made. This is normally at the end of the Autumn term. This is to ensure that parents have sufficient time to make alternative arrangements for future training and education.

Removal of an award does not mean that the child is not suited for a professional dance career, only that a classical ballet career may be unlikely.

Removal of an award does not mean that the child must leave the school. If alternative funding can be found the child will retain their place at the school.

If a scholarship is removed at the end of Year 11, this is normal practice as mentioned earlier. All dance students will be encouraged to audition for the school's Sixth Form Dance and Drama Awards. These are also means-tested but they do not offer additional support for music lessons, medical insurance and uniform costs.

In all matters related to the awarding and removing of funding, the Principal makes the final decisions, after consultation with relevant staff.