



# Support Our Schools

MILL HILL | BELMONT | GRIMSDELL | INTERNATIONAL

**The Foundation Appeal Office, Mill Hill School, The Ridgeway, London NW17 1QS  
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## **Supporting the Annual Fund: Frequently Asked Questions**

We have put together the answers to the questions we are most often asked concerning the Annual Fund. However, if your query isn't covered in the list below or you can't find the information on our website, please don't hesitate to get in contact. Our telephone and email details are provided at the top and bottom of this document. Thank you.

### **1. Who decides which development projects are selected and how the Annual Fund is spent?**

The process involves detailed consultation with a number of different parties. Firstly, the Heads of the three Schools. Dr Dominic Luckett (Mill Hill), Mrs Lyn Duncan (Belmont), and Mrs Kate Simon (Grimsdell.) Secondly, parental groups and alumni who have maintained close contact with the Schools. And finally, of course, any fundraising plans also have to be approved by the Court of Governors.

The process is co-ordinated by the Schools' development office, headed by Nick Priestnall. As far as possible, the Annual Fund's needs are planned on a five-year cycle that complements the expenditure plans of the three Schools. (A new five year cycle starts with the commencement of the 2015/16 school year.) This ensures best use of all funds across a fully co-ordinated plan.

Once a potential project has been identified, it is examined in detail and measured against the merits of alternative uses of the money. (It is a filtration process and there are always more projects than funds available!)

Whilst the specific emphasis of the Annual Fund's aims may change year on year, in general terms the funds are divided amongst bursaries, expenditure on new or improved facilities, and the specific (usually smaller-scale) development plans of the individual Schools.

### **2. How can we see how the money is being spent?**

We publish regular updates on the Support Our Schools website and also produce a printed annual review which is sent to all interested parties. In addition, as a registered charity (1064758), the Mill Hill School Foundation's accounts are filed each year with [The Charity Commission](#).

### **3. What happens to any funds that aren't used on a specific project?**

The Annual Fund receives extensive support every year and we are massively grateful to the parents, old boys and girls, and other friends of the Schools who back our fundraising efforts so generously. That said, the Annual Fund's overall needs are *always* greater than the sums it attracts. On the occasions that a specific funding target might be met, we therefore reserve

the right to redirect any excess income to other priorities within that year's Annual Fund. Please be assured that all donations are always welcome and always well spent.

#### **4. What is the difference between the Mill Hill School Foundation, the Foundation Appeal, and the Annual Fund?**

The Mill Hill School Foundation is responsible for the day-to-day running and development of the three Schools. (Its principal income comes from school fees.) The Foundation Appeal is the official name of the charity which elicits additional funds on the Schools' behalf. And the Annual Fund is the name of our major fundraising vehicle. It is our yearly approach to the parents, alumni and friends of Mill Hill, Belmont and Grimsdell Schools. The monies raised have a significant impact on the lives of all present-day pupils whilst also establishing the foundations for future developments and success.

#### **5. What are the aims of the Annual Fund?**

Whether at Mill Hill, Belmont and Grimsdell we want pupils to realise their full potential, explore every opportunity and develop the self-assurance that will sustain them for the rest of their lives.

The Annual Fund helps turn these aspirations into actuality. It helps improve facilities at all three Schools. It lets us expand the range and quality of activities on offer. And - for a fortunate few - our expanding bursary programme gives talented pupils from more modest backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy an education that would otherwise be denied them.

In short, all donations to the Annual Fund share a common purpose of promoting educational excellence at all three Schools.

#### **6. What is the financial target of the Annual Fund?**

It changes year on year, depending on the projects being funded. These can range from supporting a capital project – such as the recently completed Michael Proctor Building at Belmont – to smaller scale initiatives such as the installation of digital signage at all three Schools. But whatever the content of each year's fundraising programme, all donations play an important role in enhancing the educational experience of present-day and future pupils at all three Schools.

#### **7. What are the Annual Fund's current priorities?**

Our priorities for 2014/15 are:

##### *A Better Chance* Bursaries

Increasing the number of assisted places year-on-year and establishing an endowment fund that will cover the cost of 20 permanent bursaries in time.

##### Improving Science Facilities

Proceeds from our 'Add Your DNA' campaign will be used to complete the fit-out of Belmont's science labs, re-fit the Chemistry Labs at Mill Hill, and upgrade the Science Garden and Forest Schools facilities at Grimsdell.

### School by School Priorities

Ranging from £100 to £5000 in scope, the Heads of all three Schools have identified expenditure areas which will enhance their pupils' educational experience in the short term.

A new five-year funding cycle – to coincide with the Schools' development plans – starts in 2015/16. Projects are already being identified for this period although we already know that the funding of free places will feature in the longer-term plan.

## **8. Why are bursaries given such prominence in your fundraising plans?**

All three Schools in the Mill Hill Foundation are proud of the way they prepare pupils to prosper in the classroom and wider world. Not just the academic results we achieve, but the extra-curricular opportunities that are offered and the values we espouse. Unfortunately – being in the independent sector – we can't offer that same opportunity to one and all. That's why the '*A Better Chance* Bursary' scheme is so important, giving talented children from more modest backgrounds the chance to enjoy a first class education at Belmont, Mill Hill or both.

We believe that we have a moral obligation to offer such free places and this view is shared by the independent sector as a whole and educational experts from every side of the political spectrum. Many alumni are also happy to give a new generation of students the type of education that they enjoyed themselves. Put simply, it is an investment in potential, in the future, and in hope.

## **9. Can I give to a particular project outside the Annual Fund's current priorities?**

We are always happy to hear our supporters' ideas on how funds should be spent – that is an important part of our planning cycle. However, from experience, we know that monies are generally used to best effect when combined and channeled into specific, pre-agreed areas. There is less chance of waste, dissipation or confusion, and the benefits fit with the Schools' overarching aim of promoting educational excellence.

That said, if you have a particular project in mind – and the wherewithal to make it happen – we would be very happy to discuss it with you. By examining your ambitions alongside our own, we will be in a much better position to make them all happen. If this applies to you, please contact Nick Priestnall in the development office. (T: +44 (0)20 8906 7865) Thank you.

## **10. How much should I give to the Annual Fund?**

The Annual Fund is our *yearly* approach to the parents, alumni and friends of Mill Hill, Belmont and Grimsdell Schools. That is why we put so much emphasis on regular giving which is best achieved through the setting up of Direct Debits.

Each supporter's circumstances are different and it is an individual choice that may vary from year to year. In consequence, there is no set amount that we would recommend. However, whatever the size of the donation, please be assured that every gift is warmly received and recognised – be it at Supporter, Top Terrace or Leadership level.

We would emphasise that smaller donations are just as important to our aims as larger one-off gifts. From our perspective, it is never 'not worth it'. (For example, 150 supporters donating as little as the cost of *The Sunday Times* each week would cover a fully-funded (day) bursary place for a full year. "Every little helps" as a certain supermarket is fond of telling us.)

### **11. Can I be sure that my child will benefit if I give to the Annual Fund?**

In general terms, the Annual Fund will always support bursary places, the improvement or construction of facilities, and the specific development plans of all three Schools. Whilst some capital developments – such as a new building – may be longer-term in scope, the funds also support many shorter-term initiatives which provide more immediate benefits.

For example, recent projects at Mill Hill include the reinstatement of the stage in the Large, refurbishment of the Fishing Net Astroturf and the first part of the phased establishment of an eco-Park in the Stoa area. Belmont has invested in digital signage (a great help to parents and visitors alike!), improvements to the pupils' outdoor play areas and – of course – the brand new Michael Proctor Building. Grimsdell has also re-covered and refitted its outdoor playground (with giant musical instruments) and its own digital signs were switched on just a few months ago.

It's also worth remembering that the generosity of supporters in the past has funded many of the facilities and activities that our pupils still enjoy today.

If you want to support the School your child attends, please visit the Support Mill Hill, Belmont or Grimsdell section/s of our website. Once there you will have a chance to choose between different funding options. The 'Add Your DNA' and 'Priority Projects' choices fund initiatives that bring immediate or short-term benefits to the School in question.

### **12. The Annual Fund doesn't do much to support sport at the Schools and that is the area that interests me most.**

The Annual Fund has been used to improve the Schools' sporting facilities on many occasions. The rugby scrum machine, the cricket nets, our weight-training room, upgrading of gymnastic equipment and refurbishment of the Pavilion and Astroturf are just some recent examples. Indeed, there has never been an Annual Fund campaign that hasn't covered the Schools' sporting needs in some shape or form.

Whether at Mill Hill, Belmont or Grimsdell, sport is a hugely important part of School life and we want to enhance our facilities even more in the years ahead. Sport plays an essential role in improving the health and wellbeing of all participants whatever their ability. And we obviously want pupils to maximise their potential to the full. The Annual Fund's five-year plan for 2015/16 onwards has yet to be finalised but sport is certainly one of the funding areas being assessed in detail.

### **13. How do I qualify for Gift Aid?**

If you pay tax (income or capital gains), we will be able to reclaim 25p for every pound you donate in that financial year. But you must fill out a Gift Aid Declaration when making your first donation to the Annual Fund. (Thereafter, that same declaration will allow us to claim revenue from the government for any additional gift you might make.) Please see the 'Tax Breaks & Benefits' page in the WAYS OF SUPPORTING section of our website for further information.

#### **14. Can I reclaim tax on my donation to the Annual Fund?**

Higher rate tax-payers can claim tax relief on their charitable donations made using Gift Aid. Details of such donations – made to the Annual Fund and any other charitable causes you may support - should be entered on your self-assessment tax return for the relevant year. For further information, please visit the Tax Breaks & Benefits' page in the WAYS OF SUPPORTING section of our website.

#### **15. If I decide to stop giving to the Annual Fund, can I cancel my direct debit instruction?**

Yes, this is an easy process nowadays. If you bank online, most accounts allow you to cancel a direct debit with a process of just a few clicks. If you bank by branch or phone, a bank's representative will cancel the direct debit on request. If you should decide to cancel a direct debit donation to the Annual Fund, we would be grateful if you would let us know so that we can adjust our fundraising estimates accordingly. Thank you.

#### **16. I am thinking of leaving a legacy to the School/s. How do I go about this?**

As a first step, please contact Nick Priestnall in the development office who will be glad to offer advice and discuss how the gift might be used to best effect. (T:+44 (0)20 8906 7925)  
As a second step, we strongly recommend that you take appropriate legal advice when making a will or adding a codicil to an existing will.

The following websites also offer advice on leaving a bequest to charity:

[www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving/long-term-giving/legacies.aspx](http://www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving/long-term-giving/legacies.aspx)

[www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/giving/will.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/giving/will.htm)

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