

Community School

Information about Financial Aid Applications

It's time to apply for financial aid for the 2017-2018 school year. If you are interested in applying for need-based tuition assistance for the coming school year, please follow the guidelines below to submit your application. We have included an information sheet from School and Student Services, as well as answers to frequently asked questions about Community School's financial aid process.

Please note that applications to scholarship foundations under the VEISTC program are separate from Community School's financial aid program. The VEISTC foundation application process takes place in the fall, and students must be enrolled at Community School in order to participate.

Guidelines:

1. Complete the Parent's Financial Statement (PFS) provided by School and Student Services for Financial Aid (SSS). Go directly to the SSS website at <http://sss.nais.org/> or link to SSS from the financial aid page of our school website (http://www.communityschool.net/apply_tuition_aid.html).
2. In the school section of the PFS, insert our school name and code (Community School, 2683).
3. Fill out the PFS form completely. Any blanks will delay the processing of your form. You will need your 2016 tax information when you complete the PFS. **If your 2016 tax information is not yet available, you can estimate your answers based on your 2015 tax return and 2016 W2 forms.**
4. SSS offers detailed instructions for completing the PFS on their website. You can find a step-by-step online workbook and on-demand webinars at <http://sssbynais.org/parents/apply>. SSS also offers additional assistance through its helpline at 800-344-8328.
5. SSS will charge you a nonrefundable \$48 processing fee at the time you submit the PFS unless you qualify for a fee waiver. SSS uses the income and asset information in the financial aid application itself to assess the family situation and automatically applies a fee waiver if the family qualifies. Qualifying families will simply bypass all payment screens when their PFS is complete. SSS uses the income guidelines for the federal free lunch program to determine whether a family might qualify for a fee waiver.
6. **Deadlines: File your PFS by February 28, 2017. We will notify you about any financial aid award by March 31, 2017.** Ninety percent (90%) of our financial aid funds will be awarded in March. If you miss the application deadline, you risk receiving a smaller award or no award for 2017-2018.
7. You can check the processing status of your financial aid application and view your Family Report on the SSS website. Note: Families that applied previously and requested a report should receive an email communication from SSS letting them know when their "Family Report" is available.
8. Applying for financial aid does not guarantee eligibility. All information regarding financial aid is handled with strict confidentiality. If you have any questions regarding financial aid, please contact our Administrative Director, Michi (michi@communityschool.net), or Admissions Director, Victoria (victoria@communityschool.net).

New students:

If your child is also applying for admission to Community School, please notify Victoria when you submit the PFS (victoria@communityschool.net).

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR THE 2017-18 ACADEMIC YEAR

We partner with School and Student Services (SSS) by NAIS in our financial aid process. To begin your financial aid application, you will complete SSS's Parents' Financial Statement (PFS).

The PFS is a comprehensive application that will take some time to complete. Give yourself the time you need by not waiting until the deadline to begin. You'll need your most recent tax return before beginning the PFS. We also recommend that you review the wide range of materials that SSS has put together to help families with the financial aid process. They can be found at ssbbynais.org/parents.

We will communicate our financial aid decision to you. To make our decision, we use the information from the PFS as a starting point but also consider our school policy, practices, and available budget.



HOW TO COMPLETE THE PARENTS' FINANCIAL STATEMENT (PFS)

ONLINE

- Beginning October 24, 2016, go to <https://sss.secure.force.com/familyportal>.
- Create your PFS Online account with your email address and a password. If you applied for financial aid last year, simply login to the PFS Online as a Returning Family, using the email address and password you set up last year.
- Begin a PFS for Academic Year 2017-18. You can log out of the PFS Online at any time, then return later to complete it.
- After you have pressed submit, you'll be brought to a payment screen. The fee of \$48 is nonrefundable. Once your PFS is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn from the SSS system.
- After you pay for and submit your PFS, you'll have access in the PFS Online to a section called "My Documents." You can upload the additional documents we require there.



HOW TO SUBMIT ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS ONLINE

- Prepare your documents to be uploaded. Make sure the documents are on your computer, each saved as a separate file. Remove any security or password protection from your document files.
- Return to the PFS Online and login.
- Select the Academic Year 2017-18 button.
- From the PFS Online, click on the "My Documents" tab.
- On the "My Documents" page, you will see an upload button or a hyperlink next to a specific document name in the "Required Documents" section of the PFS. Clicking either the upload button or a hyperlink will lead you through a series of steps allowing you to name, locate and save the file.
- Once you have uploaded a document, the date will appear in the "Date Uploaded" column within minutes of the upload. Some tax documents go through a verification process. It can take up to 48 hours for the verification process to complete.

If you wish to submit required documents by mail, send to School and Student Services, PO Box 449, Randolph, MA 02368-0449. For overnight service, use: SSS by NAIS, Application Processing Center, 15 Dan Road, Suite 102, Canton, MA 02021. **If you need help completing the PFS, contact SSS customer service at (800) 344-8328.**

HERE'S KEY INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR SCHOOL AS YOU COMPLETE THE PFS:

Our school's full name: **Community School**

Our school's SSS code: **2683**

Contact information for our financial aid office: michi@communityschool.net or victoria@communityschool.net

Due date for completing the PFS: **February 28, 2017**

Due date for submitting additional documents (see below): **NA**

Documents we require you to submit, in addition to the PFS: **Community School does not require additional documents.**

___ 2015 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ ___ 2016 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ ___ 2015 W2 Form ___ 2016 W2 Form
___ Schedule C ___ 1099 Form Other: _____

Frequently Asked Questions About Community School Financial Aid

Financing a private education can be challenging, so we are proud that up to 40% of our students receive tuition assistance from Community School each year. In order to assist as many families as possible, we limit the amount of aid available per student.

- We do not award any merit scholarships or full scholarships.
- Student rarely receive over 35% in tuition assistance.
- We do not award financial assistance for before and after school charges.
- We do not offer sibling discounts for tuition.
- Only students who have applied for admission will be considered for financial aid awards.

Will financial aid decisions influence my child's acceptance to Community School?

We do not consider financial need when making an admissions decision. However, we strongly encourage parents to carefully consider their financial situation and ability to pay tuition before applying for admission.

How much financial aid is available?

We have a set financial aid budget each year, and we distribute the funds as equitably as possible among all qualified students. In recent years, most individual grants ranged from 20% to 35% of the student's demonstrated need. This means that even families with high levels of need are expected to pay most of the tuition bill from their own financial resources. Please keep in mind the following general guidelines:

- The more families that qualify for aid school-wide, the smaller the individual awards.
- Families that are re-enrolling receive priority and slightly larger awards than new families.
- Late applicants may receive smaller awards.

How do you determine eligibility for financial aid?

Financial aid is need based. We use School and Student Services for Financial Aid, a service of the National Association for Independent Schools, to process financial aid applications and provide us with a "need analysis" for each family. The "need analysis" is based on income, expenses, and family assets and includes an expected family contribution toward tuition. We use our financial aid grants to help families close some of the gap between the expected family contribution and the total cost of tuition.

What is the process for applying for financial aid?

January 1 - February 28	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Complete the financial aid application: School and Student Services (SSS) Parents' Financial Statement (PFS). You can link from the financial aid page on our website to the SSS website. You will need all of your income tax information from the tax year just ended. You must include our school code (2683) on the PFS. SSS charges a processing fee for on-line submissions. Your information will be held in strict confidentiality.2) Notify the Admissions Director when you file the PFS so that we can make sure that we receive your application.
March 15-March 31	You will receive a letter from the Administrative Director with the results of the financial aid decision. If you receive an award, we will enclose a Financial Aid Award Agreement.
March 31-April 15	Return the signed Financial Aid Award Agreement to the Administrative Director.

What if I miss the February 28 deadline for filing the PFS?

We reserve a small portion of our financial aid budget for late applicants and will consider all financial aid applications as long as funds remain. Late applicants may receive smaller individual awards.

What if I have extenuating circumstances?

If your income has decreased, or if you have other special financial circumstances that were not taken into consideration on your PFS, you can contact the Administrative Director regarding the possibility of filing additional documentation. Extenuating circumstances will only be considered after you have filed the PFS and received an initial award.

How much would my monthly payments be after receiving a financial aid award?

Your individual award will depend on the “need analysis” from your PFS, but the following examples illustrate what the semester and monthly tuition payments would be with some typical financial aid amounts. (Payments are calculated on the balance owed after payment of the \$200 tuition deposit. Families receiving financial aid grants are exempt from the 7% administrative fee for paying in monthly installments.)

A new partial-day early learner student:		A full-day early learner student re-enrolling:	
Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$5412	Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$8206
CS Financial Aid Award of 15%	\$ 812	CS Financial Aid Award of 20%	\$1641
Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$4600	Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$6565
2 Semester Payments of	\$2200	2 Semester Payments of	\$3182
or		or	
10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 440	10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 636

A new elementary student:		An elementary student re-enrolling:	
Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$9064	Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$9064
CS Financial Aid Award of 20%	\$1813	CS Financial Aid Award of 30%	\$2719
Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$7251	Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$6345
2 Semester Payments of	\$3526	2 Semester Payments of	\$3072
or		or	
10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 705	10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 614

A new middle school student:		A middle school student re-enrolling:	
Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$9542	Total 2016-2017 Tuition	\$9542
CS Financial Aid Award of 25%	\$2386	CS Financial Aid Award of 35%	\$3340
Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$7157	Family's Total Tuition Responsibility	\$6202
2 Semester Payments of	\$3478	2 Semester Payments of	\$3001
or		or	
10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 696	10 Monthly Payments of	\$ 600