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Scholarship applications for
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 **LAURISTON SCHOLARSHIPS**


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Navigating the maze to earning an opportunity

The scholarship pathway can appear daunting. **Elissa Doherty** answers some common questions.

From budding Beethovens and Picassos to female STEM stars and refugees making a fresh start, modern scholarships cater for a broad mix of students.

The subsidies on offer can be comparable to a small lottery win, opening the door to schools that might otherwise remain out of reach.

But the process can be overwhelming for families, with only a limited number of spots available.

As interest in scholarships surges amid budget pressures, experts say there are simple steps families can take to navigate the maze more easily.

How much can families save through a scholarship?

At some top independent schools, families stand to save tens of thousands of dollars a year on fees and board.

The level of subsidy varies by school, scholarship type and a family's financial circumstances, but typically ranges from 25 to 75 per cent. Only in rare cases are 100 per cent of fees covered.

What are the different types of scholarships on offer?

The most common scholarships are academic, for the brightest students, and general excellence, for all-rounders who excel in multiple areas.

Other offerings include students who can demonstrate outstanding skills in fields such as sport, music, creative arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), and languages.

Many schools also strive to offer opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds - such as low-income families, First Nations students, and boarders from regional and rural areas.

At Lauriston Girls' School, general excellence and academic scholarships are available for students entering years 5, 7, 8 and 10, offering a 30-70 per cent tuition discount.

Caulfield Grammar offers academic and music scholarships for year 5 students, while secondary students can also apply for general excellence, Indigenous, boarding



Caulfield Grammar's scholarship offering ranges from academic and music scholarships to general excellence, Indigenous, boarding and humanitarian (refugee) scholarships.

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"The number we award differs from year to year, depending on the quality of applicants," says Mandy Bristow, Caulfield's scholarships program manager.

When should parents start to think about scholarships?

Scholarships are typically available to students entering years 5-10, but can be offered as early as year 4.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) says parents should start by researching the websites of the schools

they are interested in, noting the timelines for applications, testing, and auditions.

Dr Jarrod Hingston, ACER's head of student, learning and progress, says some schools schedule the scholarship tests up to 18 months in advance of the school year for which the student is applying.

"For example, a year 5 student may sit a scholarship test in October 2025 for entry into Year 7 in 2027," he says.

Lauriston Girls' School principal Susan Just advises families to start exploring schools of interest at least a year before applying.

Parents are urged to bring their



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daughters to an Experience Lauriston session and take a tour to help inform a written piece about why they want to attend the school.

"It is important for the girl to feel excited about the school and that she would like to attend," she says.

Bristow says some families enquire about Caulfield Grammar's scholarships when their children are still very young, which isn't necessary.

"Kids need to be kids, so we tell families that they need to apply the year before they want to commence," she says.

"We opened our 2027 scholarships in September this year."

What are schools looking for in scholarship recipients?

Acing the academic test alone isn't the key to a scholarship, as schools look for students who will be an asset to their communities. Interviews with the principal, personal statements from students, portfolios of work, video submissions and records of community service are among the different ways schools can dig deeper.

Just says Lauriston rewards students who want to make "a broad contribution to the school".

"We would like to make a positive impact on the growth and development of each student," she says.

"These are generally well-rounded young people who have varied interests which they want to pursue. They demonstrate perseverance and adaptability. They are articulate and use their voices to offer opinions and their ideas."

Bristow says Caulfield Grammar is looking for "values alignment" in recipients.

"We want them to be students of good character, community-minded, and to make the most of opportunities available to them via having a scholarship. We want them to look at ways that they can seek to have a positive impact on our school community."

Lauriston Girls' School encourages parents to bring their daughters to an Experience Lauriston session.

Scholarships: common misconceptions

IT'S A FREE RIDE: Most scholarships only cover part of the tuition fees, and not extras such as textbooks, uniforms and excursions. Only in rare cases - such as Melbourne Girls Grammar School's new French language scholarship - are all costs covered.

EVERY STUDENT GETS AN INTERVIEW: Generally, only students who are short-listed after successful testing or auditions will be invited to an interview.

THERE'S NO SHORTCUTS: Schools say the test can't be studied for, so forking out for coaching colleges won't guarantee a scholarship.

IT'S ONLY FOR STRAIGHT A-STUDENTS: While book smarts are important - particularly for academic scholarships - many scholarships reward other talents such as music, sport, art, dance and drama. Schools are looking for well-rounded students of good character, so academics alone won't secure a spot.

IT'S TOO TOUGH TO BOTHER APPLYING: Competition is fierce, but a thoughtful application that showcases a student's unique strengths, range of interests and leadership quality can set them apart.



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