

Highland School Financial Aid 2011-2012



Our Mission:

To provide a demanding academic program to develop the skills and character essential for students to meet the challenges of college and leadership in the twenty-first century.

Financial Aid at Highland – An Overview

Diversity enriches our community. Highland's generous support of financial aid reflects a commitment to ensuring that talented students with limited means are able to enroll.

This year, 36% of our students, Kindergarten – Grade 12, received over \$1,000,000 in financial aid. Highland encourages families to apply for assistance based upon the assumption that the *primary obligation for financing a student's education rests with the family*.

Understanding that a Highland education is a significant investment, the Financial Aid Committee works to determine a fair assessment of a family's ability to provide their child(ren) with this unique opportunity. To determine a family's need in a fair and equitable manner, Highland requires that all applicants annually complete the Parent Financial Statement (PFS) through School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS).

With each application, the Financial Aid Committee insists that a family's commitment to their child's education is at least as strong as Highland's. Thus, Highland expects that a family is willing to make significant adjustments in the use of its discretionary resources and access secondary resources, such as family or community organizations.

It is important to read the entire packet to fully understand the financial aid process at Highland. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Donna Tomlinson, Director of Admission and Financial Aid, at (540) 878-2740 or dtomlinson@highlandschool.org.

Financing a Highland Education – Grants, Scholarships and Loans

Financial aid students submit a reduced non-refundable deposit of \$250 with their enrollment contract and must participate in FACTS' 12-payment plan. Tuition insurance through the Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) is also required.

Grants – Highland's financial aid grants are need-based and do not need to be repaid. However, in the spirit of giving, it is hoped that at some time, the recipient, or his or her family, will make contributions to the School enabling other students to receive financial aid in the future.

Merit Scholarships – Highland offers competitive, merit-based grants to rising Grade 9 students through our Founder's Scholarship program. For more information about the Founder's Scholarship program, please contact the Admission Office at (540) 878-2740 or consult our website at www.highlandschool.org.

The Application Process

Financial aid is renewed annually. Families are required to apply for financial aid and demonstrate need for each year of enrollment. The Financial Aid Committee reviews each application closely to determine need and reserves the right to amend awards if new information comes to light after enrollment.

- A. By **January 14, 2012** current students, and by **January 30, 2012** new students, must submit the Parent Financial Statement (PFS) online at www.nais.org/financialaid/sss to School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, New Jersey, along with the required fee.
- B. In each case, SSS forwards an electronic copy of the PFS to the Admission Office (school code #3874). Highland strongly recommends that families keep a copy for their files.
- C. After processing an application, SSS sends Highland a Report of Family Contribution (RFC). The RFC serves as a guideline for the Financial Aid Committee, but the Committee may make an adjustment based on supplemental information. Please be sure to make a fair estimate of family funds available for tuition, as a “0” is often interpreted as a lack of commitment by the family.
- D. For parents who are separated, divorced, or who have never been married, Highland requires a complete financial aid application by each parent/family.
- E. Following the deadlines stated above, families must also submit a signed copy of the previous year’s federal income tax returns, plus all supporting forms, schedules and explanations to SSS. Documents may be uploaded electronically or mailed to SSS. A families financial aid application will not be deemed complete until the previous year’s federal income tax returns have been received by SSS.
- F. The 4506 and a Business and Farm forms (for each business and/or farm) must be submitted by the stated deadline as well.
- G. Estimated financial aid decisions are usually sent with re-enrollment contracts: **February 2, 2012** for current students, and by **March 2, 2012** for new students. Highland feels strongly that families should have as much information as possible before making an enrollment decision. The current student contract deadline is **February 24, 2012** and the new student contract deadline is **April 6, 2012**.
- H. Final financial aid decisions are awarded after the current year’s federal income tax returns, and all supporting forms, schedules and explanations have been submitted. The deadline for submitting these documents is **April 30, 2012**.

- I. Failure to supply the Financial Aid Committee with all information by the stated deadlines will result in a delayed review of the application. A delay typically has a negative impact on the financial aid grant due to the reduction of available funds.

Confidentiality

Highland does not collect any financial aid application information on site. Confidential financial aid records for all applicants are maintained digitally by SSS. These records are reviewed by the Financial Aid Committee; and when merited, discussed with the appropriate Division Director and Head of School. *All financial aid awards are confidential agreements between Highland and the applicant's family and must not be discussed with anyone outside of the Financial Aid Committee.*

Appeals

Families should review the Report of Family Contribution (RFC) before submitting an appeal. If a family wants to appeal the Financial Aid Committee's decision, *a written appeal must be submitted to the Financial Aid Committee prior to a family signing and submitting an enrollment contract.* The statement should explain any unusual circumstances and any information not presented in the original application. The Committee will review the appeal and respond in writing within two weeks, unless more information is needed to render a decision.

Divorced, Separated and Non-Traditional Families

Highland's philosophy is consistent with that of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and School and Student Services for Financial Aid (SSS) which states that the *primary obligation for financing a student's education rests with the family.* As such, Highland expects the family, which we view as parents, guardians, domestic partners and/or step-parents, to play an active part in funding tuition and other school-related expenses. This expectation is in effect regardless of any legal agreements arranged between family members, such as, alimony and custody agreements. Each family member must submit his/her information during the financial aid process. *The Financial Aid Committee reserves the right to impute income and adjust the Report of Family Contribution (RFC) if this requirement is not satisfied.*

Non-Working Parents

Highland assumes that all adult family members will work to contribute towards the expense of enrollment. Families with preschool-aged children and/or extraordinary circumstances should notify the Director of Admission and Financial Aid, as the Committee will factor the each individual situation when rendering decisions. *However, please be aware that for adult family members that elect not to work, Highland will impute income and adjust the Report of Family Contribution (RFC).*

Non-Discrimination Policy

Highland School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational, employment or admission policies, and its scholarship, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Financial Aid Checklist

SSS: Parent Financial Statement (PFS)

Online PFS available at www.nais.org/financialaid/sss

- Online application to Princeton, New Jersey
- Send to Highland School (School Code #3874)

1040 Federal Tax Return

- 2011 (by April 30, 2012)
- 2010 *

Financial Aid Applications will not be deemed complete until the previous year's Federal Tax Returns have been received by SSS.

All IRS Schedules and Forms

- 2011 (by April 30, 2012)
- 2010 *

W-2 Forms

- 2011 (by April 30, 2012)
- 2010 *

Business and Farm Statement (for each business and/or farm)

- 2011 (by April 30, 2012)
- 2010 *

4506 Federal Tax Form (signed)

Letter to the Financial Aid Committee (optional)

Admission and Financial Aid Deadlines

January 13, 2012 – Current student financial aid deadline

January 30, 2012 – New student financial aid deadline

February 2, 2012 – Re-enrollment contracts mailed with financial aid (current students)

February 24, 2012 – Re-enrollment contract deadline (current students)

March 2, 2012 – Letters of acceptance and enrollment contracts mailed (new students)

March 2, 2012 – Financial aid decisions mailed (new students)

April 6, 2012 – New student contract deadline

April 30, 2012 – 2010 tax information deadline

* 2010 for NEW students only *

* 2010 for current students should be on file, but if not, families must submit *