



THE SCHOOL OF
CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Bursary Guidelines

Charity number: 1195159

The School of Contemplative Life is committed to making retreats and events accessible to all, regardless of financial circumstances. Our bursary fund is in place to support people who would not otherwise be able to attend due to limited income. In addition, where appropriate, we may apply to external bursary schemes, such as the Association for Promoting Retreats (APR) Bursary Fund, on behalf of participants. In such cases, additional parameters may apply depending on the rules of the external fund at the time.

1. Scope of Support

- The bursary applies to both residential retreats and one-day in-person events.
- Support may cover up to 50% of the event cost for residential retreats and one-day in-person events.
- The level of support awarded is at the discretion of the Executive Director, taking into account individual circumstances, the sum remaining in the bursary fund, and the number of bursaries already given for a specific retreat or during a calendar year.
- Where appropriate, the School of Contemplative Life may also apply to external bursary funds (e.g. APR) on behalf of a participant. Any support awarded from such external sources will be subject to the criteria and limits of the organisation providing the bursary.

2. Eligibility

- Applicants should be from low-income households or otherwise experiencing financial hardship. By “low income,” we mean anyone for whom the full retreat fee would create a genuine financial barrier. We trust applicants to discern this honestly in their own circumstances.
- Applicants should be regular participants in the School’s weekly online practice sessions at the time of application and should have attended regularly for at least three months prior to applying.
- Bursaries are intended to support those who are actively engaged in the life and practice of the community. Successful applicants are therefore expected to continue participating regularly in the weekly online practice sessions until the retreat takes place. If participation ceases without good reason, the School reserves the right to withdraw or review eligibility for bursary support. Exceptions will be made where attendance is prevented by significant personal circumstances beyond the applicant’s control.
- An individual may receive bursary support for one residential retreat or in-person event per calendar year.
- Where an external bursary is sought (e.g. APR), additional eligibility rules may apply (such as limits on how often support can be granted). These will be explained to the applicant at the time of application.

3. Online Events and Retreats

- For online events and retreats, those experiencing financial hardship are invited to make a donation of their choice in exchange for a ticket.
- There is **no limit** to the number of online events or retreats a person may attend on this basis.

4. Application and Assessment

- Decisions are made at the discretion of the Executive Director, taking into account the applicant's financial circumstances, their participation in the online practice community, and the availability of bursary funds.
- Applications will be assessed fairly and never on the basis of personal characteristics such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religious background.
- All applications will be treated in confidence. However, please note:
 - For our own bursary fund, we may need to share your name and contact information with the retreat centre concerned so that they can invoice us for the bursary portion of the fee.
 - For external bursary applications (e.g. APR), we may need to share your name and other relevant details with the funding body in order to apply for support on your behalf.
- It's important to note that if a bursary has been awarded to you and we have already incurred the cost on your behalf, but you subsequently choose not to attend for whatever reason, you will be liable to reimburse the amount paid.
- Alternatively, where you have paid the full cost of the ticket and we agree to cover a proportion after the retreat, this amount will be reimbursed upon confirmation of your full attendance.

5. Fairness

- Bursary funds are made possible through the generosity of donors and supporters. As such, the total amount available is limited, and not all requests may be able to be met in full.
- The School of Contemplative Life seeks to distribute support in a way that is fair and consistent with its mission of inclusivity and accessibility.

6. Commitment to Accessibility

The School of Contemplative Life recognises the spiritual value of silence, prayer, and retreat attendance for all people. Through these guidelines, we seek to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent participation.

7. How to Apply

To apply for a bursary, please contact Rachel Sharpe (Executive Director) via email rachel@schoolofcontemplativelife.com with:

- The name of retreat or event you wish to attend.
- A short note explaining your circumstances and why you are requesting support.

We will then advise whether support can be provided directly from our bursary fund, or whether we may also apply for support from an external scheme (such as APR).

Last updated on 1st June 2026