



275 McKinley Avenue, New Milford, NJ 07646

Tuition Assistance Policy & Guidelines 2017-18

Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County (SSDS) is an independent, non-profit Jewish day school that meets the charitable and educational definitions of Section 501(c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Our mission to establish a warm, inclusive community underlies our commitment to serving a diverse population of families. Accordingly, SSDS has established a Tuition Assistance (TA) program with flexible payment options and financial aid awards to ensure that qualified students are able to receive an SSDS education.

Our TA program is managed by a Tuition Assistance Committee (TAC) composed of non-Schechter parents in order to ensure that the process is conducted with strict confidentiality.

How it works

SSDS has engaged FACTS, an independent, third-party vendor, to collect information, analyze data and assess the financial needs of families applying for TA. **All information from FACTS is kept confidential.** Families requesting TA must submit an application online at <https://online.factsmgt.com/signin/3D4Z1>. The deadline schedule is as follows:

December 12, 2016	Re-enrollment process begins for 2017-2018
January 31, 2017	TA Application Due via FACTS Grant and Aid Your 2015 tax return and all supporting documents as outlined in attached FACTS Grant and Aid Flyer need to be submitted by this date.
February 13, 2017	Copies of 2016 W-2s (if parents are salaried employees) due via FACTS
March 31, 2017	Tuition Assistance decisions mailed from SSDS to families
April 18, 2017	Photocopies of 2016 1040 federal income tax returns or extensions to file a return due to SSDS
May 12, 2017	Payment plan selections due

Note: Applications received after January 31 will be considered on an individual basis.

Applications for tuition assistance that do not include the full 2015 tax return and required supporting documents by the deadline date referred to above, will not be considered at all.

Qualified families who complete their application or send in their tax returns and supporting documentation after the deadline, may not receive an award due to the limitations of the TA budget.

The committee will evaluate the FACTS recommendations according to guidelines set by the school's Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees approves the overall financial aid budget reserves the right to change the school's TA policies and implementation at any time.

In accordance with federal equal-opportunity standards, awards are made without regard to a student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability or age.

Payment Plans

For our parents' convenience, SSDS is pleased to offer the following payment plans:

- Full payment (due June 1 or 15)
- Two payments (due June 1 or 15 and November 1 or 15)
- Ten monthly installments (automatically deducted from bank accounts on the 1st or the 15th of each month, from June to March)

Tuition Assistance Q&A

Is TA available in all grades?

- Students enrolled in Grades Pre K-8 are eligible to apply for TA

Do both parents have to be employed to qualify for TA?

- In accordance with guidelines from FACTS, the TAC assumes that both parents in a two-parent household are employed. Exceptions include families with children younger than age 3, dependents requiring full-time care, or documented physical or health problems that prevent employment.
- If one parent is not employed, and there are no extenuating circumstances, the TAC will include an estimated second-parent income in its financial calculations. Any necessary childcare costs will be considered.

I don't have standard W-2 income – what documentation must I submit?

- If your income includes items reported to you on K-1s, then copies of the K-1s must be included with the tax returns sent to FACTS. If the K-1s you receive come from a closely held business in which either spouse or both together own in aggregate more than 10% of the business entity, a copy of the business entity's tax return need to be submitted to FACTS, as well.

How do divorced/separated families apply for TA?

- For families in divorce or separation situations, **both** parents are required to file with FACTS. All financial information is used to determine TA awards, regardless whether one parent has disclaimed responsibility for educational expenses.

What if I have children at other schools?

- If multiple children attend schools that charge tuition, the family is expected to apply for financial aid at all schools. The family is also obligated to share information about TA awards from the other schools with the TAC.

Does SSDS offer a sibling discount?

- No. Assistance for families with multiple children at SSDS is addressed via our TA program.

What education-related expenses are covered by TA?

- TA is offered for the sole purpose of providing **tuition** assistance. It does not reduce any other costs associated with attending SSDS, such as family obligation, security fees, building fund, school trips, computer programs, after-school programs, lunch programs, transportation, etc.

How are awards determined?

- As part of SSDS's overall budgetary process, the school's Finance Committee determines the annual budget for TA and submits it to the Board of Trustees for approval. Working with that total, the TAC considers all timely applications, factoring in current salaries, net worth and family circumstances, along with the aid determinations supplied by FACTS and other submitted documents. The TAC then determines the tuition assistance award for each family.

Is there an appeals process?

- If new information arises that may impact the determination of the award, ie; loss of employment, medical emergency etc., an applicant family may submit an explanation (with attachments, as necessary) by emailing ta@ssdsbergen.org. The school cannot guarantee that such submissions will result in changes to original award amounts.

Will my TA award roll over from year to year?

- No. Families must re-apply for TA each year. The TAC will consider changes in a family's financial or life circumstances when calculating awards.

Can I use my TA award for previous years' tuition?

- No. TA cannot be applied to any outstanding tuition or fees from prior years.

Can I qualify for TA if I have an outstanding tuition balance from previous years?

- No. Families will be notified of their award for the next academic year only if their account for the present year's tuition balance is kept current.

How much time do I have to respond to my TA award?

- Once families are notified, they must accept or decline the award offer **within two weeks**. Should a family fail to comply in a timely fashion, the TAC reserves the right to rescind the offer and grant the award to another applicant.

Does SSDS offer merit-based scholarships?

- SSDS's TA program is a need-based program only. A child's academic performance is not linked to financial assistance.

Does SSDS offer "educational loans"?

No. TA awards are not loans, and SSDS does not offer educational loans.

Think you won't qualify for TA? Come talk to us! Nancy Rotella x278 in our Business Office can help walk you through the options available for providing your child(ren) an SSDS education.