

ST. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS POLICY

(Senior and Prep and Early Years Foundation Stage)

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Our Vision

To be a school that lives the Gospel values, promotes the dignity of every individual and is committed to excellence. We are a Catholic school where every student, regardless of individual faith:

- is **valued**
- is a member of a thriving, happy **community**
- is helped to **achieve her personal best**
- is given a wide range of opportunities to **develop her talents**
- is **prepared for the challenges** of adult life
- is helped to **understand** and fulfil her **responsibilities** to self, family and society.

Aims

- To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purpose as a Roman Catholic foundation and girls' school.
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and fair to applicants.
- To identify applicants whose academic and other abilities appear to match the ethos and standards of the School and whose personal qualities suggest they have the potential to contribute sufficiently to the school community and benefit from the many opportunities that are offered here.

Entry points

The usual ages of entry are 3, 4, 7, 11 and 16. Occasional vacancies occur at other ages. At St Catherine's School a selection process operates at all points of entry. Parents of candidates are invited to contact the Admissions Secretary at the School for further details.

Registration

Early registration is advised for entry at all ages. There are Open Afternoons throughout the year to which we invite prospective pupils and their parents. Visits can also be arranged at other times. The School can accept applications from any area and is happy to accept advance registrations for younger children at any time. Pupils of other ages may also be accepted into the School, particularly if their family has moved into the area.

PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

Pupils normally join the Prep Department at 3+, 4+ or 7+. Entry into other year groups is dependent upon vacancies. An offer of a place at 7+ or above will only be made if a candidate is of a sufficiently high standard to have a good chance of success in meeting the requirements of the Senior School Entrance examination taken at 10+ in Year 6.

A confidential academic report may be sought from the candidate's existing school for entry at 5+ (Year1) or above. A candidate's application will not be prejudiced if a reference is not forthcoming from the current school.

Procedure

Parents seeking admission for their children should complete the registration form and return it to the Admissions Secretary at the School with a cheque for the registration fee. They will then be invited to meet the Head of Prep, who will show them round the department.

Assessment

Early Years

Candidates for admission at 3+ and 4+ are required to spend part of a day in the Early Years Department with their parents. During this time an assessment will be made of the prospective candidate's personal and social development and behaviour to ensure she is sufficiently developed to transfer smoothly into the relevant year group. Admission into Nursery will not be permitted until children are fully toilet trained.

Entry at 5+

Candidates for admission at 5+ (Year 1) to 10+ (Year 6) are required to spend the day in the Prep Department. The day is spent with the class the candidate would join if accepted to ensure that she obtains a good feel and understanding of the school before the end of the assessment day. Candidates are always assessed for the year group appropriate to their chronological age.

During this time at school, an assessment will be made of the prospective candidate's personal and social development and behaviour as well as her progress to date in Literacy and Numeracy to ensure a smooth transition into the class.

The entry assessment will involve a review of the pupil's ability in:

- Literacy, including reading and writing
- Numeracy
- Verbal Reasoning/ Speaking and Listening
- Standardised tests will be administered

Parents are requested to inform the Head of Prep in writing of any particular circumstances which might affect a candidate's application e.g. IEP, Educational Psychologist's report, unusual family situation etc.

Providing they meet the entry requirements, sisters of existing pupils will be given priority.

Following assessment, parents will be informed by letter whether or not their child will be offered a place in the Prep Department. Upon receipt of an offer letter, parents are asked to confirm their acceptance by letter enclosing a deposit, which is retained until their daughter leaves the School. It is the intention of the School to make its selection procedures equally accessible to all candidates regardless of ethnicity, disability or background. Professional evaluation allows for some reduced performance on vocabulary related tests, where children may be working in a language other than their mother tongue.

The Headmistress' decision on admission is final.

SENIOR SCHOOL

Transfer to the Senior School at 11+

Preparatory Department pupils transfer to the Senior School by recommendation of the Head of the Preparatory Department, based on continuous assessment. Where it is deemed that the pupil is academically unsuited to the Senior School, discussions will be held with parents in Year 5 or earlier to advise them on other options. All pupils will be required to sit the Entrance Examination in order to assess their performance relative to external candidates. The Headmistress' decision on whether to admit a Preparatory Department pupil to the Senior School is final.

Entry to the Senior School at 11+

Visitors' Afternoons for 11+ entry are held throughout the year. An Open Evening takes place in the Autumn Term preceding the entrance examination. A tour of the School with a pupil guide is also available at this time. Parents are invited to contact the Admissions Secretary for details of all these events.

For external candidates, entry to the Senior School is by written examination in January before entry in September. The closing date for registration is in November. Places are offered on the basis of performance in the examination, a report from the girl's present school and an informal interview with the Headmistress. The candidate's current school will be asked to provide a reference but a candidate will not be disadvantaged if the school declines to do so.

The Headmistress' decision on admission is final. Some candidates will not receive immediate offers but will be informed that they have been placed on the waiting list. In the days between the issuing of offers and the deadline for acceptances, the Admission Secretary will keep in touch by telephone with the parents of candidates on the waiting list and offers will be made to them, in rank order, if places become available.

It is the intention of the School to make its selection procedures equally accessible to all candidates regardless of ethnicity, disability or background. Parents are requested to inform the Headmistress in writing of any particular circumstances which might affect a candidate's application.

Providing that they meet the entry requirements siblings are given priority.

Where twins apply to the School their applications will be considered separately but in the event of one twin being successful and the other unsuccessful, the Headmistress will consult their parents before making offers, to avoid unnecessary distress. Twins will generally be placed in different classes.

Girls are not usually considered for admission unless they are the normal age for their year group on 1st September. Exceptions are only made where there are strong reasons for believing that this is in the candidate's best interest.

Arrangement may be made for an overseas applicant to sit entrance papers under supervision in her current school. Candidates reaching the required standard will be invited to attend for interview.

Entry to the Sixth Form

The minimum entry requirement for the Sixth Form is normally eight GCSE passes at Grade B or above, including Mathematics and English Language. Grade A or better is normally required in each subject that a student wishes to continue at AS and A2 level.

Selection

The preconditions for admission at all levels are that:

- The Applicant is in sympathy with the Catholic ethos of the School
- The Applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
- The Applicant's learning difficulties (if any) are within the School's capacity to cope.
- The present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of parents and Applicant.
- Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid.

The academic criteria for selection are:

- Success in the St Catherine's School Entrance Examination/assessment.
- A positive recommendation from the Head of the Applicant's present school.
- A satisfactory interview at St Catherine's.

The preference factors subject to the above are:

- The Applicant is a practising Roman Catholic.

- The Applicant has special aptitudes or gifts. The School is looking for well-rounded and balanced pupils and those with exceptional abilities in sports, music and the arts.
- St Catherine's is the first choice of school.
- There is a current sibling in the School.

Factors which will not be taken into account in the assessment of a pupil for admission are: the Applicant's colour of skin, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, area of residence or socio-economic group.

Scholarships & Bursaries

Academic scholarships and exhibitions are awarded on the basis of the entrance examinations and interview – up to a maximum of 50% of the tuition fees. These are available to pupils joining the School at 11+ and 16+. Scholarships and Exhibitions are awarded on the basis of the entrance examination and are available to internal and external candidates. Academic scholars are expected to maintain an excellent effort and academic achievement in their subjects.

Music scholarships are also awarded to pupils joining the School at 11+ and 16+ on the basis of an audition and interview. Candidates for music scholarships are expected to have reached a high standard (Grade 4) on an orchestral or keyboard instrument of the Associated Board Examination or equivalent. Applicants will be required to attend an audition and interview. Auditions will take place early in the Spring Term. Candidates are required to perform one substantial or two shorter pieces, on their principal instrument, and one piece on a second instrument (if studied). There are also sight-reading and aural tests. The examination will be held during January and is additional to the Year 7 entrance examination. It is expected that the holders of Music Scholarships will play a full role in the musical life of the school. Music scholarships are only awarded to pupils who are successful in the entrance examination.

A Sports Scholarship is also available at 11+ to pupils joining the Senior School at 11+, and who have met the entry requirement in the Entrance Examination. Candidates are expected to have reached a high standard in at least one sport. They are required to attend an interview with the Head of PE and an assessment of practical skills will be carried out. The award of a Sports Scholarship is made on the understanding that the recipient is prepared to make a significant contribution to the sporting life of the school.

Art, Drama and Sport Scholarship

Girls who are awarded Scholarships will be expected to complete their education at St Catherine's. The School reserves the right not to award scholarships in a particular year. Girls will be eligible for scholarship examination/interview only if they are committed/firm candidates for the Senior School. Girls transferring from St Catherine's Preparatory Department are considered for scholarships and bursaries on the same basis as external candidates.

Means-tested bursaries are also available for girls from families with modest means. Parents will be sent the necessary bursary application forms on request once their 11+ application has been received and will be informed in the offer letter whether a bursary application has been successful.

Scholarships and bursaries may be withdrawn if, in the opinion of the Head and Governors, the pupil or a parent has not complied with the obligations associated with a scholarship/bursary, or if the pupil has fallen below the required standards of conduct and progress.

Entry between Years 8 and 10

Where occasional vacancies arise, candidates are required to take appropriate entrance papers and attend an interview. Entrance to Year 11 or Upper Sixth is not normally possible.

The Offer of a Place

The parents of each Applicant and the Head of the present school will be informed whether a place is being offered or not. The School will not be obliged to state its reasons for the rejection of an Applicant.

Sibling Discounts

A reduction of 5% is made in the case of the second, and 10% in the case of the third or subsequent member of the same family, all of whom are in attendance as fee-paying pupils at one and the same time.

Every pupil must reside with a parent or legal guardian while attending the School.

June 2008

Reviewed: September 2010

Next Review Date: September 2012