



## Whole School Admissions Policy (including Early Years)

### 1. General

St Edmund's School Canterbury is a co-educational independent day and boarding school for pupils aged 2-18. The school has c.600 pupils, c.130 of whom are boarders. The School welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all backgrounds, faiths, and nationalities who meet the entry requirements and for whom we can provide an appropriate and supportive educational environment. Our admissions process is designed to be fair, transparent, and consistent, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Independent School Standards Regulations, and all other relevant legislation. The School is committed to treating all applicants and their families with courtesy, respect, and sensitivity, and to ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of each child. This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for admission, including arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and boarding applicants, in line with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

We understand that deciding upon the right school for your child is crucially important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We very much hope that you and your child will visit St Edmund's. We hold a number of open events throughout the year, which give a general introduction to the school. Please refer to our website ([www.stedmunds.org.uk](http://www.stedmunds.org.uk)) for details. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children to the school at any other time. Please contact the Admissions Department to arrange a visit on 01227 475601 ([admissions@stedmunds.org.uk](mailto:admissions@stedmunds.org.uk)).

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010 (prohibiting discrimination on protected characteristics such as disability, race, religion, sex)
- Children and Families Act 2014 SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015, updated 2020)
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based provision (DfE, January 2024)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998 (especially Article 2 Protocol 1 – right to education)
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (DfE, latest version)
- UK Visas and Immigration Sponsor Guidance (for Child Student and Student routes)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, latest version)
- Education Act 1996 (general right to education provisions)
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Children Missing Education (DfE, September 2016);
- Working together to improve school attendance – (Gov.uk, August 2024).
- Technical guidance for schools in England (Equality and Human Rights Commission, September 2023)
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)

The selection criteria, admissions process and interview procedure are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Governors of the School.

## **2. Aims & Scope of the Policy**

The aims of this policy are:

- (i) To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes and its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- (ii) To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and fair to all applicants.
- (iii) 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.

This policy applies to all day pupils, boarders, UK and international applicants.

## **3. Entry Procedure**

Whilst covering a relatively wide spectrum of academic ability, St Edmund's is an academically selective school. Selection is based upon academic merit which is assessed through entry examinations, an interview at the school (where possible) and reports from the candidate's previous school. In the Pre-Prep and Lower Junior School, the interview is replaced by an assessment day (or part-day) in school. Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school.

In the Pre-Prep and Junior Schools, entry is at any age providing places are available. The usual points of entry are at 2+/Nursery, 4+/Reception, 7+/Year 3, 11+/Year 7, 13+/Year 9 and 16+/Year 12. The school may also have occasional places at other ages. Please contact the Admissions Department for details.

Applicants for admission should register before or during the year preceding the desired year of admission. Further details can be found on the school website here:

<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/admissions/>

#### **4. Equal Treatment**

St Edmund's aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Further information can be found in the School's Equality policy on the school website:

<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

St Edmund's is committed to equal treatment for all.

We have a zero-tolerance to racism or any other type of prejudice. We recognise we have an important role to play in sending a message that racism in all its forms can never be tolerated.

To this end, we promote a culture whereby individuals are not discriminated against in any way, but specifically in regard to age, sex, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, cultural background, marriage and civil partnership, special educational need, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

#### **5. The Assessment Process**

The aim of the process is to identify potential. St Edmund's is looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The school has strong traditions in music, drama, art, debating, community activities and sport. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for the entrance examinations is needed - all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and extra-curricular skills.

Assessment for Nursery consists of the child visiting for a morning or afternoon so that the school can ensure that the child is ready to enjoy the opportunities on offer. An informal assessment of their readiness to play and learn harmoniously with others is made. Assessment for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 consists of the child visiting for a morning or day so that their progress in Literacy and Numeracy can be assessed. The child's attitude to learning and their consideration of others is also taken into account.

Candidates for entry to Junior School are assessed in non-verbal reasoning, verbal reasoning, reading and writing. In addition, we encourage all candidates to spend a half day or full day in school to assess suitability to the school environment. We also consider using Kent Test results to determine entry into the school. Entry to all years in the Junior School is also subject to the satisfactory receipt of the child's last 2 school reports and a reference from his/her current school.

All other candidates from 13+ but below 16+ sit papers in English, Mathematics and Science - all are designed for particular age groups.

Candidates for entry at 16+ sit papers in English, Maths and a creative comprehension paper depending on their A-level choices. Our offer of places into Year 12 is conditional upon a candidate achieving a minimum of 6 GCSE passes at Grade C or above, including the GCSE grade thresholds (available in the Sixth Form Curriculum Handbook) in the subjects proposed for study at AS and A2.

Where possible, we interview all candidates as part of our assessment process for each age group (apart from Reception) and we offer a visit/assessment day.

The assessment process is conducted on an individual basis throughout the year and parents are notified in writing of the closing dates for acceptance of an offer of a place in the school.

## **6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

This section should be read in conjunction with the School's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities policy.

The School's approach to the detection and management of special educational needs and learning difficulties will be guided by the "Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years" (or any substitute or amending Code of Practice) issued from time to time by the Department for Education.

St Edmund's does not discriminate in any way regarding entry. The school welcomes pupils with special educational needs providing that the Additional Educational Needs Departments can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with disabilities provided that our site can safely accommodate them. However, we strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the school before he/she sits the entrance exams or has an admissions interview so that we can make adequate provision for him/her. Parents should provide a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report if they have one.

The School will make the necessary reasonable adjustments for prospective pupils during the admissions process (for example by providing extra time during scholarship examinations when applicable). Parents should notify the Admissions Office of any reasonable adjustments required for their child in advance of any admissions assessment. The school's Head of Learning Enhancement will be informed and ensure these adjustments are applied.

The school is always mindful of its responsibilities under the Equalities Act of 2010 and has a three year Accessibility Plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum and also to improve the provision of information to those pupils. The school will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the school.

The Special Educational Need and Disability Policy and the Accessibility Plan can be found here: <https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

## **7. Preconditions for admission**

The preconditions for admission are that:

- The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
- The family/child have made reasonable attempts to get to know the school e.g. have attended a tour, open day or taster morning,

- Parents and applicants (in an age appropriate manner) will be expected to engage and support the St Edmund's values which are published on our website.
- The School is able to provide adequately for any disability or special educational needs (if any) the applicant may have, making reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- The School, having made reasonable adjustments, has the capacity to cope with any disability the applicant may have.
- Any reference provided by the present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of parents or guardians and the applicant.
- Fees (if applicable) at the present or previous school(s) have been paid.
- The applicant has the legal right to live and study in the UK, or for those aged 16-18 will be sponsored by the School to do so.

## **8. Sibling Policy**

Most siblings join us at St Edmund's. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the school judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

## **9. Scholarships**

St Edmund's offers a number of exhibitions and scholarships each year for excellence in:

- Academic subjects (11+, 13+, 16+)
- Art (11+, 13+, 16+)
- Drama (11+, 13+, 16+)
- Music (11+, 13+, 16+)
- Sport (11+, 13+, 16+)

## **10. Purpose of Exhibitions and Scholarships**

Exhibitions and scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the exhibitioner or scholar is offered a reduction in the tuition fees throughout his/her time at St Edmund's given that the pupil continues to perform to the standard required. In addition, music scholars and exhibitioners are offered free tuition in up to three musical instruments, dependent upon their performance at interview. Parents are asked to indicate on the registration form at the end of this document whether they wish to apply for a scholarship. Details of the arrangements will be sent to all who express an interest.

All scholarship candidates are interviewed either by the Head of the Junior School or by the Head of St Edmund's.

### **Academic Scholarships**

External candidates who apply for both Junior (11+) and Senior School academic scholarships sit a separate entrance exam. A pupil who has not succeeded in the academic scholarship may be exempted from sitting the normal entrance examination, providing that he/she has performed sufficiently well.

Scholarships are held for the duration of a pupil's time at the school, provided his/her conduct and progress are satisfactory.

All candidates will be interviewed in addition to sitting papers in a range of academic disciplines.

### Music Exhibitions and Scholarships

Music exhibitions and scholarships are awarded to outstanding musicians who play any instrument or sing with exceptional ability. Interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Director of Music in the first instance for an informal pre-audition and subsequent applications should be supported by specialist references from candidates' current Heads of Music and instrumental/singing teachers, in addition to a reference from the Head of their current school. Candidates will be required to perform two pieces on their principal study, followed by one on additional instruments, and will also be asked to complete aural and sight reading tests. He/she will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to music and will be expected to make a contribution to the musical life of the school throughout their time at the school.

Music exhibitions and scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have met the school's entrance criteria.

### Sports Scholarships

Sports Scholarships are awarded to outstanding, all-round sportsmen/women who have achieved a high level of competence in one or more sports. He/she will be assessed and interviewed by the Junior School and Senior School Heads of Sport or members of the Sports Department and will be expected to demonstrate qualities of leadership and team play of a very high order. Candidates will be required to provide a specialist recommendation from their current sports coach in addition to a reference from the Head of their current school. They will be expected to make a contribution to the sporting life of the school throughout their time at the school.

Sports Scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have met the school's entrance criteria.

## **11. Bursaries**

Bursaries are means-tested and can be available to current parents on application. Both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the school. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income.

Bursaries are only offered to families who are resident in the UK.

Our bursary policy can be obtained from the Bursar or from the School Office.

## **12. Overseas Applicants**

We welcome overseas pupils to study at St Edmund's as boarding or day pupils provided that they have a relative or legal guardian living in the UK with whom they can live during term time or stay with during the exeat weekends or if they are asked to leave the school for a short period of time e.g. due to suspension from school. Compliance with UKVI requirements and appropriate guardianship arrangements are essential pre-conditions for admission to the school.

## **13. Fluency in English**

In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of St Edmund's, pupils should be, where possible, capable English speakers. However, tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged for those who need additional help with their English.

## **14. Religious Beliefs**

Although St Edmund's has Christian roots, the school offers the opportunity for Jews, Hindus, Muslims and other creeds to practise their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that there is a compulsory Saturday morning activities programme for boarders and that all pupils are expected to attend a number of services which take place in the school's Chapel and in the Cathedral throughout the year. The school is responsive to families with reasonable requests for exceptional consideration.

## **15. Oversubscription**

In the event that all places in a particular year group are filled, a waiting list (based on a ranking order derived from the assessment process) will operate for a period of time after the standard acceptance deadline has passed. Thereafter the waiting list will close, and any remaining waiting list applicants will be advised that the School is unable to offer them a place.

## **16. School's Contractual Terms & Conditions**

Copies are on the school website and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

To better protect pupil well-being and health, we particularly draw your attention to the importance of paragraph 9.3 of the School's contract with parents:

"You must notify us of your child's health/medical conditions or special educational needs. It is a condition of your child's joining and remaining at the School that you complete and submit to the School a medical questionnaire in respect of your child. You must inform the School of any health or medical condition, special educational need(s), disability or allergies that your child has or subsequently develops, whether long-term or short-term, including any infections. You must also provide us, whether upon further request by the School or otherwise, any reports or other materials relevant to any of the same."

## **17. Appeals and Complaints**

The school hopes that parents and pupils do not have any complaints about its admissions process, but copies of the school's complaints procedure can be viewed on the school website or sent to parents on request.

EOC  
September 2025

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairman of Governors**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:** September 2026

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1	January 2014	LJMH
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6	July 2017	LJMH
7	June 2018	LJMH
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9	September 2019	EOC
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11	September 2021	EOC
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13	September 2022	EOC
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