

# Admissions Policy and Procedure 2018

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy and procedures for the admission of pupils to The King's School, Witney. It has been approved by the Board of Governors of The King's School and an executive of Oxfordshire Community Churches.

The aim of this policy is to ensure a clear procedure for staff and prospective parents through which prospective pupils may become part of The King's School family.

The King's School is open to anyone in sympathy with its Christian aims and values. These values are listed in full in the parents' handbook and stated in general terms on the school's website.

The School is not academically selective. However, in view of the size and resources of the School, it will not always be able to meet the educational needs of every child. As such, the School reserves the right to assess suitability for admission or progression, by means of academic attainment threshold assessments, where judged necessary. (Further details can be found below.)

## **2. Admissions to Stepping Stones Nursery (including continuation through to Reception – YR)**

Applications for Nursery education through Stepping Stones are made by registering interest in your child joining the nursery, by requesting an application form from our Registrar. Receipt of the completed application form means your child will be put on a waiting list according to their age and at the appropriate time you will be invited to visit the setting. The Registrar will contact applicants in the spring term of the academic year prior to starting at Stepping Stones to confirm whether a place has been offered and to ask parents to confirm in writing their acceptance of this place. If no place is available, applicants will be notified and asked whether they would like their child to remain on the waiting list or not. In the term prior to starting we offer an orientation visit to the setting to meet the child's key worker and complete registration paperwork.

We cannot guarantee to be able to provide all the sessions you request, but we will work with you to try to accommodate your preferences in conjunction with the age and needs of your child over time. Offers of additional sessions as your child transitions through the Nursery will take into account any limitations placed on the setting in relation to ratios of staff to children and consequent availability of sessions.

During the autumn term of your child's N2 year, you will be invited to a school open day and/or to visit the Registrar to look around the main school. This is to facilitate your decision-making as to whether you would like your child to progress from Nursery into the Reception class. Applications to the main school should be submitted on or before

15 January of the year in which your child requires a Reception place in the September. This is subject to a threshold assessment and, if relevant, the school considering reasonable adjustments.

### **Step by step guide to the admission process to Stepping Stones**

- Step 1. An initial enquiry will be made through the Registrar.
- Step 2. This will be followed by attendance at an Open Day and/or a visit to the school.
- Step 3. Submission of application form. (Note – this will include a statement as to whether or not there is an intention to enter TKS Reception.) The application form must be accompanied by any relevant special needs or medical assessment documentation.
- Step 4. The school will reply to the applicant - either offering a place in Stepping Stones Nursery, or adding them to a waiting list.
- Step 5. Orientation sessions.
- Step 6. Written communication, with offer of specific morning or afternoon sessions
- Step 7. Written acceptance of the place by the parent.

### *Progression to Reception*

- Step 1. By 15 January of the year in which the child wishes to enter YR: written confirmation from parents that it is still the intention for their child to progress to Reception (or the submission of a formal application form), upon receipt of which, references from their church pastor/elder/vicar will be requested. The school may wish to undertake a simple attainment threshold assessment to ensure the child's suitability for progression into YR. Please note that, while applications and interviews for the September intake for Reception are conducted in a relatively informal manner, transition from Stepping Stones to Reception and Infants is *not* automatic.
- Step 2. The school will reply to the application. If successful, the family will either (a) be invited for interview, or (b) where necessary, the child will be included on a waiting list until a place becomes available.
- Step 3. Final interview.
- Step 4. Written communication to the applicant, confirming offer of a place (or, if unsuccessful, reasons why a place cannot be offered).
- Step 5. Written acceptance of the place by the parent.

### **3. Admissions directly into YR and all other year groups in the School**

#### Being Non-Selective

The School is not academically selective. Pupils do not have to pass an entrance exam in order to gain admission to the school. However, in view of the size and resources of the school, it will not always be able to meet the educational needs of every child. As such, where it is felt that a prospective pupil's educational, emotional or behavioural needs might be beyond the resources of the school, threshold assessments and tests will be carried out, to help determine whether or not a place can be offered. This decision will be made by the Principal in consultation with relevant staff, Governors and the prospective parents. To enable us to reach a decision, further information may be requested from the current school attended.

## Being Christian

As a Christian school, it is expected that prospective families will support the Christian ethos of the school. For many parents this will mean taking an active part in their local church, and a reference from a church leader to demonstrate this will be requested. However, church attendance is not obligatory for a successful application to the school.

## Disability

In accordance with the Equality Act of 2010, the school does not exclude pupils on the grounds of disability. Where the school cannot adequately serve the academic needs of the child we will communicate this to families at the earliest opportunity (whether this is during the application process or following admission) in order that an alternative and more suitable option can be appropriately identified.

## When do pupils join the School?

Most students will join us at or before Reception and progress right through the school. However we also expect year groups will expand as students pass through the school as other children join at different stages. Applications are therefore considered at any stage (although in general pupils would only join after the commencement of Y10 in exceptional circumstances).

As a general rule, students will be enrolled into the correct year group for their age. However, if there are good reasons to enrol a student a year ahead or behind we will consider this option. In the event of a child repeating a year, fees will be payable at the prevailing rate for the stage of education. For example, if a child needs to stay in the Nursery for longer, fees will be based upon the hourly rate applicable.

## The application process

Initial enquiry may be by telephone or e-mail to the school Registrar or via an Open Day visit. A visit may be arranged for the prospective parents to meet the school Principal and Registrar and to look round the school, with or without the prospective pupil. For parents of pupils progressing from Nursery into our Reception class, this initial meeting may be with our Head of Primary and Registrar and will set out the school's Christian ethos and provide you with a fees calculation projection as well as an opportunity to see the school in action. For parents of current pupils progressing from our Primary to Secondary departments, we are happy to offer a meeting on request with the Head of Secondary and our Registrar to answer any questions you may have about the next stage of education and to look around the Secondary department.

The prospective pupil is invited to a taster day with the year group they would be joining. For pupils considering joining the school in Year 7, a Secondary taster day is held with the current Year 6 pupils in the Autumn Term. In order to ensure that the school is able to adequately meet the prospective pupil's needs on the taster day, we generally request sight of the most recent school report beforehand. We will also request a threshold assessment where there are concerns regarding the academic levels of an applicant. Parents should declare if a prospective pupil has a disability so that we can assess what adjustments need to be considered ahead of the day.

After the taster day, if the family wish to pursue an application, the appropriate application form must be completed and sent with a non-refundable registration fee of £75 to the Registrar. The registration fee does not apply to applications for a nursery place. Ahead of interview the latest two school reports and any SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) assessment documents should be supplied by the parents to the Registrar.

If the application is for a future start date, the applicant's name is recorded on the school waiting list.

Applications and interviews for the September intake for Reception are relatively informal and conducted during the Spring Term in the year prior to starting. Applications for a place in the Reception class should be submitted to the Registrar on or before 15 January when the child is in N2. Applications after the 15 January deadline will be considered if there are places available in the year group. Families applying for their first child to join our Reception class are generally offered a parent interview with our Reception teacher, the Head of Primary and potentially a representative of Oxfordshire Community Churches. An interview is not usually necessary for subsequent children in the same family making this transition.

### Interviews

Children who are old enough to participate are personally interviewed along with their parents. Interviews are conducted by the relevant class tutor or year tutor, along with one of the Head of Primary, Head of Secondary or the School Principal, as appropriate. In recognition of the spiritual ethos of the school, a representative of Oxfordshire Community Churches may also be present at interviews. We may offer to hold the first interview for any family in their home to make the child or children feel at ease. Subsequent interviews for other children of the same family will usually be held at school.

During interviews any further questions should be asked as it is both an opportunity for parents and staff to be clear about what is being offered by the parents and the school. Issues will be covered such as: the ethos of the school; the governance structures; the financial procedures; transport issues; what parent volunteering is being offered.

### The decision

The decision to accept a pupil into the school is made by the representatives of the school who attend the interview. The decision will take into account:

- Whether the child wants to attend a Christian school (where the child is mature enough to have a view)
- The parents and prospective pupil being in agreement with the school's Christian values and understanding the volunteering culture
- The capability of the school to meet the child's needs
- Prayerful consideration

### Key transition points

For pupils moving from the Reception class in Stepping Stones into the Infants, there is an orientation process to help them get to know their new teacher during the summer term. Parents are invited to attend an Induction meeting about life in the Infants to help them prepare themselves and their child. Similarly, we offer an information meeting to parents as their children move from Infants to Juniors during the summer term when their child is in Year 2 to help set out some of the practical differences in day to day school life and the changing expectations.

Progression through the school from the Primary department to our Secondary department takes place without necessity of completion of a further application form. Where there are concerns raised about the suitability of the Secondary department, this will be raised during Y4 and Y5. Threshold testing will occur in the summer term of Y4 and an IEP meeting with parents and SENCO during Y4 and in the first term of Y5 will indicate to parents if issues arise regarding potential entry into Y7 (see the 'Step by Step' guide below for further information about procedures in such cases).

Pupils intending to progress into Y7 are invited to participate in a Secondary department taster day in the autumn term of Y6 and parents are invited to an Induction evening in the summer term of Y6. We are happy to offer parents a meeting with our Head of Secondary and our Registrar on request.

In the case of pupils wishing to transfer to The King's School mid-year from another school, efforts are made to facilitate interviews as quickly as possible.

**Step by step guide to the admission process to YR and above.**

- Step 1. An initial enquiry will be made through the Registrar.
- Step 2. This will be followed by attendance at an Open Day and/or a visit to the school.
- Step 3. Submission of reports from previous schools, including any SEN documentation.
- Step 4. Taster Days for pupils. The school may at this point wish to undertake an attainment threshold assessment to ensure the child's suitability for entry into the relevant year group.
- Step 5. Completion and submission of application form with reference from lead church pastor/elder/vicar (with registration fee).
- Step 6. For non-casual admissions applying for a future academic year, the closing date is 15<sup>th</sup> January, after which the school panel will convene to decide upon offers for interview
- Step 7. Written communication to the applicant, inviting to a final interview; or, where necessary, placing the applicant on a waiting list, or explaining why the application has not been successful.
- Step 8. Final interview.
- Step 9. Written communication to the applicant: either the offer of a place; or explaining reasons why an offer cannot be made.
- Step 10. Written acceptance of the place with deposit from the parent

*Progression from TKS Primary to TKS Secondary.*

- Step 1 Progression to the Secondary department will be automatically agreed for most pupils. However, if a pupil has significant needs which might make progression to the Secondary department unsuitable, an assessment process (outlined below) will take place.
- Step 2. Threshold testing for all pupils will occur in the Summer Term of Y4.
- Step 3. IEP meetings with parents during Y4 and in the first term of Y5 will indicate to parents if issues arise regarding potential entry at Y7.
- Step 4. If progression to the Secondary department is in doubt, from the first term of Y5, parents will start to explore other options available, including government funding and EHC plans.
- Step 5. Applications for government funding or applications to other schools should be set in motion by parents by March of the Y5 academic year, where *any* concern about offering a place in the Secondary department remains.
- Step 6. Should the school be unable to offer a place to a pupil for Y7, this will be made clear to the parent by the end of the Autumn Term of Y6. This allows as much time as possible, up to this point, for the pupil to improve, or potential support to be agreed. (As this will be too late to *begin* an application process elsewhere that needs to have been initiated by the parents well before this final decision date as indicated in 5.)
- Step 7, Any appeal should be completed by the end of February in Y6. (Other state schools' offers are made from the start of March)

## Appendix A

### Criteria for admissions when there are more applicants than places

Our small class sizes are a strength of the school, offering individual attention and strong pastoral care. Therefore the Governors and Senior Management Team agree the maximum number of pupils there may be within each Year group. This is determined by, and takes account of: the number of pupils we can legally have on site, school resources, staffing and space, as well as good educational practice. More places are available as a class progresses through the school. Where the maximum number of pupils in a year group has not yet been reached, casual admissions may be considered at any time. Should there be more applicants than places into a particular Year group, the following criteria will be used to determine the allocation of places.

#### Nursery (Stepping Stones)

- Where there are more applicants than places, priority will be given to those stating their intention to continue into the Reception Year at the School.
- Parents who do not intend their child to enter Reception may be placed on a waiting list.
- Applications will be then considered in the order in which an application was made.

#### YR-Y11

Where there are more applicants than places, priority will be given to:

1. Applicants with a sibling already in the school. Priority will be given to those on the waiting list the longest.
2. Remaining places will normally be allocated to applicants acknowledged by the interview panel as belonging to Christian families\* prepared to pay full fees and/or able to give voluntary time to support the educational provision. Within this category priority will be allocated as follows:
  - Firstly, those pupils already registered at an educational establishment operated by Oxfordshire Community Churches (e.g. Tyndale School, Oxford) applying to join at the appropriate transition point (Reception or into Year 7)
  - Secondly, those pupils already registered at Emmanuel Christian School, Oxford
  - Thirdly, those who have been listed on The King's School's waiting list the longest.
  - Fourthly, children of families who are active members of one of the Oxfordshire Community Churches
3. Applicants acknowledged by the interview panel as belonging to Christian families\* and where an assisted place is available. Within this category priority will be allocated as follows:
  - Firstly, those pupils already registered at an educational establishment operated by Oxfordshire Community Churches (e.g. Tyndale School, Oxford) applying to join at the appropriate transition point (Reception or into Year 7)
  - Secondly, those pupils already registered at Emmanuel Christian School, Oxford
  - Thirdly, those who have been listed on The King's School's waiting list the longest.
  - Fourthly, children of families who are active members of one of the Oxfordshire Community Churches
4. If after all the above factors have been taken into consideration there are still places available, applicants from the wider community acknowledged by the interview panel as being in sympathy with the school's Christian ethos and prepared to pay full fees will be considered. The number of admissions from the wider community is not to exceed 20% of the year group. Priority will be given to those who have been on the waiting list the longest.
5. Exceptional admissions may be considered at the Principal's discretion in conjunction with the Chair of Governors e.g. for TKS staff or for missionary families supported by Oxfordshire Community Churches returning on temporary furlough, or where recalled for reasons of security.

\* A reference from the family's most recent church leader will be sought, confirming the commitment of the parents in church activities.

## **Appendix B**

### **Reasonable Adjustment and Equality of Opportunity for those with Disabilities**

#### **Equal treatment**

All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their, or their parents' race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, orientation, property, birth or other status. We expect all of our families to support wholeheartedly the Christian virtues, mission and vision of the school which are fundamental to our Christian ethos and which pervade every aspect of school life. Human rights and freedoms are respected but must be balanced with the lawful needs and rules of our School Community and the rights and freedoms of others.

#### **Tier 4**

The School is not registered as a Tier 4 School. As such, we are unable to consider applications from enquirers wanting unaccompanied children to be sponsored for an educational visa.

#### **Disability and Special Educational Needs**

The School's admissions policies and procedures comply fully with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. The School currently has limited facilities for the disabled. However, all reasonable adjustments will be undertaken, in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities. The School needs to be made aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a child's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the School. Parents of a child who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the School with full details prior to the admissions procedure, at registration, or subsequently before accepting the offer of a place.

The School needs this information so that, in the case of any child with particular needs, the School can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to ensure that the application procedure is accessible for the child and that the School can cater adequately for the pupil should an offer of a place be made.

The School will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the information and application procedure are accessible for disabled candidates and will make such reasonable adjustments as necessary. For example, the School would be able to provide an examination paper in large font for a visually impaired pupil.

Similarly, if special education needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments in order to allow the child to continue at the School. Any reasonable financial costs involved will be discussed with the parent.

#### **Admissions Procedure for Pupils**

The School will be open to applications from any prospective pupil with a physical and/or mental impairment. Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the child's ability and aptitude. The registration and admission form will enable the parents to give details of their child's disability. The School will treat every application from a disabled child in a fair, open-minded way.

The School will, if appropriate, request from the parents or previous school full details in the form of medical reports, educational psychologist reports and any other report which assesses the child's disability so that the School can make an assessment of the reasonable adjustments that would be needed in order to provide adequately for the child's physical and educational needs.

Applications will be considered on the basis that all reasonable adjustments have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's disability (see definition below). A place will not be offered if, after all reasonable adjustments have been made, it is judged that the School will not be able to provide adequately or appropriately for the child's physical and educational needs; or if attending to the child's needs would, to an unreasonable degree, affect the educational progress and welfare of classmates, or the welfare of staff.

The School will inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are prepared to make or give reasons why the offer of a place will not be made.

### **Reasonable Adjustments Defined**

When providing educational services to a pupil, the School is legally required to make '**reasonable adjustments**' in order to cater for a pupil's disability.

Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room;
- providing examination papers in larger print for a child with a visual impairment;
- rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend a class in an accessible part of the building;

The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include physical alterations such as the provision of expensive computer equipment, a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, or a new library.

In making "reasonable adjustments" the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

**Existing and prospective pupils:** Where the School becomes aware of a disability or special educational need of an existing pupil, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil whilst at the School. If, after reasonable adjustments are made or carefully considered, the impact of managing existing or prospective pupils' needs or behaviour is considered to be sufficiently great that it compromises the education and well-being of other pupils or staff, then that is a strong, sometimes decisive, factor that the Principal will have to consider. If in the professional judgement of the Principal and relevant staff, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical, educational or behavioural needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, or if attending to the child's needs affects to an unreasonable degree the educational progress and welfare of classmates, or the welfare of staff, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fees in lieu of notice. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.

**Access:** The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary.

### **INTERNAL PROGRESSION**

Progression from one year group to the next is usually automatic, unless it is felt that this would not be in the best interest of the child or the other children, once reasonable adjustments have been made. In such cases, there will be consultations with the relevant Head or Principal well in advance and the parents will have been given advice regarding their child's needs.

## Disability Defined

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a "*substantial and long-term adverse effect*" on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity. (**EA 2010**).

By way of further explanation:

- i physical disability includes medical conditions for which a person needs to use a wheelchair, for example, cerebral palsy or brittle bones;
- ii a mental impairment is a recognised mental illness which has been diagnosed, a severe learning difficulty or a psychiatric illness;
- iii "long-term" means a period of 12 months or longer.

Other disabilities which may amount to a defined disability include:

- severe disfigurements, scarring conditions and birthmarks (but not including tattoos or piercings);
- progressive conditions which will result in a substantial long-term adverse effect on day-to-day activity;
- a controlled impairment, i.e. a person with a prosthesis, or a person with drug-controlled epilepsy or diabetes;
- a history of impairment, for example a person who used to be disabled and has recovered, or for example, a person with a previous mental illness.

Disability does not include:

- hay fever sufferers;
- a person with anti-social tendencies;
- a person who has a behavioural difficulty, for a reason other than a disability, for example, arising from social or domestic circumstances;
- a person who is addicted to nicotine, alcohol and other non-prescribed substances unless the addiction was originally the result of administration of medically prescribed drugs or other medical treatment.