

ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL

Admissions Policy and Procedures

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL

St Margaret's School (the "**School**") is an independent school for pupils from ages 2 to 18, located in Bushey, Hertfordshire.

The aims of this policy are:

- i. To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purpose.
- ii. To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and fair to applicants.
- iii. To identify applicants who will thrive in and contribute to the School's community due to their academic abilities, extra-curricular interests and personal characteristics.

The School's selection criteria and interview procedures are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Governors of the School. Those involved in selection and interviewing have received appropriate training. The Head is responsible for admissions and the operation of this policy.

THE ENTRY PROCEDURE

St Margaret's School is a selective school. Our selection process (see details **below**) 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.

The usual points of entry are into the Nursery and then at 4+, 7+, 11+, 13+ and 16+. The School may also have occasional places at other ages. Please contact the Admissions department for details.

For entry in September, applicants for admission should register by the date stated on the website, year preceding the desired year of admission by completion of a Registration Form and payment of a non-refundable registration fee. The School's Registration Form is available on the School's website, the admissions team will answer questions and supply information including a prospectus and curricular information specific to the relevant section of the School.

The Assessment Process

The aim of the process is to identify potential. St Margaret's School 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.

The preconditions for admission are that:

- The applicant must be of an appropriate age.
- The School is able to provide adequately for any Special Educational Needs the applicant may have.
- The School, having made reasonable adjustments, is able to cater for any disability. See further details in the Special Educational Needs paragraph below.
- Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid.

The academic criteria for selection in St Margaret's School are:

- A satisfactory performance in assessment at the School
- A positive recommendation from the applicant's present school (if applicable)

The preference factors subject to the preconditions and criteria above are that the applicable is judged to be a pupil who:

- will thrive at the School
- will consistently behave in accordance with the ethos of the School
- will take full advantage of the educational and extra-curricular provision the School offers
- will contribute fully to School life
- will offer an exceptional contribution in a particular area such as music, sport or the arts
- has a sibling at the School.

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

Further details in relation to applicable entrance tests for the Junior School, Senior School and Sixth Form are set out below.

The dates for the assessment process for the current year are published on our website, together with the dates that results are posted to families and the closing date for acceptances. We will offer places to candidates from our waiting list after the closing date for acceptances.

References will be sought from the Head of a candidate's current school as part of the assessment process.

Junior School

The main points of entry are into the Nursery and Pre Reception, Reception and into Y3. However, we do also have children join through occasional spaces, if space in a year group opens up or if we are not full. Parents are able to register their child's name expressing an interest in a place at any stage.

For entry into the Nursery: offers of a place are based on a report from the child's nursery and a practical age appropriate assessment followed by an informal meeting between the Head of the Junior School or Nursery Manager, the parents and their child.

For entry in Reception: offers of a place are based on a report from the child's nursery and a practical age appropriate assessment followed by an informal meeting between the Head of the Junior School or Nursery Manager, the parents and their child.

For all other year groups, offers of places are made on the basis of an entrance test in English and Mathematics, a taster day and a report from the Head of the child's current school.

The majority of our Year 6 pupils have a place in the Senior School, if they have been in attendance at the Junior School since Year 4. All pupils at the Junior School sit the Senior School entrance exam. The School will discuss individual pupils with families if it is felt that the school would be unable to meet a child's needs further through the school.

Senior School

The main entry to the Senior School is at 11+. Applicants sit entrance examinations in November of the year preceding entry in verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and Mathematics. Decisions are made on the basis of the results in these examinations, an individual interview and a report from the Head of the applicant's current school.

The senior School also has a 13+ entry, this is taken as deferred entry and children are invited in during Y6 or Y7, offers are made for a Y9 entry, this is usually for pupils at a Prep School that goes to Y8.

On occasion the pupils may enter the senior school through occasional spaces across year groups. This is dependent on space being available and a match between the education we offer and the child's need. Parents are able to register their child's name expressing an interest in a place at any stage.

Sixth Form

Entry to the Sixth Form is dependent on at least six GCSE Level 5 grades or above, with Level 6 grades in the subjects they wish to study at Advanced level, excepting Sciences and Mathematics which require Level 7s, as set out in the current Sixth Form booklet. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be admitted with lower grades.

For internal and external domestic students, conditional offers of places are made on the basis of an application from the student and then interview with the Head, Academic Director or Director of Sixth Form.

For external overseas students, conditional offers of places are normally made on the basis of an application, interview face to face or Skype with the Head, Academic Director or Director of Sixth Form, a report from the Head of the applicant's current school and entrance tests in English and Mathematics, additional papers set by Heads of Department of key subject areas such as Science, and UKiset external assessments. In most cases a minimum IELTS level of 5.0 will be required as proof of academic English competency.

A Sixth Form Open Evening for parents and prospective Sixth Form pupils is held in the Summer term of Year 10 and the Autumn term of Year 11 each year. This is then followed by a Sixth Form Taster day in the Autumn Term of Year 11 where both internal and external prospective students are able to enjoy a 'day in the life' of a Sixth Former, undertaking A-Level taster lessons and spending time in the Sixth Form Centre with staff and Prefects. These are the main opportunities in the School year to find out about A Level choices, extracurricular activities and life in the Sixth Form, however there is also an additional 'taster morning' in June of Year 11 where formal taster lessons are timetabled primarily for the dissemination of information and summer bridging work, but this is a chance for additional external applicants to experience the school prior to making an application.

Equal Treatment

St Margaret School'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. Generous bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School. The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

St Margaret's School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.

Special Educational Needs

St Margaret's School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can offer them the support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our physical site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Parents of children with SEND are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the School considers the application for a place and before they sit the School's entrance exam so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day.

Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support a request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements. The School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEND through discussion and meetings with parents; consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools; assessment and observation of the pupil through our assessment process, as appropriate.

There may be circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's SEND. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or the provision mapped out in section F of an EHCP is not deliverable by the School, or that his/her health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we reserve the right to decline a place at the School.

The School recognises that children's needs change as they grow; where future review is deemed appropriate, this may be stipulated in an applicant's offer letter.

Send Process outlined:

Prospective families with a child with SEND should share additional information with the school before registration.

The school will then review the information and arrange contact to learn more about the SEND.

At this stage a decision will be made to either continue the standard admissions process, with reasonable adjustments in the assessments. Or the school will decide they are unable to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's SEND.

Open Day

Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. Prior to registration parents are encouraged to visit the School on one of the regular Open Days publicised on the School's website. They will be shown around the School and will have the opportunity to meet the Head and Senior Management Team. If attendance at the Open Day is not possible, a visit during the working school day can be arranged through the Admissions Department.

We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. Please contact the School's Admissions Department to arrange a visit. If it is not possible to hold open events or arrange school visits because of circumstances beyond the School's control, then the School publishes on its website the alternative arrangements in place.

Sibling Policy

Most siblings join us at St Margaret's School. 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.

Admission of the Children of Staff

Children of school staff may be given priority over other applicants when determining waiting lists or priority order for the offer of places.

Scholarships And Bursaries

St Margaret School's bursary programme is generous and is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet the School's entry criteria to take up a place here. The School offers a limited number of means-tested awards annually. Scholarships are also awarded each year at 11+, 13+ and Sixth Form level to both internal and external candidates. Parents are asked to indicate on the Registration Form whether they wish to apply for a scholarship. Details of the assessment arrangements will be sent to candidates upon receipt of the scholarship application form that is available to download from our website.

A fee remission is given for siblings, the children of Anglican clergy, forces children (including F&CO) and children of former pupils.

A bursary or scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or otherwise in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

Further details on the School's bursaries and scholarships can be found in the Bursaries and Scholarships Policy or from the Finance office.

Overseas Applicants

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at St Margaret's School provided that they have a relative or responsible adult living in the UK with whom he/she can stay for some weekends, more details of which are contained in the School's Terms and Conditions. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expect overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study such as Years 9-11, or Years 12 -13.

Applications from abroad are registered in the usual way but arrangements can be made for tests to be administered by educational agents or the applicant's current school at a time and date which is mutually convenient. In most cases, overseas applicants will have a skype interview with the Head.

Tests in English and Mathematics, specific subject related papers and a UKISET score may be required along with a report request from the applicant's current school. In most cases, a minimum IELTS level of 5.0 will be required as proof of academic English competency, and form part of a conditional offer.

In some exceptional cases, the Head may decide to award unconditional offers to an overseas student.

Fluency In English

In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of St Margaret's School, pupils must be fluent English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English medium for a number of years before coming to the School. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

Progression

St Margaret's is a through-school, pupils' progress is reviewed at key transition points. From time to time, there may be occasions for pastoral or academic reasons where moving up is not beneficial for the child. In these cases the school will be in ongoing discussion with the family regarding their future school.

School's Terms & Conditions

The School's Terms and Conditions will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Concerns and complaints

The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website and can be sent to prospective parents on request. The Complaints Procedure is not available for use by prospective parents. However, prospective parents have the right to appeal decisions made during the admissions process; in line with the spirit of our complaints procedure, we aim to resolve any such appeals at the informal stage one level wherever possible.

Records And Review

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice and Data protection policy

The School will not hold the personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no more than two years, but reasons to retain for longer might include: if the parents express an interest in the candidate re-applying for any reason at a later date, or in the potential candidacy of another sibling; or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.

Appeals Process

Following the provision of a written decision to a prospective family, families have ten working days to appeal the decision in writing. Appeals will be heard by:

stage 1: informal resolution by a member of SMT

stage 2: formal meeting with the Head

stage 3: Governor-led panel meeting

There is no further right of appeal after this point.

Future policy changes

This policy may be amended at any meeting of the governing body, in which case the revised policy would take immediate effect.

Admissions Policy.

Revised June 2023