

ADMISSIONS POLICY (INCLUDING EYFS)

Introduction

St Mary's is a highly successful Independent Day School, founded in 1908. The pupils are aged 3-16 years (including boys aged 3-4 years) and spread across a Lower (including the Kindergarten) and Senior School, which are located on two sites, approximately 3 miles apart and set in attractive surroundings.

Vision

To empower girls to thrive at St Mary's and beyond.

Mission

Using our expertise in educating girls and the latest research, we empower girls by inspiring them to see the world as one of limitless possibilities and by equipping them with the knowledge, experiences and skills needed to thrive at St Mary's and beyond. We do this in an environment designed specifically for girls; one that is safe in every respect - to experiment and question, to take risks and follow passions, to innovate and lead - one that is free from judgement and stereotypes, and full of respect and support.

Aims of the School

- To provide an **ambitious**, girl-centred education
- To foster high aspirations and a **bold** attitude
- To create a **compassionate** culture where every girl is known, supported and understood
- To develop pupils' understanding of the world so they become **dynamic** and engaged global citizens
- To promote intellectual curiosity and an **enquiring** mindset

Entry Procedure – Kindergarten only

1. Once parents have contacted the School showing an interest in a place at the Kindergarten for their child, the Registrar will arrange a visit to the setting.
2. Parents wishing to send their child to the Kindergarten must register them by completing the School's Registration Form and providing their child's original birth certificate.

3. Once a place has been offered, parents are asked to confirm in writing in order to secure the place and pay a refundable Admission Deposit of £50 which will be credited against the first month's invoice.
4. Once parents have formally accepted a place, they will be entering into a legally binding contract with the School and as such will be required to abide by the School's Terms and Conditions. It is important that parents understand these and ask questions if they require clarification on any points.
5. Progress from Kindergarten to Lower School is not automatic. Consideration at each stage of progression is given to, amongst other things, academic attainment, behaviour and the School's ability to meet any additional needs.

Entry Procedure – Lower & Senior Schools only

1. Once parents have contacted the School showing an interest in a place for their child, the Registrar will arrange a visit to the School.
2. Parents wishing to send their child to St Mary's School must register them by completing the School's Registration Form, providing the child's original birth certificate and paying a non-refundable Registration Fee of £125.
3. Once a place has been offered, parents are asked to confirm in writing and to pay an Entry Deposit in order to secure the place.
4. Once parents have formally accepted a place, they will be entering into a legally binding contract with the School and as such will be required to abide by the School's Terms and Conditions. It is important that parents understand these and ask questions if they require clarification on any points.
5. Progress from Lower School to Senior School is not automatic. Consideration at each stage of progression is given to, amongst other things, academic attainment, behaviour and the School's ability to meet any additional needs.

Criteria for places and class sizes

In the event of the Kindergarten being over-subscribed, places will be offered to children according to the following criteria, in order of priority:

1. Children with siblings already in the School, children registered for St Mary's Lower School and children who are children of staff;
2. Date of registration

Children who are priority level 1 will be offered places once registered, if available. Remaining places will be offered no later than 6 months prior to the start date, unless registration is within 6 months of the start date, in which case places will be offered following registration, if available.

Places for entry into Prep and Year 7 will be offered according to the criteria below in order of priority. For places in all other year groups, or entry into Prep and Year 7 after National Offer Day, in the event of a year group being over-subscribed, at the point of a taster day being arranged, places will be offered to pupils according to the following criteria in order

of priority:

1. Pupils with siblings already in the School;
2. Date of registration.

The Principal reserves the right to refuse entry to the School for any child. The School is under no obligation to provide feedback on the reasons for refusing entry to the School.

Class size is set at the discretion of the Principal.

Entry to Kindergarten

The Kindergarten admits children from the beginning of the term in which their third birthday falls. Parents are invited to view the Kindergarten by arranging an appointment via the Registrar.

Once parents have decided that they would like their child to join the Kindergarten they are asked to complete the Kindergarten Registration Form, provide the child's original birth certificate, and state the sessions they would like their child to attend. When the School has confirmed that the requested sessions can be accommodated, parents will be required to sign up to the Terms and Conditions of the Kindergarten and pay a refundable Admission Deposit of £50. This Admission Deposit will then be credited against the first month's invoice.

When a child is ready to start Kindergarten, parent and child are invited to attend for a familiarisation session.

The school currently offers 15 hours per week Government funding based on an attendance of 38 weeks per year. For attendance of 51 weeks per year, the 15 hours per week Government funding will be spread evenly across the weeks. This commences the term following a child's third birthday.

Term time only places are kept to a minimum and are only offered to children who have older siblings already attending St Mary's School.

Entry into Lower School

Prep (Reception Class)

Following a tour of the school, parents wishing for their child to join St Mary's School must register them by completing the Registration Form, providing the child's original birth certificate, and paying the non-refundable Registration Fee of £125.

Pupils are admitted at the beginning of the academic year in which they turn five. Places are formally offered by the School in writing to Pupils who are already registered with us at the beginning of the Spring Term. Acceptance of a place must be in writing and received by the School, along with an Entry Deposit of £400 to be received by the date provided in the offer letter. The following rules apply to the Entry Deposit:

1. When a pupil leaves St Mary's School, providing correct notice has been given, the Entry Deposit will be credited to the last invoice payable by parents or otherwise unless agreed otherwise between St Mary's School and the parents or otherwise;

2. if parents or otherwise of a pupil pay the Entry Deposit but withdraw a pupil from St Mary's Lower School either before their first day or on or after their first day at St Mary's Lower School and fails to provide 1 terms' notice, the Entry Deposit will be offset against the fees owed to St Mary's School in lieu of notice;
3. If the parents or otherwise pay the Entry Deposit but withdraw a pupil before their first day at St Mary's Lower School and provides St Mary's School with 1 terms notice so no fees in lieu are payable, the Entry Deposit will not be refunded;
4. The Entry Deposit of a pupil at St Mary's Lower School is automatically transferred to St Mary's Senior School (if a pupil is awarded a place at the Senior School) on their behalf and will be credited to the last invoice payable by parents or otherwise providing the appropriate notice to leave is provided, as applicable (unless agreed otherwise by St Mary's School);
5. In all other cases the Entry Deposit is non-refundable unless St Mary's School confirms otherwise.

In spite of the above, St Mary's School reserves the right to retain any or all of the Entry Deposit provided it is to offset against any unpaid fees due from the parents or otherwise of a pupil that has left St Mary's School.

Once your acceptance is confirmed by the School, parents are invited to attend a meeting with their child's teacher in the Summer Term so that the School can begin to formulate her learning journey.

Years 1-6 (and Prep if later than September start)

1. Following a tour of the School with the Registrar and the return of a completed registration form, the Registrar will then arrange for the child to attend School for two taster days. This allows the class teacher to observe the child informally enabling us to build a picture as to whether the school is suitable for the child. We also require copies of previous school reports, a reference from the current school, evidence of previous academic achievement as well as attendance at a parent meeting with the Head of the Lower School.
2. Once it has been established that St Mary's is a School suited to the needs of the child, the Registrar writes to the parents confirming a place within the School. The place must be accepted by the deadline stated within the offer letter.
3. If there are no places available at the time of registration, the child's name is placed on a waiting list and the parents are informed as soon as a place becomes available. Places are offered based on the same order of priority listed above.

Entry into Senior School

Year 7

1. Pupils entering Year 7 are asked to ideally register prior to the November that precedes the September entry date (specific deadlines for each year are detailed in School admissions literature and on the School website). However, registrations will be accepted after this date subject to availability.
2. In the Autumn term prior to the year they join, or upon registration if this date is later,

a school reference will be requested from their current school.

3. The Year 7 Entry Assessment for all candidates takes place in November.
4. Interviews with the Principal and/or other senior members of staff are then held, along with further Scholarship assessments.
5. Places in Year 7 are offered on the basis of candidates' performance in the Year 7 Entry Assessment, interview, school reference and school report.

Parents are asked to accept their child's place in writing by the deadline provided in the offer letter. Parents of Pupils who do not attend St Mary's Lower School are required to pay an Entry Deposit of £400. The following rules apply to the Entry Deposit:

1. When a pupil leaves St Mary's School, providing correct notice has been given, the Entry Deposit will be credited to the last invoice payable by parents or otherwise unless agreed otherwise between St Mary's School and the parents or otherwise;
2. if parents or otherwise of a pupil pay the Entry Deposit but withdraw a pupil from St Mary's School either before their first day or on or after their first day at St Mary's Senior School and fails to provide 1 terms' notice, the Entry Deposit will be offset against the fees owed to St Mary's School in lieu of notice;
3. If the parents or otherwise pay the Entry Deposit but withdraw a pupil before their first day at St Mary's Senior School and provides St Mary's School with 1 terms notice so no fees in lieu are payable, the Entry Deposit will not be refunded;
4. In all other cases the Entry Deposit is non-refundable.

In spite of the above, St Mary's School reserves the right to retain any or all of the Entry Deposit provided it is to offset against any unpaid fees due from the parents or otherwise of a pupil that has left St Mary's School.

Years 8-10 (and Year 7 if later than September start)

As and when places become available at the School, candidates are asked to take an Entry Assessment, attend two taster days in School and to meet the Head of the Senior School prior to a place being offered. A report and reference from the candidate's current / previous school will be required prior to attendance at the first taster day. Parents are then asked to accept their child's place in writing and pay an Entry Deposit of £400. The Entry Deposit is refundable on leaving the School, provided the required notice to leave has been given. The school reserves the right to retain any or all of the Entry Deposit to offset against any unpaid fees upon the Pupil leaving the school.

There is no entry to the School from Year 10 onwards once the academic year has commenced.

Temporary entry into Lower and Senior School

Occasionally, and if space allows, pupils may be accepted into the School on a temporary basis. Candidates must fulfil all the entry requirements detailed above and follow the appropriate admissions process for the year of entry. This does not apply to entry at Years 10 or 11.

Pupils out of Year Group

Applications for pupils out of year group will be reviewed on a case by case basis and will be considered at the discretion of the school.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Pupils who do not have English as their first language may apply for a place in the usual way.

Equality

The School is committed to providing equality of opportunity through the creation of an environment in which individuals are treated on the basis of their merits and abilities. All those being considered for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parent's race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, orientation, property, birth or other status.

Pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

We welcome all children who can benefit from the opportunities that we offer. Parents of a child who has any SEND should provide the school with full details prior to the admission procedure at registration and prior to a taster day being arranged. 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 and any additional advisers about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to ensure that the application process is accessible for the child and the School can cater adequately for the child's needs should an offer of a place be made.

No child will be discriminated against on entry into school as a result of their individual needs, so long as the school is able to meet a child's needs through reasonable adjustment.

The school defines a reasonable adjustment as one which can reasonably be undertaken within the normal staffing, facilities and resources of the school.

If, following the offer of a place, it is discovered that the School has not received full disclosure of information relating to a child's special educational needs and/or disability and the School is not able to provide adequate or appropriate provision to meet a child's physical and education needs or promote the child's well-being by making reasonable adjustments for those disabilities and/or needs, then the School may withdraw the offer of a place, or ask the parents to withdraw a child who is already a pupil.

We work closely with the child and his/her parents to help him/her to overcome the barriers that his/her difficulties present.

Reviewed/Approved: July 2024
Next review: Summer 2025