



Admissions Policy and Procedures Including EYFS

Introduction

St Hilary's is an independent day school for girls and boys aged between 2 and 11 years old. It is a mixed ability, non-denominational school with a family ethos that welcomes children from all backgrounds and faiths. We welcome applications for admission from all sections of society and the School does not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We seek to operate an open, transparent and fair approach to admissions.

We actively promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and respect for those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

The School is organised into the following areas:

- EYFS 2–5 years
- Pre-Prep 5–7 years
- Prep 7–11 years

The Headmaster of the School is responsible for admissions.

Documents in support of this Policy include:

- Disability Access Policy (Including EYFS)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes.
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and are fair to applicants.
- To ensure that applicants match the ethos and standards of the School and have the potential to contribute sufficiently to the school community and benefit from the many opportunities that are offered.
- To ensure that all pupils who join St Hilary's are able to be happy, successful and secure within our academic, social, moral, cultural and pastoral environment.

Regulatory and Legal Framework

This policy is kept under review against the legal and regulatory framework applicable to independent schools in England, including, where relevant:

- Education Act 1996.
- Education and Skills Act 2008.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and current Department for Education guidance on the Independent School Standards.
- Equality Act 2010 and relevant Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance.
- Children and Families Act 2014, where applicable.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (current edition).
- Department for Education statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) (current edition).
- Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children (current edition), where relevant.
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The School does not treat the School Admissions Code as applying to it merely by virtue of being an independent school; that Code principally applies to maintained schools and academies.

Admission Criteria

Entry to the School does not rely on passing a formal academic test. The School may, however, decline or withdraw an offer where, having considered the available information and the child's best interests, it is unable to provide an appropriate education or meet its legal and regulatory duties. For example;

- Where information from a pupil's previous school or nursery setting indicates behaviour or conduct that would materially inhibit the pupil's learning or that of other pupils. In considering this, the School will have regard to the circumstances of any looked-after or previously looked-after child and will not apply this criterion in a discriminatory manner.
- Where, after appropriate consideration and reasonable adjustments, the School reasonably concludes that it cannot provide an appropriate education for the pupil within its available provision.
- Where the School, having considered the child's needs, available provision, reasonable adjustments and relevant professional advice, is unable to meet the child's needs in accordance with its legal duties.
- Where information from the pupil's current or previous school or setting gives rise to serious and substantiated concerns about the conduct of the child and/or parents or guardians which would materially affect the School's ability to provide education or safeguard the welfare of pupils.

Admissions decisions will be made fairly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination. Where relevant, the School will consider reasonable adjustments and the individual circumstances of the child.

Entry Points

The usual entry points to the School are at Nursery (2 years), Reception (rising 5) and Year 3 (rising 8), although pupils may be accepted at other points if places are available. The admission process in Early Years, Pre-Prep and Prep is supervised by the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Admissions Manager, under the guidance of the Headmaster.

Entry to Nursery and Kindergarten

There are two main entry points into Nursery – at the start of the Autumn Term and the start of the Spring Term. Children must be aged 2 by 31 August to join in the Autumn Term, or aged 2 by 31 December for entry into the Spring Term. The School would not normally accept entries mid-term unless there are exceptional circumstances. Children will then spend up to one full year in Nursery before moving into Kindergarten. Moves from Nursery to Kindergarten therefore take place in the Autumn Term and the Spring Term.

Children joining the School into Kindergarten must be aged 3 by 31 August to join in the Autumn Term, or aged 3 by 31 December for entry into the Spring Term. Children will then remain in Kindergarten until the September they start in Reception.

The School reserves the right to use professional judgement if a child is not ready to move from Nursery into Kindergarten, taking account of the child's development, wellbeing and best interests.

Admissions to the School

Parents or legal guardians interested in applying for a place should contact the School Admissions Manager to arrange a tour and a meeting with the Headmaster or, in his absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or other relevant member of staff. For pupils who are relocating and unable to visit the School, the Headmaster may arrange a remote meeting using an appropriate video-conferencing platform.

Open Days are held throughout each academic year. Prospective parents/legal guardians are encouraged to attend at least one of these with their child prior to applying, although the School understands that this is not always possible and parents are welcome to visit by appointment.

The School will write to parents/legal guardians to either:

- Inform them that a place is available and ask for the Registration Form to be completed and the Registration Fee paid.
- Inform them that a place is not currently available and that their child's name will be placed on the waiting list.

Parents/legal guardians should provide information about any medical, educational or developmental history relevant to the School's ability to plan for the child's education, wellbeing and safeguarding, including information about an EHCP or relevant multi-agency support. Where appropriate, parents may be asked to provide relevant professional reports.

If a place is available, a date may be arranged for the child to attend a Taster Day or morning at the School, if possible. This is not an assessment day but an opportunity for the child and staff to spend time together. Parents/legal guardians of children in EYFS may be invited to spend a Stay and Play session with their child. Alternatively, the Headmaster and key staff may meet the prospective pupil and family remotely.

The School will make required notifications to the local authority in accordance with applicable legislation and guidance, including the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and relevant safeguarding requirements.

The School may require access to relevant reports and information from the child's current setting or school and will actively seek these where appropriate.

The School may request information about a child's needs or disability to enable it to consider reasonable adjustments and support a positive transition from the current setting or school.

Parents/legal guardians will usually be notified in writing within two weeks of the Taster Day whether a place is being offered or whether further information is required.

Once both the School and the parents/legal guardians have decided that the child will attend, the parents/legal guardians are required to sign the Parent Contract and pay the deposit to secure the place. This guarantees a place at St Hilary's School. Any withdrawal following this is subject to the notice periods specified in the contractual terms and conditions.

Parents or guardians who wish to appeal against a decision not to offer a place may appeal to the Chair of Governors at the School and should state the grounds for the appeal. Contact details can be obtained from the School Office.

The School reserves the right, before offering a place and where lawful and appropriate, to contact the pupil's current school or pre-school setting, request a reference or report, and request confirmation that relevant fees have been paid. Information will be sought and used in accordance with applicable data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Safeguarding and Information from Previous Schools

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will request relevant safeguarding and child protection information from the current setting or school where appropriate. The School will actively follow up the request to ensure that relevant records are received, securely transferred and considered before the child starts at the School where reasonably practicable, or as soon as possible after the start date.

Safeguarding information will be handled securely and confidentially and shared only where there is a lawful basis and a safeguarding need. The School will follow KCSIE and its Safeguarding Children Policy when receiving, recording and acting on safeguarding information.

Children with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs

The School recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. The School will not discriminate unlawfully in its admission arrangements and will consider reasonable adjustments and accessibility requirements.

The School has some limitations to its facilities for pupils with physical disabilities but will take such reasonable steps as are required to comply with its legal duties and to support access to education. Parents/legal guardians of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are encouraged to discuss their child's requirements with the School before registering for a place. This enables the School to consider the reasonable adjustments, resources and support that may be required.

Where necessary and lawful, parents may be asked to provide relevant reports from professionals such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or paediatric/medical professionals. Where a report is specifically commissioned at the request of the School, the School will discuss with parents in advance any costs that are their responsibility.

The School will consider information received about all pupils to ensure that, where necessary, appropriate arrangements and reasonable adjustments are put in place and that the admissions process is fair. SEND provision will be reviewed as each pupil's needs develop and may require different levels of support.

The School will have regard to relevant provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated guidance where applicable to the School and the individual pupil.

Parental Responsibility

The School recognises that a person with parental responsibility may have rights to receive information about a child even where that person does not care for the child on a day-to-day basis,

unless a court order or other lawful restriction provides otherwise. The School will act in accordance with its safeguarding and information-sharing duties and any relevant court orders.

Bursaries

Bursaries are available on entry to St Hilary's School in Year 3 and above. Current parents, and parents whose children are candidates for entry who are experiencing financial difficulties, may apply to the Governors for a Bursary by completing a Bursary form; this is available from the Business Manager.

The School has a Bursary Policy which is provided to all parents applying for a Bursary. This sets out the criteria which the School will apply to any Bursary application. Parents will be required to provide detailed financial information and may be interviewed by the Business Manager or Headmaster in relation to their application.

The award of a Bursary shall be for a maximum period of 12 months after which the level of Bursary and the parents' current financial statement shall be reviewed. The award of a Bursary is entirely at the discretion of the Headmaster and Governors.

Potential applicants should contact the Business Manager by mid-November, where possible, preceding each academic year to express interest. Full written applications, on the forms provided, must be received.

Admissions Register

The School maintains an Admission Register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The admission register is maintained electronically and is kept up to date.

An entry will be made in the admission register from the beginning of the first day on which St Hilary's has agreed or been informed that the pupil will attend the School, in accordance with the 2024 Regulations and current Department for Education attendance guidance.

The Admission Register is completed electronically by the Admissions Manager and contains the information required by the 2024 Regulations and applicable guidance, including, as relevant:

- The pupil's full legal name and, where different, the name usually used in school.
- The pupil's sex, as required for the admission register.
- The name and address of every person known to the School to be a parent of the pupil, including an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with and which parents have parental responsibility, where known.
- The pupil's address.
- Emergency contact details, including at least one telephone number for each parent the pupil normally lives with, as required.
- The pupil's date of birth.
- The date of admission or re-admission to the School.
- The name and address of the school last attended, where applicable.
- The date and details of amendments made to the admission register, including the person making the amendment, as required.
- Any other information required by the 2024 Regulations or current Department for Education guidance.

The School will also retain any other information that it is legally required to hold for safeguarding, attendance, admissions, immigration or other statutory purposes. Any immigration or right-to-study

documentation held by the School will be managed securely and in accordance with applicable legal and data protection requirements.

The School recognises that parents with parental responsibility may have rights to relevant information concerning their child, subject to safeguarding considerations, court orders and other lawful restrictions.

Maintaining and Retaining the Admission Register

The Admission Register will be kept securely and accurately and amended as soon as possible when relevant information changes. The School will retain the register and associated records in accordance with its Records Management and Data Protection arrangements and any statutory retention requirements.

Electronic back-ups will be maintained in accordance with the School's IT, information security and records management procedures.

When a pupil leaves the School, the School will record the leaving date and, where appropriate, seek confirmation of the receiving school or other destination. The pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register where a ground for deletion under regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

The School will not delete a pupil retrospectively and will record attendance up to the date of deletion.

Deletion from the Admission Register and Local Authority Notifications

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register for a reason permitted by regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The School will not remove a pupil from the roll for any other reason.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent for a period covered by the relevant deletion grounds, the School will follow the 2024 Regulations and current Department for Education attendance guidance. This includes making reasonable enquiries and, where required, working jointly with the local authority before deletion.

The School will make the required return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, except where the Regulations provide an exception, such as deletion at or after the end of the last term of the school year when the pupil is in the School's most senior class, unless the local authority requests the information.

The School will provide the local authority with the information required by regulation 13 and current attendance guidance, including the pupil's details, relevant parent/contact information, destination information where applicable and the reason for deletion.

The School will notify the local authority where required in relation to a pupil joining or leaving the School, irregular attendance, specified prolonged absence, or other circumstances specified by legislation or current statutory guidance. Local authority notification will be made within the statutory timescales and using the required information.

The School will not delete a pupil on the former ground of being medically unfit to attend school. Where health needs affect attendance, the School will follow its attendance, medical and safeguarding procedures and work with parents and relevant agencies as appropriate.

The local authority may inspect or take extracts from the admission register where it has a lawful entitlement to do so. The Secretary of State and other authorised persons may also exercise any statutory powers to access school records.

EYFS

This policy applies to all pupils and prospective pupils, including children within the School's Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The School will apply the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and relevant safeguarding, equality, health and welfare requirements to admissions and transition arrangements for EYFS children.

Availability, Review and Responsibility

This policy applies to all members of the School community, including those in the EYFS setting. It is available to interested parties on the School website and on request from the School Office and should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Exclusions Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, SEND Policy, Accessibility Plan and other relevant policies.

Reviewed: June 2019, June 2021, June 2022, June 2023, June 2024, July 2025, July 2026

Updated: September 2026 to reflect the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, current Department for Education attendance guidance, KCSIE 2026 and current independent school regulatory requirements.

Next review date: June 2027

Person(s) responsible: Mr Duncan Sinclair (Headmaster), Mrs Sarah Wharf (Admissions Manager)