



# Admissions Policy

## **Introduction**

Downside School's Admissions procedure aims to ensure that boys and girls who join Downside School are able to be happy, successful and secure within its academic, cultural, pastoral and spiritual environment, whether they are boarders or day pupils.

## **Application criteria**

Downside School welcomes applications for admission from all sections of society and is non-discriminatory in line with the Equality Act (2010) and Equal Opportunities Policy. This applies to all pupils and includes inappropriate discrimination on the grounds of: gender; age; religion or belief; physical ability or disability (including HIV status); learning ability; other special educational needs or academic or sporting ability; race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, family, cultural or linguistic background); marital status and civil partnership; sex; sexual orientation; trade union membership; part-time and fixed-term working; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity. These factors are taken into account in the care of our community members so that care is sensitive to different needs. Those intending to join Downside School are expected, however, to be comfortable with the demands set by our Catholic and Benedictine foundation and character.

The School is inclusive and welcomes applicants with disabilities and special educational needs. It maintains a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs and it will not treat an applicant less favourably on these grounds without justification. At present, its facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited. Nevertheless, the school will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2010) in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.

Parents or guardians of an applicant who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the Registrar with full written details when submitting a Registration Form. This will enable the school to assess those needs and ensure the School can provide adequately for them throughout the admission process. The School will consult with parents or guardians about the adjustments which can reasonably be made for the applicant both during the admission process and later as a pupil.

## **Admissions criteria**

The admissions criteria are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Head Master in consultation with the Director of Admissions.

Admission to the School is at the discretion of the Head Master.

The preconditions for admission are that:

- The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
- The School is able to provide adequately for any special educational needs the applicant may have following an assessment of the pupil by the Head of Learning Support if required.
- The School, having made reasonable adjustment, has the capacity to cope with any disability the applicant may have.
- The applicant fulfils any conditions set out when offered a place.
- Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid.

## **Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Head Master in consultation with the Director of Admissions

The selection criteria to be fulfilled by the applicant will be determined by the School. The selection criteria aim 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 at the School.

The selection criteria include provision of satisfactory evidence, through the School's own age-appropriate assessment tests, of academic ability sufficient to access the school curriculum, and a satisfactory reference from the applicant's current school. The School is academically selective but also recognises the central value of Art, Drama, Music, Sport and other co-curricular activities, and enthusiasm in these fields is expected and encouraged.

The School values its connections with Old Gregorians (alumni) but is also keen to foster new associations and links. The School intends to widen access to the school to boys and girls who can clearly and substantially benefit from a Downside education regardless of their parents' or guardians' financial circumstances. The School is therefore committed to offering to eligible parents or guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support is known as a bursary and these may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100% of fees, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants.

## **Entry Points**

The main entry point is at 11+, 13+ and at 16+. Pupils may be accepted at other points if places are available.

Occasionally, an applicant may have fallen behind in his/her education due to illness or other problems. In such a case, the School may offer a place in a year lower than

the applicant's normal age range. Parents or guardians will be consulted before such an offer is made, but the decision as to the appropriate year for the applicant, taking into account all the relevant circumstances, is a matter for the Head Master, whose decision is final.

### **Admissions Records**

Confidential records will be completed for each applicant.

Approved by SLT 15.1.15