

## 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 and Senior School, which are located on two sites, approximately 3 miles apart and set in attractive surroundings.

### **Mission and Ethos Statement**

At St Mary's, our ethos underpins all that we do at the school and enriches life in the Kindergarten, Lower School and Senior School.

The School is committed to providing your child with an education that will prove to be a solid foundation for a whole lifetime of personal fulfilment. For young people to thrive, learn and achieve, they must feel content, relaxed and secure. At St Mary's, each individual is known and understood and there is a culture in the school community – our staff as well as our pupils – of caring for each other, celebrating successes and working through difficulties. In this environment, our young people develop the strength of character and the self-confidence they need to make the very most of the life that lies ahead.

### **Aims of the School**

- Tailor the education of our pupils so that they are understood, supported and encouraged to thrive
- Provide a happy atmosphere in which the pupils can enjoy school and develop a love of learning
- Provide exceptional pastoral care so that pupils can be challenged and developed
- Encourage all pupils to find and develop their creative flair, their sporting prowess and the other talents and interests which add enjoyment and achievement to life both at school and into adulthood
- Instil the important values of respect and courtesy that will stand them in good stead throughout their lives
- Encourage our pupils to be active, to voice their opinions and to develop a “have-a-go” attitude, preparing them for success in our ever-changing world
- Give pupils experience of being active members of a caring community conveying the broad, Christian ethos of the school

## **Entry Procedure**

The School is divided into Kindergarten, Lower School and Senior School, each of which has its own admissions policy. However, there is a common procedure for all departments:

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 and pay a non-refundable Registration Fee of £50.
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 Kindergarten to Lower School and 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 a year group being over-subscribed, at the point of places being offered, places will be offered to pupils according to the following criteria in order of priority:

1. Pupils with siblings already in the School;
2. Children of previous St Mary's pupils;
3. Date of registration.

The Principal reserves the right to refuse entry to the School for any child.

Class size is set at the discretion of the Principal based upon ensuring the optimum learning environment for all pupils, to enable them to fulfil their potential in line with the School's aims.

## **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 and pay a non-refundable Registration Fee of £50.

Once parents have accepted a place for their child, an Entry Deposit of £50 is payable by

parents, which is returned as their child leaves the Kindergarten or it is transferred to the school if the child continues to the Lower School. The school reserves the right to retain any or all of the Entry Deposit to offset against any unpaid fees.

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 comprising of 5, 3 hour sessions in the afternoon 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 and paying the non-refundable Registration Fee of £50. The Entry Deposit of pupils at St Mary's Kindergarten are transferred to St Mary's School on the parent's behalf.

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 a non-refundable Entry Deposit of £400 within 5 working days of the date provided in the offer letter. 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.

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

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 a taster day. 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 and evidence of previous academic achievement.
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 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).
2. The Year 7 Entry Assessment for all candidates takes place in November.
3. Interviews with the Principal and/or other senior members of staff are then held, along with further Scholarship assessments.
4. Places in Year 7 are offered on the basis of candidates' performance in the Year 7 Entry Assessment and interview.
5. 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 Entry Deposits of pupils at St Mary's Lower School are transferred to St Mary's Senior School on their behalf and are refundable on leaving the School, provided the required notice to leave has been given.

### Years 8-10

As and when places become available at the School, candidates are asked to take an Entry Assessment, attend a trial day in School and to meet the Principal prior to a place being offered. A report from the candidate's current / previous school will be required. 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.

At St. Mary's we have an 'open door' approach. The foundations for all learning are cemented by strong partnerships between home and School.

### **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, 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 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: May 2021  
Next review: Summer 2022