

# Admissions Policy

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Registration for entry can be made at any age. It is usual for parents to visit the school before registering their child. Hollygirt accepts children aged 3 to 16 years.

## Criteria for Entry

- a) Pupils must be of the correct age and maturity to enter a particular year group. From time to time, where there are unusual circumstances, pupils may be admitted 'out of year' where the Headmistress is satisfied that it is in the interests both of the pupil and of the school community for this to occur.
- b) Pupils must be of an appropriate aptitude and ability range to be able to benefit from an education at Hollygirt. We cater for children with a range of academic and social needs.
- c) Where the child already attends school, every effort will be made to obtain a report from their current school attesting to their satisfactory conduct and educational record. For children joining from other independent fee-paying schools, we ask that financial obligations are fulfilled.
- d) Attention is drawn to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy which sets out the school's commitment to the rejection on unfair discrimination.
- e) Parents are required to provide details of any diagnosed learning need or disability and any social, emotional or behavioural needs in relation to a prospective pupil at the time of application on the Registration Form, or by separate letter, if preferred. If any specific needs are identified at this stage, or on assessment or at some future point, the Headmistress will discuss with the parents the adjustments the school is able to make to meet these needs (*see Disability Equality and SEND Policy*). In assessing any prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such professional assessments as it regards appropriate. Some additional charges for 1:1 support may apply.

## **Nursery/Reception Class (Early Years Foundation Stage – EYFS)**

There is open admission from age 3 depending on availability of places and readiness for a structured environment. Readiness is defined as the ability to manage feeding and toileting independently and to be capable of understanding and complying with basic instructions. We expect that all Nursery children will build up to full time, starting on a minimum of three full days. Reception places are full time. We now accept Government funding for up to 15 hours per week for full time nursery pupils from the term after the pupil turns 3 years old. We also participate in workplace childcare vouchers.

## **Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage One – KS1) / Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Key Stage Two – KS2)**

Admission is dependent on the availability of places and readiness for a Hollygirt education. Children spend a Taster Day with us, joining their peer group on a normal school day. Their social skills, attitude to learning, behaviour and an indication of their academic ability will be assessed by teaching staff although no formal tests will be taken.

All pupils in the Junior School are guaranteed a place in the Senior School unless there are exceptional circumstances which suggest a pupil will not benefit from the Senior School curriculum. In this case, the Headmistress will alert parents when pupils are still in Year 5 or early in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 take the Entrance Assessment for entry into Year 7 with those seeking admission from external schools.

### **Year 7 (Key Stage Three – KS3)**

The Entrance Day for pupils who will be 11 on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year of entry to the Senior School takes place during the previous Spring Term, usually mid-January. The Entrance Day is not a formal assessment. The pupils will be placed into small groups and take part in a number of lessons with key teachers which will give us an indication of their abilities, aptitudes, and attitudes to learning and social skills. Additionally each pupil will have an interview with the Headmistress or a senior member of staff. Places are offered to pupils who display qualities which suggest they will respond to a Hollygirt education. Offer letters will be sent out as soon as possible after the Entrance Day and parents are asked to reply by the first Tuesday in March. Waiting list places are also offered if demand exceeds available places.

### **Years 8, 9 and 10**

Pupils seeking admission to Years 8, 9 and 10, when there is a vacancy, spend a full day in school with the relevant peer group during which their abilities, aptitudes, attitudes to learning and social skills are assessed. They will receive an interview with the Headmistresses or a member of the senior staff on this day.

Pupils must produce their latest report from their current school attesting not only to their satisfactory conduct but also showing evidence of a suitable level of ability.

For entry to Year 10, pupils should be able to access a GCSE curriculum.

### **Mid-Year 10 and Year 11**

It is unusual for a pupil to transfer to Hollygirt during or at the end of Year 10. In exceptional circumstances where a very similar curriculum has been followed, pupils will be interviewed by the Headmistress and by key subject teachers to ascertain whether moving school at this unusual stage is in the pupil's best interest. Pupils will be requested to bring to interview current files of school work/reports.

### **Admission of Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

The school admits pupils with a variety of diagnosis if it is satisfied that the pupil's needs can be reasonably met within the school environment.

At the earliest opportunity and before entry, parents are expected to discuss openly the issues facing the child in their current setting and in the home environment and provide any reports for the school to consider.

The Headmistress will discuss the benefits of the small school with small classes, the unique ethos and environment at Hollygirt and outline what the school is able to do (and what it cannot do) to accommodate the identified needs.

The pupil will have the opportunity to tour the school and will normally attend at least one taster day. This can be split into shorter periods of time over a few days, or 2 full days offered to assess the pupil's ability to thrive in the setting.

The current school will be contacted for a reference and for any other supplementary information.

If a place is offered and accepted, the pupil Social and Emotional Support Coordinator will support transition and if required do a home visit.

In some cases, usually for children presenting with more complex needs, the school will offer a place for a trial period, after which a full teacher assessment can be made of the longer term prospects, which will be fully discussed with the parents.

In the rare eventuality that the child is not settled or progress is not being made at the end of the agreed trial period, the school and parent may reciprocally agree to terminate the contract, and in this circumstance the notice period would be waived.

## **Availability of Places**

Class size varies from year to year but subject to a maximum number to retain the benefits of classes significantly smaller than the maintained sector. There is usually a one class entry to the Junior School and two class entry to the Senior School. In Senior School pupils are placed in year based tutor groups but are taught as two classes.

Parents are asked to reply promptly to offers of a place, by a given deadline. Where this is impossible for reasons such as uncertainty about relocation, parents are asked to contact the school to explain their circumstances.

Where places are available, and it is in the child's best interest, pupils can be admitted throughout the academic year.

## **Proof of Identification**

On acceptance, all pupils will be required to provide a copy of their passport or birth certificate.

## **Financial Support / Bursaries**

A small number of means-tested bursaries are available on entry to Year 7. Bursaries may also be available to pupils in the case of unexpected financial hardship, either for a short period of time or to enable a pupil to complete a GCSE course when it is not in their best interest to transfer to another school.

The Trustees will decide on any level of financial support to be offered by March preceding September entry. Documentary evidence must be provided in all cases. A bursary application form can be obtained from the Registrar and should be submitted with a pupil's Registration Form. Please note bursaries are offered in line with the school's available funding and not all applications will be accepted. Currently we do not offer financial support to pupils in the Junior School.

From time to time the Trustees may offer means-tested bursaries in addition to awards described below.

*Please also see Means-Tested Bursaries Policy.*

## **Academic Scholarships**

Academic scholarships are available on entry to Year 7 to pupils who we believe have the capacity to reach the highest grades and to be ambassadors for the school. In addition to the Entrance Day, they will be invited in to school to sit some formal assessments which may include Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning and internal English and Maths tests. This will take place in January, following the Entrance Day. Hollygirt will make recommendations of suitability to some following the Entrance Day but parents may opt for the additional testing if they believe it is appropriate for their child. Academic Scholarships award up to 25% reduction of basic fees for the five years a pupil will remain in Senior School. These are not means-tested but are subject to specific terms and conditions of award.

## **Music Awards**

Music Awards are also available, offering free tuition and music examination fees on one instrument taught in school. Pupils should normally have reached the standard of Grade 3, but we would prefer a pupil to play a Grade 2 piece musically, rather than struggle through a Grade 3 piece that is new.

It is a condition of the award that pupils sing in the choir and play in one or more of the bands/groups at school, perform solos when required and act as an ambassador for music both within the school and outside.

Awards will be reviewed on an annual basis, to make certain that pupils still attain the standards and commitment expected of an award holder. Should instrumental lessons be missed other than for reasons of absence from school or other exceptional circumstances, parents could be expected to reimburse the school.

A shortlist of candidates will be invited to attend for audition. They will be expected to play two contrasting pieces and, if offering a second instrument, one on that instrument also. There will also be a *viva voce* examination on the music played with the Head of Music, and a short interview with the Headmistress.

## **Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)**

Hollygirt has a small number of pupils on EHCPs, some of which are funded by the local education authority.

## **Overseas Applicants**

Currently, Hollygirt is able to accept pupils from the European Economic area and Switzerland and any who are here as a dependent on some visas. However we are not able to provide CAS for Tier 4 (child) student visas.