



## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Downe House seeks to attract and admit girls who will benefit from its holistic boarding education, as described in the School's aims and objectives, and whose parents/guardians are committed to such an education. This will include a wide variety of girls whose individuality will be valued.
  
2. The aim of this Policy is to ensure that all those who enter Downe House will be able to benefit from the education offered by:
  - 2.1 Setting out the procedure for admission from initial contact to acceptance of a place.
  - 2.2 Setting out the procedure for assessment of new pupils throughout the School.
  - 2.3 Ensuring that parents get the maximum amount of appropriate information on which to base their judgements.
  - 2.4 Ensuring that the pupil has the opportunity to see and become familiar with the School.

### **ADMISSION PROCEDURES**

#### **PROSPECTIVE PUPILS**

3. The following procedures will apply:
  - 3.1 A parent who contacts Downe House will be given a warm reception and sent a prospectus and other relevant information, as required, with a personal letter.
  - 3.2 Parents will be encouraged to come to a prospective parents' morning if they contact the School more than two years ahead of their daughter's entry date, and to make an individual visit within two years.
  - 3.3 At prospective parents' mornings, and on individual visits, parents will normally have the opportunity to meet the Headmistress, a Housemistress, girls – preferably those with whom they have a link, i.e. from their daughter's school - other staff, and the Deputy Headmistress.
  - 3.4 As a follow-up, girls may be offered the opportunity to spend time at the School, as necessary, to meet other girls and, if appropriate and possible, experience boarding.
  - 3.5 Parents are welcome to make a second, subsequent, visit although arrangements may be altered to avoid unnecessary repetition.

3.6 A record will be kept of girls registering after preliminary visits and those that are unsuccessful; a discreet follow-up procedure will be carried out to discover the reasons for the latter.

3.7 Girls registering will be invited to the appropriate Assessment Day in the year prior to entry.

#### **ENTRY AT 11+/12+/13+**

4. The purpose of Assessment Days is threefold:

4.1 To enable the School to assess whether a girl will be able to benefit from the education on offer at Downe House.

4.2 To enable the girls to judge for themselves whether this is the case.

4.3 To identify potential academic scholars.

5. The format of the Assessment Day will include:

5.1 English books brought for scanning.

5.2 Computerised test

5.3 An interview with the Headmistress.

5.4 A tour of the School with girls of a similar age.

5.5 Drama.

5.6 Problem solving/lateral thinking exercises or a practical exercise.

5.7 Creative activity

5.8 A swim or physical education activities.

6. The academic ability of each girl is assessed through the tests, and her general personality and ability to cope with a busy boarding environment will be observed during the group activities and assessed at interview. The results of the Assessment Day, together with the information provided by the girl's current Headmistress/Headmaster, will be considered by the Headmistress, who will make a decision as to whether or not to offer a place conditional on Common Entrance. Girls are then expected to achieve a good standard on their Common Entrance papers, as defined by the Headmistress in the light of the papers set and advice from Heads of Department.

#### **ENTRY AT 16+**

7. Girls assessed for entry to the Sixth Form will have to complete two subject specific papers, a general paper and have an interview with the Headmistress and Head of Sixth Form. They will also, if possible, meet another member of the Leadership Team.

8. The Assessments will generally take place at Downe House, which enables the girl to meet other pupils and become familiar with the environment, and all girls will be required to visit the School for interview prior to entry. Ideally, parents will also visit.

9. All girls entering the Sixth Form, both internal and external candidates, will be required to achieve at least 7 A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent, and ideally an A\* or A grade, but at least a B

grade, in the subjects they wish to study at AS/A Level or for Pre-U. All entrants must have English and Mathematics at GCSE or equivalent.

### **ENTRY AT OTHER POINTS**

10. Girls will move schools at a variety of points other than the normal entry times. Downe House seeks to accommodate this where girls meet the necessary standard and there is space.

11. Girls entering at points other than 11+/12+/13+ and 16+ will be required to sit an English paper, a Mathematics paper, a Science paper, undertake a computerised reasoning test and have an interview with the Headmistress. Girls not able to attend the initial Assessment Day will need to follow a similar pattern of testing prior to entry.

12. Assessment information will be viewed in the light of the girl's current Headmistress's/ Headmaster's report, and the Headmistress will make an offer of a place or not on the basis of the overall picture.

### **SCHOLARSHIP ENTRY**

13. Downe House seeks to encourage academic excellence and excellence in music and art through, amongst other things, scholarship entry. Academic Scholarships are offered at 11+/12+/13+ and 16+. They are also offered in Art and Music, and at 13+ in Drama, and candidates for such awards will also be required to meet the general academic entry standards set by the School. Details of Scholarship procedures are contained in the separate Scholarship Policy.

### **PUPILS UNABLE TO ATTEND ASSESSMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP DAYS**

14. Pupils who are unable to attend Assessment and Scholarship Days will normally be able to be tested at other times. They will be required to sit an English Paper, a Mathematics paper, a computer based assessment test, and be interviewed by the Headmistress.

15. Pupils living overseas will be able to sit the entry papers overseas at their school or an approved agency, e.g. the British Council.

### **PUBLISHING OF RESULTS**

16. The School aims to publish the result of all Assessment and Scholarship Days within a fortnight of girls sitting the tests - letters will be sent to both girls' schools and their parents. The School will publish Common Entrance results within the time scale set by the ISEB.

## **ENTRY POLICY**

### **OVERSEAS PUPILS**

17. Downe House welcomes pupils from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds as long as they are committed to an English boarding school education. Girls entering the School must have an appropriate working knowledge of English, and parents must be committed to supporting further English study at their cost, if necessary.

### **BOARDING/DAY PUPILS**

18. Downe House is a full boarding school for girls. The majority of its entrants will be boarders, although up to approximately 5% may be day-girls, provided they are able to benefit from a boarding environment.

### **SISTERS**

19. Sisters must meet the overall entry requirements, but will be given preferential treatment over other candidates when they meet the entry standard and places are limited.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

20. Downe House is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in admissions and the provision of education, and will not unlawfully discriminate between pupils or prospective pupils on grounds of race or disability. Parents of children with disabilities are asked to notify the School upon application of any disability suffered by their child.

21. Parents may be asked to attend a meeting at the School in order to provide more information about the particular disability. A formal assessment may then be arranged by the School at the parent's expense, and the School will consider, on an individual basis, what reasonable adjustments could be made to the application and assessment process in order to accommodate the child. Ultimately, any decision in relation to whether to offer a place will be taken in the light of the child's individual needs, the interests of other pupils and the School's need to maintain academic, musical or sporting standards.

### **DEFERRED ENTRY**

22. Girls who come to an Assessment Day and who are offered a place conditional on Common Entrance results may defer taking Common Entrance for one year without having to come to an Assessment Day again. Girls who are offered a place on successful completion of the Common Entrance may defer entry for one year.

Review Leader: Headmistress

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