



Downe House

## 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 access to all relevant information, including a prospectus in hard copy if required, with a personal letter or email.
  - 3.2 Parents will be encouraged to come to a prospective parents' morning, a specific tailored **Introduction to the** Lower or Upper School mornings, and/or to make an individual visit in the two to three years before the year of entry.
  - 3.3 At prospective parents' mornings, and on individual visits, parents will normally have the opportunity to meet the Headmistress, members of LT and a Housemistress, and if possible girls preferably those with whom they have a link, e.g. from their daughter's school.
  - 3.4 At the tailored **Introductory** Mornings, parents and girls will hear in greater detail about the relevant sections of the School, have the opportunity to ask questions and girls will be able to do some activities.
  - 3.5 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.
  - 3.6 Parents are welcome to make subsequent visits which will often be to a prospective parents' morning, a tailored morning or individual visit, depending on their first point of contact.
  - 3.7 A record will be kept of girls registering after preliminary visits and those that are unsuccessful.

3.8 Girls registering will be invited to the appropriate Assessment Day in the year prior to entry, or in the case of 13+ this can be up to two years ahead.

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#### **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 assist with the identification of potential academic or other scholars.

5. The format of the Assessment Day is likely to include:

5.1 English books brought for scanning

5.2 Computerised test

5.3 An interview with the Headmistress or, if necessary, another senior member of staff

5.4 A tour of the School with girls of a similar age for girls of 11+ and 12+

5.5 Drama

5.6 Group activity games

5.7 Creative activity

5.8 A swim or physical education activities

5.9 Time to be spent visiting the Boarding Houses

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, after taking advice from staff involved in the process and she will then make a decision as to whether or not to offer a place conditional on entrance examinations. Girls are then expected to achieve a good standard on these entrance papers, as defined by the Headmistress in the light of the papers set and advice from Heads of Department and other relevant staff.

#### **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. All girls will be required to visit the School for interview prior to entry and ideally, parents will also visit.

9. All girls entering the Sixth Form, both internal and external candidates, will be **expected** to achieve at least seven GCSEs at grade 6 or above, and ideally an 8, but at least a grade 7, in the subjects they wish to study at A Level unless the subject has not previously been studied or is not required to be studied at A Level. It should be noted that to study some subjects at A level some have specific GCSE requirements, for example Physics, grade 7 or 8 is required at GCSE. All entrants must have English and Mathematics at GCSE or equivalent. Where applicants do not follow an education system with summative examinations at 16+, further testing may be required.

## 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 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, Art, Drama and P.E. through, amongst other things, scholarship entry. Academic Scholarships are offered at 11+/12+/13+ and 16+. They are also offered in Art, P.E. 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. A Head's Award exists to reward outstanding all-round candidates.

## 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 a computer based assessment test, and be interviewed by the Headmistress. The order of assessment may be adjusted to suit need.

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 and other entrance examination results within a fortnight. **Candidates offering the PSB will have results offered in accordance with PSB regulations.**

## BURSARIES

17. A limited number of Bursaries are available to support those in need to access a Downe House education. More information can be found in the Bursary Policy.

## **ENTRY POLICY**

### **OVERSEAS PUPILS / PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

18. Downe House welcomes pupils from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, including overseas pupils and those with English as an additional language (EAL), as long as they are committed to a **British** 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 (for more information on the support given to pupils with EAL needs, see the School's English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy (Sep 2016).

19. Overseas students are required to have a guardian who is resident in the UK and who can act on behalf of the parents, if required. Details of the guardian need to be passed onto the Registry by 30<sup>th</sup> June in year of entry (for September start).

### **BOARDING/DAY PUPILS**

20. 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**

21. Downe House recognises the value of siblings being educated together. 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**

22. 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, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or social background. Downe House complies with best practice in relation to special educational needs and disabilities, including the provisions of the current SEND Code of Practice. Parents of children with disabilities, including special educational needs, are asked to notify the School upon application of any reasonable adjustments, which their child will require, either within the admissions process or, in the event of being offered a place at the school, in taking up that place. Parents should provide a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report if one has been obtained.

23. Parents may be asked to attend a meeting at the School in order to provide more information about their child's disability and the reasonable adjustments required. A formal assessment may then be arranged by the School and the School will consider, on an individual basis, whether 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, the School's need to maintain academic, musical or sporting standards and whether any adjustments required would be reasonable.

## DEFERRED ENTRY

24. Girls who come to an Assessment Day and who are offered a place conditional on entrance examinations results may defer taking entrance exams for a maximum of two years without having to come to another Assessment Day. Girls who are offered a place on successful completion of the entrance examinations may defer entry for one year. Girls, at Prep Schools, are offered the opportunity to undergo the pre-assessment at 11 for 13+ entry. This enables girls to remain in their 13+ Prep Schools secure in the knowledge that a conditional offer of a place at 13+ has been made.

## EARLY ASSESSMENT AT 13+

25. Girls may be assessed for a place up to **three** years in advance **i.e. in Year 6** by joining an assessment day or undertaking an early assessment programme. Offers will be made but remain subject to candidates sitting entrance examinations, usually Common Entrance, or scholarship. To secure a place, a full deposit will be required on acceptance and offers will lapse if unconfirmed within a year.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY POLICY

26. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy and Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity Policy.

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

27. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Complaints Policy.

This policy makes reference to the following School policies, copies of which can be located on Merlin in the 'My Policies' section:

Anti-Corruption and Bribery (Reviewer: FBUR)  
Bursary (Reviewer: FBUR)  
Complaints (Reviewer: DHM)  
English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Reviewer: DHM)  
Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity (Reviewer: DHR)  
Scholarship (Reviewer: DHM)

### Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	January 2015	Reviewed	Emma McKendrick
	January 2016	Reviewed	Emma McKendrick
	December 2016	Amendments to points 5.6, 8, 9, 11 and 14	Laura Ogilvie-Jones
	January 2017	Reviewed	Emma McKendrick
	September 2017	Amendment to point 9	Emma McKendrick
	January 2018	Amendments to point 9 and 25	Emma McKendrick
	January 2019	Amendments to points 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 5.9, 6, 9, 14, 16, 22, 24 and 25	Emma McKendrick
	January 2020	Amendments highlighted in yellow	Emma McKendrick

Review Leader: Headmistress  
Reviewed: January 2020  
Next Review: January 2021

Review Date: January 2021 – HM