

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

1. Downe House seeks to attract and admit pupils who will benefit from its holistic boarding and day 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 pupils 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.
  - 2.3 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 an Open Morning, a specific tailored Admissions event, and/or to make an individual visit in the two to three years before the year of entry.
  - 3.3 At open mornings, and on individual visits, parents will normally have the opportunity to meet the Headmistress, senior members of staff and a Housemistress, and if possible, pupils preferably those with whom they have a link, e.g. from their daughter's school.
  - 3.4 At the tailored Admissions events, parents and pupils will hear in greater detail about the relevant sections of the School, have the opportunity to ask questions and pupils will be able to do some activities.
  - 3.5 Pupils may be offered the opportunity to spend time at the School, as necessary, to meet other pupils 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 pupils registering after preliminary visits and those that are unsuccessful.
  - 3.8 Pupils registering will be invited to the appropriate Assessment Day the year prior to entry, or in the case of 13+ up to three years ahead.

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

All candidates who attend UK schools and are registered for entry at 11+, 12+ and 13+ will be invited to an Assessment day and asked to complete the ISEB Common Pre-test. For 11+ and 12+ candidates will be invited to an assessment day at Downe House in September/October the year prior to entry and will then be asked to sit the ISEB Common Pre-test at their own school, or at a local testing centre,

later in the term. The entry procedure for 13+ candidates takes place when pupils are in year 6, three years before entry. These pupils will be asked to sit the ISEB Pre-Test in October and those pupils who perform strongly in the test will be invited to an Assessment day later in the term. International candidates for 11+, 12+ and 13+ entry points, will be asked to sit the ISEB Pre-Test at a local testing centre overseas and, depending on their performance, will then be invited to an online interview with a senior member of staff. Candidates from state primary schools with no access to ISEB will be offered to sit the CEM test, an alternative computerised adaptive test at Downe House.

For 13+ candidates who may have missed the assessment window in year 6, they may be offered to apply in year 7 or year 8, depending on the number of places available. Downe House will always reserve places for exceptional pupils and for pupils, whose personal circumstances, prevented them from sitting in year 6.

4. The purpose of Assessment Day/Interview 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 pupils 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 Writing exercise
- 5.2 An interview with the Headmistress or, if necessary, another senior member of staff
- 5.3 A tour of the School with pupils of a similar age for pupils of 11+ and 12+
- 5.4 Drama
- 5.5 Group activity games
- 5.6 Creative activity
- 5.7 A swim or physical education activities
- 5.8 Time to be spent visiting the Boarding Houses

6. The academic ability of each girl is assessed through the writing test at the Assessment day and also through the ISEB Pre-test, 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 ISEB Pre-Test, the Assessment Day, and the information provided by the girl's current Headmistress/Headmaster, will be considered by the Headmistress and Director of Admissions, after taking advice from staff involved in the process. Mrs McKendrick and the Director of Admissions will make a decision as to whether or not to offer an unconditional place by the end of the Michaelmas term. 13+ candidates will be expected to sit Common Entrance or provide evidence of attainment in English, Maths and Science at the end of year 8 for setting purposes. Once a place has been offered, a full deposit will be required on acceptance and offers will lapse if unconfirmed within six months.

### **ENTRY AT 16+**

7. Pupils 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 interview may take place online, but all pupils are encouraged to visit the School before accepting an offer.

9. All pupils 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 and a transcript of grades acquired from their previous school.

### **ENTRY AT OTHER POINTS**

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

11. Pupils 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 or Director of Admissions. Pupils 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 write to parents with the outcome of all Assessment and Scholarship Days by the end of the Michaelmas term - letters will be sent to both pupils' 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. Pupils 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).

19. Overseas students are required to have a guardian who is resident in the UK, is a British citizen or has consent to remain, 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).

20. Non-British passport holders will need to apply for a child student visa, further details of which can be found in our Child Student Visa Policy.

### **BOARDING/DAY PUPILS**

21. Downe House is a full, flexi boarding and day school. The majority of its entrants will be flexi and full boarders, although up to approximately 15% may be day pupils, provided they are able to benefit from a fully immersive environment.

### **SISTERS**

22. 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**

23. 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.

24. 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**

25. Pupils who are offered a place on successful completion of the entrance requirements may defer entry for two years.

### **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 and Procedure.

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

Anti-Corruption and Bribery (Reviewer: DF&O)

Bursary (Reviewer: DF&O)

Complaints Policy and Procedure (Reviewer: DH)

English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Reviewer: AHO)

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (Reviewer: DHR)

Scholarship (Reviewer: DH)

**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	Reviewed	Emma McKendrick
	January 2021	Amendments in yellow	Michelle Scott and Tara Reeve
	January 2022	Amendments in blue	Tara Reeve
	January 2023	Point 20: 5% to 10% when referring to day pupils	Tara Reeve
	January 2024	Reviewed	Tara Reeve
	January 2025	Reviewed and updated	Tara Reeve
	January 2026	Reviewed and updated	Tara Reeve

Review Leader: Director of Admissions  
Reviewed: January 2026  
Next Review: January 2027