

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

### Policy statement

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes. The School is an academically and musically selective, mainstream, Catholic school, for day boys and boarding choristers aged 7-13 years;
- to identify and admit choristers who will contribute to and benefit from membership of our boarding community and who are able to perform the rigorous duties demanded from Probationers and Choristers to the standard required by the Head Master and the Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral;
- to identify and admit day boys who will benefit from an academic education and who will contribute to and benefit from the Catholic ethos and activities of our school community.

1. **Probationers and Choristers:** Due to the particular nature of the duties attached to Choristership at Westminster Cathedral, and in accordance with the School's designated status, all Probationers and Choristers must be baptised and practising Roman Catholics.
2. **Day boys:** the School welcomes application from families whose children will benefit from an academic education and who will contribute to and benefit from the Catholic ethos and activities of our school community. If we have to decide between two or more candidates who meet our admission requirements, after all appropriate allowances and special consideration has been given, we will give preference to:
  - a candidate who is a baptised and practising Roman Catholic;
  - a candidate who already has a brother in the School;
  - a candidate whose parent is a current member of our staff;
  - a candidate with a particular skill, talent or aptitude.
3. **Disability and Special Educational Needs:** The School has limited facilities for the disabled but will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.
4. The School needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a child's ability to take full advantage of the education provided at the School. Parents of a child who has any disability or special educational needs must provide the School with full written details at registration before accepting the offer of a place.
5. The School needs this information so that, in the case of any child with particular needs, we can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the child's needs both during the admission process and if an offer of a place is made.
6. Similarly, if special education needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow the child to continue at the School.
7. **Procedures**

Our admission procedure has five elements:

  1. Academic and, in the case of chorister applications, musical assessment tests;
  2. Boarding assessments for all chorister applicants;
  3. Interviews with parents and prospective pupils;
  4. Academic, character and, where applicable, musical references;
  5. Disability assessments (if applicable).
8. **Entry points:** these procedures apply at the main points of entry: 7+ or 8+, and also to candidates for occasional vacancies in any other year group.

9. **Entry tests:** these are as follows:

- at 7+ / 8+ candidates take common papers in English (comprehension and composition), Mathematics (basic arithmetic) and general reasoning;
- for admission to other year groups, the School may set its own tests in certain core/option subjects as appropriate.

10. **Interviews:** in all cases there will be a general interview with parents and prospective pupils to explore the candidate's interests, attitude to school, personal qualities, ability to contribute to the School community, support available at home and any relevant connection with the School.

11. **Character reference:** the Head of the candidate's current school will be asked to provide a written reference as to the candidate's academic ability (and musical ability where appropriate), attitude and behaviour, involvement in the school community, talents and interest, and any other special circumstances such as special educational needs, or a disability. The reference may also include the results of tests taken at the school (such as NFER or SATs).

12. **Candidate's age:** very occasionally, we may offer places to pupils one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement, that this would be in the best interests of the pupil and the School.

13. **Special circumstances:** we recognise that a candidate's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example:

- if he is unwell when taking tests or has had a lengthy absence from his school;
- if there are particular family circumstances such as a recent bereavement;
- if there is a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system;
- if the candidate has a disability or specific learning difficulties;
- if English is not the candidate's first language.

14. In any of these cases, we may request further information such as a medical certificate or educational psychologist's report and any associated correspondence or details from the pupil's current school (including samples of work) or any family history of dyslexia, as we consider necessary to make a fair assessment.

15. **Disclosures:** parents must disclose any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties.

The admission of any boy is at the discretion of the Head Master and is conditional on written acceptance of the School's Terms and Conditions, which are supplied with the Acceptance Form and detailed in the Parents' Handbook.