

# WINCHESTER HOUSE SCHOOL

## ADMISSIONS

### POLICY

Winchester House is not an academically selective school. Pupils can join the school at any stage providing there is room within the particular year group. Admission to the school depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if possible to improve, the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos to which the school aspires. The school must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful learning experience at Winchester House, and leave confident, well-rounded and well-prepared for the next stage of the pupil's education. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the school.

The school's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who is not disadvantaged because of his or her disability. The school asks parents to declare any special circumstances in respect of a prospective pupil at the time of application.

An assessment, prior to the formal offer of a place, is designed to ensure that WHS is the right school for the individual, rather than to set rigid academic benchmarks. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

One of the obvious problems which the school has (in common with many other schools) is its lay-out which covers a wide area and consists of many separate and some listed buildings of several stories and without lifts, which have grown up since the school moved to Brackley. Another is the system, again common to many schools, of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils in Years 4 and above, to go from classroom to classroom, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. The boarding facilities pose similar problems in a greater degree. It is not hard to conclude that any pupil with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the school offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments, short of making major alterations to physical features of the school at prohibitive cost. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position.

## **PROCEDURE**

Prospective parents generally make initial contact with the school by telephone or via the website to request a prospectus. The headmaster's PA will arrange an appointment for parents to visit the school. They usually meet the headmaster and his wife and the headmaster then accompanies them on a tour of the school. If this is not possible, parents are hosted by the Deputy Head or a senior member of staff. The appointment lasts between 1 ½ - 2 hours. Open Mornings can also attract first-time visitors.

### 1. Registration

Parents wishing to proceed towards their child entering the school then complete a Registration Form and send it, with the non-returnable registration fee, to the school. The child's name will be entered on a waiting list and receipt of this form is acknowledged by the Registrar.

### 2. Waiting List.

Whilst on the waiting list, and prior to the offer of a place, priority is determined as follows:

- children with siblings currently in the school
- chronological order of the date of receipt of the registration fee

Adjustments to the waiting list can also be made:

- on receipt of written confirmation that the child will enter the school as a boarder, either weekly or fully
- at the headmaster's discretion

### 3. Confirmation of intent, assessment and the offer of a place

Early in the academic year prior to entry, parents are asked to commit the first of two payments confirming their intention to send their child to WHS. On receipt of the first payment, arrangements are made to invite the child to an assessment day. Following the assessment, parents are contacted again with the formal offer of a place and are asked to return the completed form, with the second confirmation payment. (The two confirmation payments are refunded at the conclusion of the child's WHS career.)

### 4. And then...

During the summer term prior to arrival, a practice day is organised so that those starting at the school in the following September can meet one another and their peers. There is also an Information Evening for parents, at which Joining Instructions and the Parents' Handbook are distributed.

Late in the summer holidays, parent representatives (Hippos) will contact families to invite them to social gatherings arranged to enable new parents and new children to meet

those already at Winchester House. Within days of the start of term, there is a New Families' Picnic held at the school, attended by all new families and a supporting cast of Hippos, established WHS families and staff.

Arrangements for arrival on the first day of term, either for boarding or day pupils, are dealt with by the Registrar and the headmaster's PA. Parents will be notified.

A programme of coffee mornings will also be in place during the first week or two of term. These are largely social occasions, but they do encourage early communication with the school.