

Admissions Policy

This document aims to set out the criteria and procedures for admission to Prebendal School. In addition, it offers guidance for parents whose children who have a disability or special educational needs.

General

- The Admissions Policy for the Prebendal School is the responsibility of the Governing Body. It is administered by the Head Master in consultation with teaching staff.
- The policy operates in accordance with the stated aims of the school, which are to foster the academic, physical, social and spiritual development of boys and girls in a happy, caring and safe environment. Admission may be refused where it is felt that admission to the school is not in the best interests of the child or other children in the school.
- Admission to Prebendal is generally dependent upon the parent or guardian's ability to pay fees in accordance with the published scale applicable at the time. Assistance may be available with fees in the form of Choristerships, Scholarships (academic, music, sport and art) and Bursaries. These are advertised as and when they are available and full details are available from the Bursar's office. (The award of scholarships and bursaries may be subject to means testing.)

Policy Objectives

- To make it possible for children who would benefit from the opportunities afforded by Prebendal School to do so;
- To maintain and develop the Christian Foundation of the school;
- To facilitate the recruitment of Choristers of the highest quality, irrespective of parental means;
- To ensure that the School recruits the optimum number of pupils consistent with the duty to safeguard the interests of all members of the School community.

Awards and Fee Remission: The School's policy detailing *Bursaries and Scholarships* is available in the School prospectus, on the School Website and from the Bursar's Assistant. Fee assistance takes no account of an applicant's gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or disability. All bursaries are subject to the satisfactory completion and return of an annual statement of means.

Admission Criteria: Admission to Prebendal School depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if possible, improve the educational and general standards for all its pupils, commensurate with the School's ethos and aims. 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.

The School's criteria for admissions are:

- that a prospective pupil will benefit from the education that Prebendal offers, this will be judged upon a pupil achieving sufficient results during a taster day to satisfy the Head that he or she can cope with the general pace of learning. An individual's economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and in most cases disability (see below), do not form part of this selection process;
- that a satisfactory report is received from a pupil's current school (not applicable for Nursery and Reception aged pupils)
- the school caters for a wide range of abilities and it is important that a prospective pupil, in the judgement of the Head, shows sufficient aptitude, commitment and willingness to benefit from the educational opportunities on offer at the School;
- that the School is able to meet the needs of a prospective pupil without impairing the education of other pupils;
- that there are sufficient vacancies in the appropriate year group, Cathedral Choir or boarding house;
- that candidates for the Cathedral Choir satisfy the requirements of both the Cathedral department of Liturgy and Music and the School as to their suitability to be a Chorister and a pupil of the School;
- In the case of an applicant for the Nursery class, parents are able to give an assurance that lavatory training has been satisfactorily completed by their child.

Special Educational Needs and Disability: This guidance should be read in conjunction with the School's *Learning Support Policy*. This aim of this guidance is to ensure compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and follows guidance issued by the Disability Rights Commission and the Independent Schools' Council.

The School is open to applications from any prospective pupil with a physical and/or mental impairment. The School's policy is to apply the above criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability* of which it is aware, and not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who

is not disadvantaged because of a disability. All applications will be judged fairly and the School will consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made to cater for the child's disabilities.

** For the purposes of this guidance, 'disability' includes any pupil or prospective pupil whose mobility, hearing, sight or other physical functions are impaired, or who exhibits other special educational needs, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, or significant behavioural or emotional problems.*

When applying for a place, parents are asked to discuss with the Head the nature and extent of any disability. The Head may request copies of any assessments or relevant medical reports. Subject to this, the School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. In assessing a prospective pupil in relation to the criteria above, the School will consider each case on an individual basis and make any reasonable adjustments. The School is happy to consider any pupil with sufficient aptitude for a place at the School and no group is excluded *per se*. However, parents may wish to be aware of certain factors before deciding whether Prebendal School will be a suitable school for their child.

- **Physical layout of the School:** In common with many other schools, Prebendal consists of many separate and historic buildings which cover a reasonably wide area; none are currently provided with lifts. In order to provide specialist facilities, most subjects (in Years 5 and above) are taught in subject areas and the more senior pupils therefore move from classroom to classroom and building to building between lessons. However, some parts of the School are accessible to those with a level of impaired mobility and the School is therefore happy to consider such prospective pupils.
- **Sport and physical education and activities:** Sport and physical education are a significant part of the programme at Prebendal. However, there is no absolute requirement for any pupil to take part in any or all such activities if, by reason of disability, parents do not wish them to or they are advised not to. In such cases, the School will endeavour to provide appropriate alternatives but cannot guarantee such provision. Alternatively, parents may (with the Head's permission) wish to take their child out of School on their designated games afternoons, for example, to attend physiotherapy. Every effort will be made to accommodate a pupil with a disability on school trips and expeditions, especially those which form a part of the academic curriculum. However, each case will be assessed separately and the School reserves the right to refuse a place on a trip if it considers that it cannot provide for the welfare of the pupil concerned or if other pupils or staff might be placed in a position of danger.
- **Sight or hearing-impaired pupils:** Prospective pupils who are sight or hearing-impaired are welcome to apply for admission. The School foresees no problem with admitting a pupil who needs to use an individual hearing system, but sufficient time would need to be allowed for appropriate staff training in advance.

- **Specific learning difficulties:** Parents are asked to advise the Head at the time of application if their child has a diagnosed specific learning difficulty and to send the Educational Psychologist's report to the School before any taster day is undertaken. Children with a specific learning difficulty will be allowed additional time and other assistance as required in any assessments undertaken. The School has a small Learning Support team who are able to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis. This service is designed to assist those pupils with mild learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. Parents are advised that these lessons are separately chargeable. Please see the School's *Learning support Policy* for further details.
- **Behavioural or emotional problems:** Pupils with a history of behavioural or emotional problems may be accepted into the School. The School may require a medical examination to be carried out and, if any medication is prescribed (e.g. Ritalin), parents must ensure that medical advice is followed. As with all disabilities, each case will be considered on an individual basis. However, the overriding consideration in this case will be whether the presence of a pupil with behavioural or emotional problems in the School will impair the education of other pupils (for example, by occupying large amounts of staff time) or put other pupils or staff directly or indirectly at risk.
- **Disclosure:** In order for the School to consider what reasonable adjustments it may need to make for each individual pupil, full disclosure by parents of any medical reports, educational, psychology or psychiatric assessments, or any other relevant information, in advance of any application is essential. In cases of doubt, parents should consult the School well in advance of any application. In the event of parents disclosing relevant information (of which they were already aware) after accepting a place, or being discovered to have deliberately withheld such information at any stage during or after the admissions process, and the School is unable to make reasonable adjustments to cater for the pupil, the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, if the pupil has already joined the School, to ask the parents to withdraw the child.

Admissions Procedure

Children may join the School in any year group, depending on place availability. The earliest possible entry to the School is in the Nursery Class during the term a child reaches the age of three. There is a maximum number of places in each year or teaching group. Parents should be aware that waiting lists may be in operation, particularly in the youngest year groups, and early registration is therefore advised. The School Admissions Secretary will be very pleased to offer guidance with this.

Visit and Registration: Parents are very welcome to make the initial visit either with or without their child(ren). The visit will include a meeting and tour of the School with the

Head (and sometimes with some pupils) and where appropriate the Head of Pre-Prep. Following a visit the Head will write to the parents enclosing a registration form. The completed registration form together with a £75 registration fee should be submitted to the School as soon as possible thereafter. Parents should be aware that places in our Pre-Preparatory Classes are booked some time in advance, therefore early registration is advised.

“Taster” / assessment day: The taster day is an opportunity for your child to spend a normal day with the pupils in his or her current year group and will include all the activities that happen during any chosen day. The day is designed to give children the opportunity to get to know their peers, teaching staff and to familiarise themselves with the School buildings. If your child has a particular interest (drama, swimming) the taster day can be arranged on a day when this activity takes place. Pupil mentors are assigned to take special care of visiting children. Children spending a taster day in the Nursery – Year 2 will be informally assessed by the form teacher during the course of the day. Children in Year 3 and above may in addition to informal testing may undertake some assessments in English, Reading and Mathematics with the form teacher or another senior teacher. No preparation is needed for this. These assessments will not take the form of a formal examination as we want children to be relaxed and confident so that we can assess their level of ability.

Request of report from current school: All places offered are subject to a satisfactory report from a child’s current school (not applicable for Nursery or Reception aged children).

Admission Process for Cathedral Choristers: Auditions for the Cathedral Choir may take place at any time, by appointment, if there are vacancies in the Choir to be filled. The main voice auditions take place in November and February of each academic year, for entry the following September, or occasionally, more immediately. Children seeking a Chorister place also undertake general entrance assessments in verbal reasoning, English and mathematics. This testing is to ensure that the pupils will be able to cope with the additional demands of a choristership. Voice trialists who are already members of the School follow will not be asked to undergo any academic tests as the school will already hold appropriate academic data on the pupils. If a choristership is offered it is conditional upon the pupil remaining in the School and Choir until the age of 13 (the completion of Year 8).

- **Offer of a place:** Following a taster day the Head or in the case of the Pre-Prep the Head of Pre-Prep either at the end of the taster day or as soon as possible thereafter will contact the parents to discuss the day’s events from both the School, the parents and the child’s perspective and to answer any remaining questions. If all has gone well a verbal offer of a place will be made, which will be followed up in writing. It is expected that all Pre-Prep pupils will move to the Prep department and continue to be educated at the Prebendal School.

Acceptance of a place: This is requested, in writing, together with a non-returnable deposit of £250 which is payable before a pupil joins the School. This deposit is held as a credit against the final fee account that is presented after a pupil leaves the School.

Appeals: An application for admission may be refused if, in the opinion of the Head:

- It is not possible for the School to provide an appropriate education for the prospective pupil
- The admission of the applicant is likely to jeopardise the safety and/or education of other pupils and/or jeopardise the good name and reputation of the School

Or if:

- In the case of an applicant for the Nursery class, parents are unable to give an assurance that lavatory training has been satisfactorily completed by their child.

Any appeal with regard to admission should be made in writing to the Head.

The Admissions Process From Enquiry To Joining

Enquiry

All enquiries should go through the Admissions Secretary. On enquiry the following information should be obtained:

- Title, Initials, Surname
- Name of child (Surname, First names)
- Date of birth
- Address / tel / email
- Term and Year of anticipated entry
- Inquiry source, i.e. word of mouth, ISC etc

The following information should be sent out:

- Prospectus and relevant documentation including availability of policies.
- Letter with details of how to make an appointment
- Latest copy of the Prebendalian Magazine

Follow Up

- If within two weeks no appointment is made a follow up letter / phone call will be made offering an appointment.

Appointment

Pre-Prep

- All prospective parents will have the opportunity to meet the Head Master and the Head of Pre-Prep.
- Pre-Prep ~ meeting and talking with the Head of Pre-Prep; tour of NGH and Highleigh, mini tour of main school site with the Head Master.

Prep

- Meeting the Head Master and tour of the main school

Follow Up

- Following a visit the Head Master / Head of Pre-Prep should write to the parents thanking them for their visit and enclose registration forms. If the child visited at this stage the Head will send a hand written card thanking them for visiting.
- If within two weeks no contact has been made with the school a follow up letter / phone call should be made.
- If parents decide not to send their child to Prebendal we should try to establish the reason for not choosing us.

Upon Registration

- An opportunity should be given for the child to visit the school for a day at a time suitable for both parent and school. It is anticipated that this will happen within a few weeks of registering.
- Ideally the child should be with the form they will join on starting.
- The Deputy Head, Director of Studies and Form Teacher should be informed and a 'buddy' organised (by the Form Teacher).
- The Head and the Form Teacher should meet the Parent and child on arrival and a teacher nominated to see the child off in the afternoon.
- Ideally on the visit the child will undertake the following tests (Prep, two from nfer Eng, nfer maths, VR and NVR). It is anticipated that the tests will take approx. 1.5 hours. These test are the responsibility of the Director of Studies.

Follow up

- From this point further follow up regarding Pre-Prep children will be undertaken by the Head of Pre-Prep and in the main school by the Head Master which is in practice delegated to the admissions secretary.
- The visit should be followed up with a letter by the Head and details about joining instructions sent (uniform list, first day where to meet, plus information as to when final details will be sent out).
- Newsletters, invitations to major concerts and plays should be sent on a regular basis to help the new family feel a part of the school.

Upon Acceptance of a Place

- An Admissions Folder will be sent to parents which includes joining details, uniform lists and a wide variety of information that and forms (e.g. medical) in order to ensure a smooth transition into the school.

Recording & Monitoring

The whole process needs to be recorded by the Admissions Secretary. Each week the Admissions Secretary will ensure any follow up letters / phone calls that are due are made.

Each half term the SMT will look at the data and feed any useful information back to the Governing Body / Marketing Committee.