



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Date of issue: November 2023	Version no: 2
Approved by: SLT	Review date: August 2024

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to serve as a guide to the various procedures concerned with entrance to St George's School, Edinburgh.

SCOPE

This policy applies to either:

- Whole school

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Person responsible:	Head
Council member or Committee:	Education
Reviewed by and frequency:	Annually, Head
Date of last review:	November 2023
Policy approved by SLT on:	November 2023
Date of next review:	August 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Policy (students)
- Support for Learning Policy
- Exclusion Policy

LEGAL REFERENCES:

This policy operates within a wider national and local policy framework, which includes:

- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and as amended 2009
- The Equality Act 2010

OBJECTIVES:

- To make our admission procedures fair, transparent, and as accessible as possible to all potential pupils and families.
- To ensure consistency in the application of those procedures.
- To ensure we offer places to pupils who will thrive in our unique environment.

POLICY:

St George's School is a selective, independent day and boarding school. A day school education is available for boys and girls from age 3 (or the term of their third birthday) until the end of P3 (by 2024 for boys), for girls only from P4 until the end of Upper Sixth (P6). Boarding is available from the age of 10 years, on a full-time or flexible basis.

St George's is firmly committed to offering a single-sex education for girls from the age of 8 (P4 upwards). In our experience, students in girls' schools are less constrained in their choice of subjects, show a greater propensity to take risks and innovate, perform better in examinations, have more opportunities to show leadership, and are less likely to conform to gender stereotypes. For these reasons, St George's parents and students choose a predominately single-sex environment over other available options.

1. Main entry points and structure:

St George's is selective on the basis of academic ability and potential. Places are offered to prospective pupils based on their potential to thrive in the educational environment provided. We pay particular attention to preparing our pupils for transition between different stages of the school and for this reason organise our education into four sections: Nursery; Junior school; Lower school and Upper school. Further detail of the school structure can be found on our website: [School structure and campus tour \(stge.org.uk\)](http://stge.org.uk)

The main points of entry for the Junior School are Nursery (3+) and Primary 1 (Age 5+). In Lower School the main entry point is Lower 4 (Age 11+) and in Upper School the main entry point is Upper 4 (Age 13+). Entry to other year groups is welcomed as vacancies occur. A waiting list for vacancies is maintained. The school will advise on the appropriate entry stage according to the applicant's date of birth.

2. Admissions selection processes:

Admission is dependent on achieving an acceptable standard in an assessment (formal and informal) or examination appropriate to the age group and academic pace of the school. Such examinations and assessments are free of bias, and due consideration will be given to individual needs and prior educational experience in making any decision on the offer of a place. We are fully aware of our duties to make reasonable adjustments to the admissions process for prospective students with a disability (see Equality of opportunity and inclusion below).

The final decision regarding admissions rests with the Head, who reserves the right to decline to offer a place on grounds other than simply academic potential (e.g. a pupil's record at a previous school).

Entry to Nursery (from 3 years or the term of their third birthday):

Children are assessed by the Head of Junior School and Nursery to ensure that they are developmentally suited and ready for the activities, play, and learning at the Nursery. This takes the form of a play session with the Head of Junior School and Nursery and other members of the Nursery team. Communication, social, physical and self-care skills are assessed in addition to academic levels of learning, appropriate for this age and stage. Every child will be invited to attend a play session in the Nursery, however, participation in a play session **does not** guarantee the offer of a place. More than one play session may be required to ascertain the suitability of our Nursery environment for the needs of an individual child, and this may involve consultation with the Head of Support for Learning. The Head of Junior School and Nursery will advise the Head whether a Nursery place should be offered. **See Appendix Two (Admissions Play Session guidelines) for further detail.**

There are two main intakes a year for Nursery admissions: August and January. However, children can join us at any point throughout the session if places are available and in accordance with the Care Inspectorate ratios of children to staff. The ratio of staff to children may alter where an additional level of support is needed for a child to access the curriculum safely and independently. Should there be no spaces available, a waiting list will be in operation, with priority given to the siblings of existing students, the child of a staff member and the date of receipt of the formal application form.

Entry to Junior School (P1-P5):

Primary 1

The Primary 1 assessment play morning date for autumn entry will be in the January of that year. P1 applications after this date are held throughout the year and dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Primary 2 and 3

Children applying for P2 and P3 are invited to spend a full day with the class to which admission is sought. During the day the class teacher will informally assess the applicant. Assessments are arranged on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Primary 4 and 5

Children applying for P4 and P5 are invited to spend a morning in school. During the morning they will complete entrance tests comprising of literacy, numeracy and problem-solving ability. Assessments are arranged on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Offers are made based on the entrance assessment and a reference and report from your child's current school. Communication, social, physical and self-care skills are assessed in addition to academic levels of learning, appropriate for this age and stage. Parents are required to supply a copy of their child's most recent school report with the application form.

Entrance assessments can be arranged at a girl's current school for overseas applicants or those living some distance from Edinburgh.

Entry to Lower School (P6 - Lower 4 / P6-S1):

Applicants entering P6 - S1 are invited to spend a full day in school. During the morning they complete entrance tests comprising of papers testing language, mathematical and reasoning (verbal and non-verbal) ability. Following assessments girls join their peer group for the rest of the school day.

Assessments for all year groups are arranged on an ongoing basis throughout the year. For S1, as a major entry point, there is a set assessment date in January, applications after this point are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Entrance assessments can be arranged at a girl's current school for overseas applicants or those living some distance from Edinburgh.

Places will be allocated based on performance in these assessments, and a reference and report from your daughter's current school. Parents are required to provide a copy of their daughter's most recent school report with the application form.

Entry to Upper School (Upper 4 – Upper 5 / S2-S4):

Applicants are invited to spend the morning in school where they will complete entrance tests comprising of papers testing language, mathematical and reasoning (verbal and non-verbal) ability. Applicants will be invited to an interview with a member of the senior leadership team.

Places will be allocated based on performance in these assessments, and a reference and report from your daughter's current school. Parents are required to provide a copy of their daughter's most recent school report with the application form.

Entry to Sixth Form (S5-S6):

Applications for girls to the Sixth Form (S5 and S6) are assessed on an individual basis. Girls are invited to spend the morning in school where they sit an entrance assessment testing their mathematical and reasoning (verbal and non-verbal) abilities. Girls will be invited to an interview with a member of the senior leadership team.

Entrance assessments can be arranged at a girl's current school for overseas applicants or those living some distance from Edinburgh.

Places will be allocated based on performance in these assessments, and a reference and report from your daughter's current school. Parents are required to provide a copy of their daughter's most recent school report with the application form.

ESOL Candidates:

Candidates for whom English is a second or other language will sit an additional English language test, which will be used to ascertain whether English is at a sufficient level for accessing the curriculum. Places will be allocated based on performance in the assessments and a satisfactory school report. Parents are required to provide a copy of their child's most recent school report with the application form.

Siblings:

Wherever possible, when siblings of pupils at the school reach a satisfactory standard in entrance assessments at Junior and Lower School level, they will be offered places, if places are available. However, there may be cases in which it would not be in the best interests of a sibling to take a place at St George's; this is at the Head's judgement. There is no sibling policy for entrance to the Upper School.

3. Overseas admissions:**Students from outside the UK and Ireland**

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations: all pupils must fulfil UK Border Agency regulations for study in the UK. All prospective pupils should provide a copy of their birth certificate, passport, and any visa documentation. Parents are also required to provide copies of their own passports and any visa documentation, including Settled Status documents.

St George's School is a Student Visa Sponsor and will discharge its statutory duties in line with the Sponsor guidelines issued by UK Visas and Immigration. Boarding pupils wishing to live in the UK under the Child Student route should inform the school admissions department at the time of application. Due to the complexity surrounding child student visa applications we work with a firm of immigration specialists, in all instances. An additional cost is incurred for this service, payable by families.

4. Boarding places:

Long- and short-term boarding options are available at all stages of entry from the age of 10 years. Boarding places are limited in number and are allocated at the same time as an offer of a place in the school only if a suitable boarding place is available. For international students and for those who live some distance from the school, an online interview will be offered with the Head of Boarding, who is also a member of the academic staff and Senior Deputy of the school. Parents who are not UK nationals and/or who are not domiciled in the UK are required to pay a larger deposit than day students when a boarding place is accepted (details on the school website).

5. Transitions between each section of the school:

The best outcomes for pupils come for those who experience the full breadth of a 3-18 education with us. For this reason, it is expected that pupils will automatically move into the next section of the school. There are however some exceptional circumstances, when this is not in the best interests of the child. The Head will advise parents if it would be inadvisable or not beneficial for their child to make the relevant move into the next section of the school. This will be with as much notice as possible and no later than one term before the intended transition i.e.: April of Pre-School year; April of P5; April of Lower 6 or April of Upper 5. When moving in the Sixth Form, there are several different curriculum options, and we may make a recommendation of which is most likely to benefit each student before April of Upper 5. Entry into the Sixth Form is then on the basis that this advice is followed.

The Head of Junior School and Nursery will advise the Head if they judge any child unready to start in Primary 1 or would benefit from an additional year of play-based learning in pre-school. The decision to allow transition at any stage will remain with the Head.

6. Financial Assistance:

Means-tested bursaries are available for pupils from Lower 4 (S1) upwards whose families cannot afford to pay full school fees; it is a central part of St George's ethos to offer its education to children from a diverse and wide-range of different backgrounds, including socio-economic and we think carefully about how best to support these students once part of the St George's community. As the bursary fund is funded solely from fee-income it is regrettably limited.

Offers of bursaries are therefore made with reference to the pupil's:

- academic ability, including attainment in admissions tests.
- commitment to joining St George's.
- contribution to the wider life of their previous school.
- record of behaviour at their previous school
- Interview with the Head

7. Equality of opportunity and inclusion:

St George's is committed to promoting equality of opportunity throughout our admissions process and will not discriminate against pupils in relation to any relevant protected characteristic, including disability, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Whilst we are a single sex school from P4 onwards, we will not discriminate on grounds of sex in relation to admissions from Nursery to P3.

In addition, we don't just accept difference—we celebrate it, we support it, and we thrive on it for the benefit of all the members of our community. If applicants have a disability or additional support need that requires accommodation, we encourage them to let us know at the application stage so that reasonable adjustments can be made to the admissions process. We will make every effort to make all our applicants feel welcome and that our admissions procedures are fair, transparent, and as accessible as possible to all potential pupils and their families.

The school must be satisfied that pupils entering the school have the potential to benefit from the education that St George's offers and parents should inform admissions from the outset, of any known medical conditions, disabilities, additional support needs, health problems or allergies that may affect the applicant. Where a prospective pupil is disabled, the school will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, and other agencies and services if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the school, to ensure that the prospective pupil is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a pupil who is not disadvantaged because of a disability. There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments being made, there is evidence that the prospective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the school.

Details of any learning difficulties, additional support needs or behavioural, emotional, or social difficulties should also be provided at the start of the admissions process. The school will make any necessary reasonable adjustments to accommodate pupils who demonstrate the ability to benefit from education at St George's, and who require additional support to fully access learning at St George's. Any such adjustments may be discussed and explored as a partnership between the school and parents. This process may take place over several planning meetings between key staff members in school and the parents themselves, with the child's needs at the centre of all discussions.

Any additional family circumstances, court proceedings or court orders which might affect the applicant's welfare or happiness should also be provided to the Admissions Registrar at the start of the admissions proceedings.

8. Offering a place:

Offers of places are made in writing on behalf of the Head. A completed application form and payment of the registration fee, to cover administration costs, is required for all registrations. We also require a copy of a child's birth certificate, passport, and any relevant visa documentation along with their most recent school report/ a reference. For places in Lower 4 (S1) and Primary 1, commencing at the start of any school session, offers cannot be made until the February before the start of session (the exact date having been agreed in advance by Edinburgh independent schools). Offers for places commencing at any other time during the school session, or for August in any other year group than Lower 4 and Primary 1, can be made at any time during the year. To enrol, families must sign a copy of the contract and terms and conditions of accepting a place (Appendix 1).

GDPR IMPACT:

The admissions team will request and process personal applicant and family data in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and we will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679). The collected data will be used for the purpose of registering the applicant's interest in applying for a place at St George's School and collecting information required by the school to enable applicant selection and if successful, the offer of a school place. Data will be held securely and will not be retained by the school for any longer than is necessary for this purpose.