

# **Durston House**

## **Admissions Policy**

### **Aim of the Policy**

- to state the school's approach to admissions to Durston House

### **Objectives of the Policy**

- to set out clearly the admissions process
- to provide prospective parents with a guide to their part in the process
- to establish criteria for entry to Durston House
- to state the time-scale of the process and the fees incurred
- To complement all relevant school policies and procedures, including the Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Policies, and the Bursary Policy (available from the Bursar: [bursar@durstonhouse.org](mailto:bursar@durstonhouse.org))

Durston House welcomes pupils of all faiths, cultures, races and family backgrounds. This policy aims to set out the particulars of the school's policy in and arrangements for admission to the school and ensure compliance with the school's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 as well as its charitable purposes.

All prospective pupils (including those in our EYFS setting), will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' sex; religion or belief; disability; race (including colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins); sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy or maternity. Prospective pupils will also be treated equally in respect of their parents' age or marital or civil partnership status. The school will make any reasonable additional or alternative arrangements to ensure that the school's admissions procedures are accessible to disabled children.

The school will consult with parents and such other persons or organisations as necessary in order to ascertain a child's particular needs and the nature of any additional or alternative arrangements which would be required to meet them if an offer of a place was made. Parents of a child who has a disability or special educational need should therefore provide the school with full details on registration.

A limited number of means tested bursaries are available each year. Further details can be found in the Bursary Policy available from the school, as above.

### **Admissions Criteria**

- A satisfactory report from the prospective pupil's previous school or setting from Reception upwards (and Pre-School/Nursery if available).
- The completion of a signed declaration by all parents, or those with parental control of the prospective pupil, which informs the school of all known special educational needs of the prospective pupil concerned.
- Where applicable, overseas pupils may be required to undertake a language proficiency assessment before a place is offered. This may include a written assessment and an interview in person or via electronic media.
- Completion of the entrance procedure, as set out below, for each year group of entry.
- All prospective pupils must have the legal right to live and study in the UK.

It is assumed that pupils will automatically progress through the school, subject to their meeting the required standards of behaviour and progress and the school continuing to be able to meet their needs. The relevant criteria for progression through the school are set out in this Admissions Policy.

## **Non EEA Nationals**

In accordance with UK Border Authority regulations, which apply to all schools, non EEA nationals must provide evidence of entry visas and right to reside in the UK.

The school does not hold a Tier 4 licence and is therefore unable to provide Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) numbers.

## **Waiting List**

In the event of a year group being full, the Registrar will contact you and, if you wish, will place your application on a waiting list. Should a vacancy become available, you will be contacted and invited to confirm your interest.

## **Data Protection**

Data, some of it sensitive and/or confidential, is held by the school for both parents and pupils. All data is held securely and only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see it. The school acknowledges its responsibility under the Data Protection Act 2018.

All staff members understand the need to protect the privacy of the pupils in their care as well as the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to parents and pupils is handled in a way that ensures confidentiality; please refer to the school's Privacy Notice available on the school's website, [www.durstonhouse.org](http://www.durstonhouse.org), for further information or contact the Bursar by telephone, post or email.

## **Terms & Conditions**

The Parental Contract is the Terms and Conditions. The Parental Contract is sent to prospective parents with the offer letter. Should you wish to see a copy of the Terms and Conditions before applying for a place please contact the Registrar ([Registrar@Durstonhouse.org](mailto:Registrar@Durstonhouse.org))

## **Admissions Procedure**

### **Application**

Admission and entry to the school is subject to the availability of a place and the prospective pupil satisfying the admissions criteria listed on page 1. With regards to admission for pupils with a disability, reference should also be made to the school's SEN Policy and Accessibility Plan and Equal Opportunities Policy that can be found on the School's website ([www.durstonhouse.org](http://www.durstonhouse.org)).

Prospective pupils will be considered as candidates for admission and entry to the school when the online Registration Form has been submitted along with the non-refundable registration fee of £150 (VAT Exempt) for registrations of children under 5 years of age or £180 (including VAT) for children aged 5 and above. Parents/guardians can register their child at any time from birth. The Registration Form is available on the school's website: [www.durstonhouse.org](http://www.durstonhouse.org).

Prospective parents may also choose to pay the Acceptance Fee when they register, in order to reserve their place. If an offer is not made after the assessment has taken place, the Acceptance Fee will be refunded in full.

Prospective parents can make an appointment to meet the Headmaster and to tour the school. Alternatively, Open Mornings are held each term.

Having satisfied the entrance criteria, there are a number of factors which may be taken into account when considering priority:

- Children who have siblings already attending the school
- Children who demonstrate exceptional talent
- Children whose parents work at the school
- The school's ability to provide suitable support for the welfare of the child
- Extenuating circumstances affecting the child's welfare or his/her family

For twin siblings who apply to the school, their applications will be considered separately; if only one is offered a place, it will be up to the parents to decide whether to accept it.

### **Entry to Pre-School**

Pupils are admitted to our Pre-School class in the term following their third birthday. Up to 40 children are admitted into Pre-School.

Applicants are invited to join a stay-and-play assessment morning or afternoon during the term before they are due to start. These informal play sessions are an opportunity for us to see children complete some activities with our teachers in the Pre-School for about 30 – 45 minutes. We ask that parents leave their child/children with us for that short time.

The aim of the play session is to ensure that your child will be able to benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities and the community life offered by the school. During the sessions, staff will be observing and talking to your child whilst they take part in a range of play activities, as well as a group story time. We may also arrange a second visit, or a follow-up visit to a child's current setting, if they do not settle well during the play session.

Places will be offered on the basis of observation and general assessment of school readiness during these visits as well as satisfactory references. It is important to note that at this young age, we are looking for potential, rather than what has already been learnt, taking into account national age-related expectations. The Head of Pre- Prep oversees the entry process as directed by the Headmaster.

If a child has any additional needs, or English is not their first language, parents should inform us on registration so that any specific arrangements or support for their assessment can be put in place in advance.

When stay-and-play sessions are booked in, the Registrar will send questionnaires to parents and to the child's setting, which must be returned before offers can be considered. Offers will be made within two weeks of the assessment and the deadline for acceptances will be two weeks after the date of the offer letter.

### **Entry to Reception**

Pupils are usually admitted to our Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Up to 48 children are admitted into Reception.

Children who are not already attending Durston House Pre-School are invited to join a stay-and-play assessment afternoon. For the majority of pupils, this will take place in the Autumn Term in the school year before they join Reception. These informal play sessions are an opportunity for us to see children complete some activities with our teachers in one of the classrooms or in the playground for about 45 minutes. We ask that parents leave their child/children with us for that short time. Those who are unable to attend on that day will instead be asked to attend during either a morning or afternoon session in our Pre-School, on a mutually convenient date.

The aim of the play session is to ensure that they will be able to benefit sufficiently from the educational opportunities and the community life offered by the school. During the sessions, staff will be observing and talking to your child whilst they take part in a range of play activities, as well as a group story time. We may also arrange a second session, or a follow up visit to a child's current setting.

Children who wish to join Reception after the start of the academic year are assessed for entry in accordance with the admission criteria of the school to ensure that they are working within the same academic range as the current pupils in Reception. There is no assessment fee.

In evaluating the completed assessments, the Headmaster will be seeking evidence of a standard of academic ability whereby the prospective pupil will be able to develop and prosper in the academic and social environment of Reception at the school.

If a child has any additional needs or English is not their first language, parents should inform the School at registration so that any specific arrangements or support for their assessment can be put in place in advance.

Places will be offered on the basis of observation and general assessment of school readiness during these visits as well as satisfactory references. It is important to note that at this young age, we are looking for potential, rather than what has already been learnt, taking into account national age-related expectations. The Head of Pre- Prep oversees the entry process as directed by the Headmaster.

When these sessions are booked in, the Registrar will send questionnaires to parents and the child's setting or school, which must be returned before offers can be considered. Offers will be made within two weeks of the assessment and the deadline for acceptances will be two weeks after the date of the offer letter.

### **Entry into Years 1-8**

All prospective pupils from our application list are assessed for entry in accordance with the admission criteria of the school to ensure that they are working within the same academic range as the current pupils in the Year Group for which the application is being made. A reference and a copy of their most recent report is requested from their current school. There is no assessment fee.

In evaluating the completed assessments, the Headmaster will be seeking evidence of a standard of academic ability whereby the prospective pupil will be able to develop and prosper in the academic and social environment of the year group at the school.

### **The Entry Procedures**

To register your child/ren for admission to Durston House a registration fee of £150 (VAT Exempt) is payable for children under 5 years of age and £180 (Including VAT) for children over 5 years of age. The Registration Fee is non-refundable.

The Registration Form is available on the school's website [www.durstonhouse.org](http://www.durstonhouse.org).

### **Offer and Acceptance of a Place**

Once the assessments have been carried out, the Parental Questionnaire returned (for Pre-School and Reception entry), and a satisfactory reference received from the current setting/school, applicants are then formally offered a place by the Headmaster for the Year of Entry (which may be subject to such conditions as specified in the letter).

The offer letter is sent with the Acceptance Form, the Durston House Parent Contract, (Terms and Conditions) and the Confidential Medical Information Form. To accept a place that has been offered, the Acceptance Form must be completed and signed (signatures are required from each of those with parental responsibility), The Acceptance Fee must be paid.

Signatures on the Parental Contract confirm that all signatories have read and understood the Parental Contract, and this should be retained for information and future reference

The Acceptance Fee will be retained by the school as part of its general fund, refundable after the end of the pupil's final term. It will only be refundable at other times and subject to the receipt of documentary evidence provided to support the withdrawal, if a pupil is withdrawn before starting at the school for either of the following reasons:

- The family is moving more than 25 miles from the school.
- Both parents are no longer in employment or there has been a significant change in financial circumstances

The Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the completed Acceptance Form and payment of the Acceptance Fee to confirm that the place has been secured.

### **Deferred Entry after Assessment**

At Durston House, we acknowledge the individual circumstances of our pupils and understand that sometimes unforeseen personal situations may arise, preventing them from joining on their expected start date. In such cases, we will consider deferred entry. Notice to defer a start date must be received at least one term before the start date. Failure to give a term's notice will, as per the Terms and Conditions of the Parental Contract, result in a charge for fees in lieu of notice.

In all case where a place is deferred, whether due notice is given or not, the Parental Contract is broken and the application procedures for the deferred date must be followed again and a new contract entered into.

For pupils starting at Pre-School or Reception, if their start date is delayed by more than one term, we may consider assessing their needs and requirements again before offering a deferred place.

Similarly, for later year groups, if their start date is delayed by more than two terms, we may reassess pupils to ensure that they will be able to cope with the rigours of the Durston Curriculum.

### **Transition through the School**

A pupil's progression from Pre-School to Reception or Reception to Pre-Prep, from Pre-Prep to Junior School or Junior School to Main School, as applicable, will be subject to the discretion of the Headmaster who must be satisfied that the pupil will be able to cope with the pace and rigour of academic life at the next stage.

The progress of each child is monitored closely through incidental and focused observations, systematic 'tracking' and assessments linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum or National Curriculum. Great care is taken in making a judgement as the school recognises that children develop at different rates. Under exceptional circumstances, if the school has any concerns that a pupil is finding it difficult to cope with the curriculum, discussion with the pupil's parents is entered into in order to advise alternative future schooling arrangements, in the Spring Term before transition occurs.

Parents of pupils from Pre-School to Year 7 must, in every case, give a term's notice if it is not their intention to continue into the following school year. Failure to give a term's notice will, as per the Terms and Conditions of the Parental Contract, result in a charge for fees in lieu of notice.

## **Transition events for new families**

In the Summer Term prior to the pupil taking up their place at the start of the next academic year there are a range of events for new families. Joining information will be sent to all new parents during the term before their child is due to start at Durston House.

New parents will be invited to attend an Information Session in June or July where they will have the opportunity to meet members of staff and learn more about the school, the curriculum and information about the start of term. Parent Handbooks and information about School Uniform are distributed by email.

New pupils are invited to attend the school in May or June (Reception and Pre-School) or in July (Y1-8) in order to meet their new teachers and class members, thus starting the induction process.

## **Automatic Fee Discount**

There is a sibling discount of 5% for any second and subsequent siblings in the school.

## **Record keeping and confidentiality**

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records. A confidential admissions record will be kept for each prospective pupil.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The school's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The school has published privacy notices on its website, which explain how the school will use personal data.

## **Evaluation of this Policy**

*This policy will be evaluated biennially by the school, amended where necessary and approved by SMT.*

<i>Updated for Co-educational School</i>	<i>Jun 2023</i>	<i>SMT</i>	<i>Version 1</i>
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