

ADMISSIONS POLICY

These notes are to help parents understand our criteria and processes for admission to the School.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Following their initial enquiry, parents are welcome to visit the School.

This may be on one of the Open Days held periodically and throughout the year. The programme on Open Days includes talk by the Head, a tour of the School with pupils, an opportunity to visit departments, observe activities, ask questions and visit a boarding house.

Parents may also wish arrange a private visit, to see the School on a normal working day. This may be in addition to an Open Day visit, or as a first step. These visits should be booked directly with the Registrar on 01462 650947 or admissions@stchris.co.uk.

A private visit may include a discussion with the Head, with the Head of the Junior School or the Head of the Montessori Nursery in the case of a younger child, or with another senior member of staff.

For those interested in boarding, there may be an opportunity to visit a boarding house. Providing we have notice, it is usually possible to meet a relevant Houseparent.

APPLYING FOR A PLACE (Registration)

When parents have decided to apply for a place, they should submit a Registration Form and the Registration fee. Copies of the Registration Form are available in the Information Booklet, sent with the prospectus. The Form can also be downloaded online from the "Downloads" page of the School's website, www.stchris.co.uk. The Registration Fee is non-refundable.

Parents should also provide a copy of their child's most recent school report at the same time. The School may also request a confidential reference from the student's current or previous School.

From the information provided, the Registrar should be able to give parents some idea of the probability of a place being available in the right year group at the desired point of entry.

THE ASSESSMENT VISIT (not Years 7 or 9 entry)

Unless there are significant reservations about a child's suitability, parents will be invited to bring their son or daughter for interview and assessment. It would not be usual for this assessment visit to take place more than a year before the planned date of entry.

For Junior School admissions the pupil will be set an informal test involving English and Maths and will be interviewed by the Head of the Junior School, when he or she will be asked to talk about something they have created – for example a picture, a story or a model – or to play a piece on an instrument they are learning.

For the Nursery, the child will be presented with some of preliminary Montessori materials or activities during a pre-arranged visit.

Admissions to the Senior School involve a meeting for the child and parents with the Head and/or other senior members of staff. Candidates for Senior School admission sit three Cognitive Ability Tests in Verbal, Non-Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning. They also have to produce a piece of extended writing on a given theme. Parents will have a discussion with the Head to inform him about their child and to ask any questions they wish.

ASSESSMENT DAY (Years 7 and 9 entry)

For entry into Year 7 and Year 9, the entry assessments and subsequent interviews are held on a Saturday morning in the January prior to the September of admission.

Assessment will be as above, (Cognitive Ability Tests and extended writing).

Successful candidates will be recalled for interview, either by the Head or by a senior member of staff. Parents will also have the opportunity to meet the Head.

Places will be offered by post and candidates will be given a deadline for acceptance, usually late February or early March. Offers will be made subject to satisfactory reports from the student's current school and/or a confidential reference from the student's current Head.

Full details outlining the process and key dates can be found in the annual Information Booklet, available from Admissions or directly from the website's "Downloads" page.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA (Montessori Nursery only)

Children starting in September must be three years old by 31 December of that year. Similarly, children starting in January must be three by 31 March of that year, and those entering in April must be three by 31 August of that year.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA (Senior School entry)

Places are offered subject to satisfactory reports and attainment in the relevant Assessment Tests (see above).

However, the admissions criteria are not solely academic. There are many very able children at St Christopher – some are gifted in scholarship, others may have talents that are creative or sporting. As a rule, our children are of average-to-outstanding ability.

The aim is to admit children who will both contribute to and benefit from the School.

Our assessment criteria aim to establish how well a child will thrive at the School.

We also want to have parents who understand the approach of the School and who will work with us in the interests of their children.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA (Sixth Form Entry)

For Sixth Form entry, we take into account the GCSE grades the student has already attained. A Sixth Form candidate would be expected to have achieved at least six GCSEs at grades A*-C, or equivalent, with grades B or above, or equivalent, in the subjects he/she intends to study at A level.

As elsewhere, a confidential reference from the student's current Head and a copy of the student's most recent report may also be required.

MAKING AN ENQUIRY

The Registrar handles all admissions enquiries, and all enquiries must be directed through the Registrar in the first instance. She works closely with the Head who takes the final decision on all admissions to both the Junior and Senior School, although in practice this is delegated to the Head of the Junior School for Junior School admissions. The Deputy Head, the Head of the Junior School and other staff are involved as appropriate. Applications to the Montessori Department are also made via the Registrar, but in this case the decisions are made by the Head of the Nursery, in consultation with the Head of the Junior School.

WHEN AN OFFER IS MADE

When an offer is made, it asks for an answer by a set date and comes with an invoice for the Admission Deposit, payment for which secures the place.

Nearer the time when the child is due to start, joining information is sent by the Registrar, together with details of induction arrangements. In the meantime any questions are best directed to the Registrar, who will refer them to other staff as appropriate.

TRANSPORT

Parents are expected to make arrangements for their child's transport to and from School. To help with this the School has produced a Transport Information Sheet which can be downloaded from the "location" page of the School's website. This includes information on rail transport as well as the School's coach and minibuss services. Further information is available from the Bursary.

BEFORE STARTING

A joining pack is provided for all pupils; this is sent out in July for those joining in September. Pupils joining Year 7 (known internally as "I Group") are asked to make an orientation visit in June when they meet other children also starting and staff who will be teaching them. There is also a weekend "Bonding Trip" for all Year 7 early in the Autumn Term, for students to get to know each other and key staff. The Lower Sixth (Year 12) have a conference over the weekend just before the start of the Autumn Term and a "Bonding Weekend" in the Peak District near to the start of term.

Prior orientation visits may also be arranged for children joining at other points in the Junior and Senior School. Children starting the Montessori Nursery will attend several settling-in visits at the beginning of the term within which they are due to join us. Boarders are their parents are invited to visit their Houseparents during the week prior to starting. We aim to make new children feel welcome from the very outset.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

St Christopher takes pride in its reputation of being able to provide well for **some** children with special needs in each year group. The School considers what reasonable adjustments may be made to accommodate such children. However, we are not a 'special school' and the number of places for such children is strictly limited by the ability of the School to take them successfully, while at the same time continuing to cater well for the vast majority of children who do not need extra help. Our curriculum is a broad and challenging one and to benefit from the School's special atmosphere pupils needs to be able to access it without detriment to others.

If a child has had difficulties with some aspect of his or her learning and may need special help or has special needs of some description it is important to make these known at an early stage in the process. Copies of recent specialist reports, such as those by an educational psychologist, should be provided to help the School make preliminary

assessment as to whether it may in principle be able to meet the needs of the child. The School may ask for further evidence and if the application proceeds to an assessment visit then the child will usually spend a significant period with one of our specialist teachers. Reasonable adjustments to assessment process may be made providing we have sufficient information beforehand.

For some children, St Christopher is not suitable and in this case we shall try to say so quickly. We try to give parents some early indication of the chances of their application being successful.

Admission of International Students who are from outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland

The School is a Points Based System (PBS) Tier 4 sponsor registered with the UK Borders Agency. Pupils from outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland, wishing to apply for a place at St Christopher will need to be issued with a Certificate of Sponsorship by the School. In order for us to do this we will need to confirm a number of criteria, including willingness to study, the ability to pay the School's fees, and the student's intention to study lawfully in the UK. We are required to keep records of attendance and report these directly to the UK Borders Agency.

Richard Palmer
Head

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