



**Admissions
Policy**
October 2020

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 St Christopher School is a co-educational independent school for pupils from ages 3 to 18. The School has approximately 550 pupils, 50 of whom are boarders.

2. EQUAL TREATMENT

- 2.1 The aim of St Christopher School is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for the wider world.
- 2.2 St Christopher School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or social background. The School's provision for scholarships and bursaries is described in this document.
- 2.3 St Christopher School has no religious affiliation and welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith.

3. ENTRY PROCEDURE

- 3.1 St Christopher School has a selection procedure which is not solely academic, but which does include consideration of past and current academic ability, performance and potential.
- 3.2 Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.
- 3.3 The usual points of entry are at Nursery (from the beginning of the term that a child turns 3), Reception (4+), Year 4 (8+), Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+).
- 3.4 As we are a growing school, the numbers of places available can vary each year, and we aim to be as open as possible about these. If you require further details about a specific year group, you can contact the Admissions Department to discuss further. The School may also have occasional places at other ages; again, please contact the Admissions Department for details.



- 3.5 The Head has the final decision on all admissions to the Nursery, Junior and Senior School (although in practice admissions to the Nursery and Junior School are delegated to the Head of the Junior School.) Other members of the Senior Management Team are involved in the admissions process as appropriate.

4. ENQUIRY & VISIT STAGE

- 4.1 The Admissions Department handles all admissions enquiries and visits to the School. All enquiries should be directed through the Registrar or Admissions Assistant and not through any other member of staff or department.
- 4.2 Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We very much hope that you and your child will visit St Christopher School.
- 4.3 We hold a number of open day events throughout the school year which give a general introduction to the School. Details are published on our website. From September 2020 these events will be virtual in line with COVID-19 guidelines.
- 4.4 In addition, and importantly, we welcome private visits by prospective parents/guardians and their children. From September 2020 onwards we are arranging for a limited number of socially distanced tours of the school to take place for those families who are considering entry for the next academic year.
- 4.5 The Admissions Department can be contacted on +44 1462 650947 or by emailing admissions@stchris.co.uk.

5. REGISTRATION

- 5.1 A child's formal application to St Christopher School begins with submission of the Registration Form together with the most recent school report, and payment of the Registration Fee. We also approach the child's current school for a personal reference. Applications are made online using the OpenApply portal, accessed via our website: <https://stchris.openapply.com/>
- 5.2 Once this stage is complete, the pupil moves to the assessment stage. Please note that the School reserves the right not to progress a child's application to the assessment stage based on the outcome of the current school reference or report.
- 5.3 We accept registrations up to three years before entry. Specific deadlines for the following year of entry are available on our website, alongside further information about how to apply here: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/admissions/how-to-apply/>

6. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 6.1 The dates for the assessment process for the current academic year are published on our website. Below is an overview of the assessment steps for each area of the School from September 2020 onwards, based on the latest Government guidelines in relation to COVID-19 and social distancing, and on the basis that your health and wellbeing, and that of our pupils and staff, is our main priority.



6.2 **Junior School – Nursery to Year 4**

Our assessment procedure for these years will involve an informal meeting with the Head of the Junior School, a call to your child's previous education setting and a review of your child's latest school report where applicable.

Under normal conditions we would offer families a Stay and Play Taster Session (Nursery) or a Taster Day (Reception to Year 4) but we are unable to do so at least until January 2021 due to social distancing guidelines.

6.3 **Junior School – Years 5 and 6**

Assessment involves an online CAT (Cognitive Ability Test) which takes approximately 1.5 hours, and an informal interview with the Junior School Head or the Deputy Head. Assessments and interviews will run from October 2020 at St Chris, and will adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Under normal conditions we would offer a Taster Day to all pupils spent in class, however we are unable to do so at the moment until January 2021 due to social distancing guidelines.

6.4 **Senior School**

Applicants for the Senior School are invited to an Assessment Morning on a normal school day, in the school year before they start. Assessments are in small groups and candidates sit an online CAT (Cognitive Ability Test), English paper (30 minutes' creative writing) and have an informal interview with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

From October 2020 Assessment Mornings will be run in person at St Chris as socially distanced events.

Please see point 7 for the admissions process for in-year applicants.

6.5 **Sixth Form**

6.5.1 Sixth Form applicants are invited for an interview with the Head or the Head of Sixth Form.

6.5.2 Normally we would consider the candidate's projected or actual GCSE results. Generally we expect candidates to obtain at least five GCSEs at grade 5 and above in order to follow an AS/A-level programme, with at least grade 6 in the subjects selected for studying at A-level, or in relevant subjects where a student is starting a subject from scratch (such as Psychology or Business Studies). We reserve the right to alter these expectations on a case-by-case basis.

6.5.3 Those not doing GCSEs will need to show suitable ability.

6.5.4 In practice, the vast majority of entrants into our Sixth Form gain significantly better results than the minimum requirement.



6.6 Overseas Applicants

- 6.8.1 The first step after Registration (see 5.1) is an interview and formal assessment. Our partner organisation Bespoke English Language Testing contact the pupil's agent or family (whichever is most appropriate) to arrange an online video interview of approximately 15 minutes and an English language test within a week of Registration.
- 6.8.2 Applicants wishing to study A level Mathematics or Physics will also be asked to sit the School's mathematics paper, which must be sat under exam conditions arranged with the pupil's agent, or at the British Council Office in the pupil's home country.
- 6.8.3 For 11+ and 13+ entry we would expect candidates to be at Preliminary English Test ('PET') level (B1 Preliminary).
- 6.8.4 For 16+ entry we require an equivalent level of English to International English Language Testing System ('IELTS') band score 5.5.
- 6.8.5 Successful completion of this stage leads to an online video interview with the Head which is the final step in the process.

6.7 Boarders

Applicants for boarding places will also be considered based on their suitability to board, with further information requested by the Registrar if necessary. The Head of Boarding will be fully consulted before an offer is made.

7. IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In-year applications are subject to the same process as applications made within the normal process (usually for the following academic year), with specific additions (see 7.3 and 7.4 below).
- 7.2 Applicants for an in-year place should check first with the Admissions Department as to the availability of places. If places are available, the usual Registration and Assessment process applies (see points 5 and 6 above).
- 7.3 In addition, the Head of St Christopher School will contact the Head of the current school to discuss the application in detail. The application will not proceed further until this stage has been concluded to the Head's satisfaction.
- 7.4 Finally, the School will request that a candidate come in to spend one or more Taster Days (Junior School) or a Taster Week (Senior School) with us before we progress to the Offer stage (point 8).
- 7.5 Our Admissions Department will follow the process as outlined above and this will not be altered for individual circumstances. Under no circumstances should parents expect or request that the normal application process is changed or accelerated.



8. OFFER STAGE

- 8.1 Offers to successful candidates are made in writing with deadlines for the submission of acceptance documents.
- 8.2 The Acceptance Form is sent to the parents/carers of candidates with their offer letter. All further documents and information that the School requires before a pupil starts can be found on the OpenApply portal under the Checklist.
- 8.3 Submission of the Acceptance Form and payment of the Admissions Deposit secure the place at St Christopher School.
- 8.4 Candidates who are unsuccessful in their application are informed verbally by the Registrar, followed by the decision in writing.
- 8.5 Before the official start date, the Admissions Department send out Welcome Packs to parents/carers containing all the information needed for starting at the School.

9. SIBLING POLICY

- 9.1 Most siblings join us at St Christopher School. However, admission is not automatic and siblings must apply to the School via the normal process.
- 9.2 Where there is one place available in a specific year group and there is a choice to be made between a candidate with a sibling at the School and one without (both having completed the application and assessment process), the sibling will have priority.
- 9.3 There may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment and ultimately it is the decision of the School as to which candidates are offered places.

10. INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- 10.1 St Christopher School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry.
- 10.2 St Chris takes pride in supporting students with Individual Needs. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs and/or pastoral needs, providing that we can reasonably offer them the support that they require.
- 10.3 We strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs, specific pastoral needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Admissions Department before beginning an application so that we can make adequate provision for him/her to take part in and be supported throughout the admissions process.
- 10.4 At the point of Registration, parents **must disclose** any known or suspected difficulties or diagnoses relating to their child's health, wellbeing, abilities or behaviour. This includes any known or suspected pastoral issues relating to their child's physical/mental health, wellbeing, social interaction, bullying, or wider family circumstances. It also includes any issues that may impact on their suitability to board if they are applying for a boarding place.



- 10.5 At Registration parents **must submit** all relevant and up-to-date information to the Admissions Department. This could include but is not restricted to a medical letter or report (for example from a GP, consultant or counsellor); an Educational Psychologist's report (EP report); an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), an Individual Pupil Plan (IPP) or similarly named plan for an individual pupil's behaviour, learning or pastoral support.
- 10.6 Parents **must** also inform the school of any involvement by specialist/external agencies, such as CAMHS, private counselling, or other therapies.
- 10.7 The deadline for submitting this information is published far in advance on our website under Admissions, and it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that it reaches us by that date. Please only submit copies of reports, not originals.
- 10.8 Failure to submit this information by the deadline may mean that the school cannot provide the support required for a child when they start, or may lead to the offer of a place being withdrawn by the school.
- 10.9 The Head of Individual Needs is fully involved in the admissions process at St Christopher School, and makes a full assessment of all information submitted by parents/carers. They may wish to speak to the pupil's current school, the SEN Coordinator or another person who has been named in the information provided, and where necessary your permission will be sought for this.
- 10.10 If it is concluded that we can reasonably meet the needs of a child within an existing year group and with the facilities and staffing that we have available, then we will progress a pupil to the appropriate Assessment stage for their age group. If we do not, we will inform the parent/carer as soon as possible (verbally and in writing) so that they have the time to consider alternative options for their child.
- 10.11 Please note that we do not allow the parents of prospective candidates to discuss their child's individual needs directly with the Head of Individual Needs; all discussions must be held with the Registrar in order for us to ensure a fair process for all applicants.

12. SCHOLARSHIPS

- 12.1 St Christopher School offers the following scholarships:
- Academic Scholarship
- Art Scholarship
- 12.2 **Purpose of Scholarships**
Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered a 10% reduction in the fees throughout his/her time at St Christopher School.
- 12.3 **Application for an Academic Scholarship**
All candidates for Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12 are automatically considered for the Academic Scholarship, which is awarded on their performance in the entrance assessments, and for Year 12, on their GCSE results.
- 12.4 **Application for an Art Scholarship**
Candidates for Year 7, 9 and 12 can apply for an Art Scholarship. This involves completing the Art Scholarship Application Form and submitting it to the Admissions team by the deadline published on our website.



The Registrar will also request a reference from the applicant's current art teacher or another person who has supported their work.

Applicants are then invited for an Art Scholarship interview with the Head of Art, when they will be asked to bring in a portfolio of their work to discuss alongside a more general talk about their interests and experiences in the creative arts.

12.5 Scholarships are held for the duration of a pupil's time at the School, provided his/her conduct and progress is satisfactory.

12.6 A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

13 BURSARIES (FEE ASSISTANCE)

13.1 St Christopher School's bursary (fee assistance) programme is designed to ensure that as many pupils as possible of those who meet our entry criteria are able to take up a place here.

13.2 The School offers means-tested awards annually where the parents/carers have submitted the relevant application form with supporting evidence by the deadline published on our website here:
<https://www.stchris.co.uk/admissions/scholarships-bursaries/>

13.3 Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria outlined in the application form. Both parents/carers are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to need, but can extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need.

13.4 Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time and reviewed annually. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for each year that their child attends the School and a bursary is requested. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or assets.

13.5 The School's practice is to allocate its entire available bursary funding on entry. The School's expectation is that parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

13.6 A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

14 OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

14.1 We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at St Christopher School as a boarder provided that they have a relative or responsible adult (guardian) living in the UK or European Economic Area with whom they can stay for some holidays, more details of which are contained in the School's Terms and Conditions.

14.2 The minimum offer for a period of time at the School is half an academic term.

14.3 The School is a Points Based System (PBS) Tier 4 sponsor registered with the UKVI.



- 14.4 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 Visa and Immigration ('UKVI').
- 14.5 Please note that in order to cope with the academic and social demands of St Christopher School, pupils must speak a proficient level of English and where their standard is considered insufficient, we would require them to attend English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons each week at an additional cost.

15. SCHOOL'S TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 15.1 Copies of the School's Terms and Conditions are on the School's website or can be sent to parents on request.

16. COMPLAINTS

- 16.1 Copies of the School's Parental Complaints Procedure are on the School's website or can be sent to parents on request.

Rhiannon Butlin
Marketing & Communications Manager

Amended and approved by Governors 3 October 2020