



Admissions Policy

This document applies to prospective pupils and their parents (including EYFS)

Author: Registrar

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Admissions Policy

General

The Pilgrims' School is an Independent Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory school for boys from ages 4 to 13 years. Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is essential. A number of events are held which give a general introduction to the school; details are published on the school web site. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. The Registrar (on 01962 854189 or email admissions@pilgrims-school.co.uk) is available to discuss initial enquiries, provide further information or to arrange a visit.

The Entry Procedure

The Pilgrims' School is a selective school. Selection is based upon an entry assessment at the school and references from the candidate's previous school (if applicable). Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are best able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school.

The usual points of entry are at 4 years of age / Reception, and at 7 years of age / Year 3. We may also have occasional places at other ages. Candidates must be registered by the Registrar before assessment.

Equal Treatment

The Pilgrims' School welcomes applications from candidates from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school.

The Pilgrims' School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of a candidate's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background. Our provision for bursaries is described below.

Special Needs and Disability

We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can provide the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can safely accommodate their needs. However, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their son's requirements with the School before he is assessed for entry so that we can make adequate provision for him. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request for any special arrangements. Further information is provided in our Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) policy, available on request. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers all reasonable adjustments that can be made for the child if he becomes a pupil at the school.

Sibling Policy

Most male siblings join their brothers at The Pilgrims' School. However, admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. The school does not provide discounts for siblings.

Scholarships

The only scholarships at The Pilgrims' School are those provided by the Choral Foundations of Winchester Cathedral and Winchester College for the Choristers and Quiristers of those foundations. For further details about entry as a choral scholar please see the website or contact the Registrar.

Bursaries

Our bursary programme is designed to make access to the school possible for as many as possible of those who meet The Pilgrims' School's entry criteria to take up a place here. We offer means-tested awards to day entrants at Year 3 and above, where the parents have indicated that they require financial assistance. Bursaries are means-tested and both parents are required to provide proof of their income, assets, expenditure and liabilities. The level of support varies according to parental need. Before the offer of a bursary is confirmed, a member of staff may visit the family at their home.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the school. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or changes in personal circumstances.

The priority for Bursary awards is to those filling choral places; bursaries are also provided to Commoners as the fund allows.

Bursaries are normally only offered to families who are resident in the UK.

Further details of our Bursary Policy can be obtained from the Director of Finance & Resources.

Religious Beliefs

Although The Pilgrims' School is the Cathedral school and a Christian foundation, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we support other faiths in the practice of their worship. However, parents should be aware that there is compulsory Saturday morning school from Year 4 upwards, and that all pupils are expected to attend assemblies and whole school services such as Remembrance Day and the Carol Service.

The Assessment Process

The aim of the process is to identify potential. We are looking for well-rounded boys receptive to the education that The Pilgrims' School offers with interests that stretch beyond the academic curriculum.

No specific preparation for the assessment is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their aptitude and character.

Assessment for Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 takes the form of gentle observational assessment and for Year 1 and 2 will also include some reading as well as paper and pencil exercises and Reasoning.

All other candidates for entry at Year 3 and upward are assessed in English, Maths and Reasoning, using standardised tests appropriate to their age group.

All assessments include some measure of social observation and an opportunity for candidates to interact with their potential peer group.

Overseas Applicants

The Pilgrims' School welcomes permanent students from overseas, particularly as boarders in the Senior School. It does not accept temporary placements for less than one Academic Year except to boys who are known to the school. The Admissions process for overseas applicants is as follows:

- Discussion with the Registrar: Through discussions with the Registrar, it is expected that parents can have full confidence in their choice of school for their boy and so that the school is satisfied that the school is the right place for them. In some cases pupils are asked to sit initial examinations overseas, for example CAT 4, before taking things further. Where possible, overseas pupils and their parents (or guardians) will visit the school prior to a place being offered. Arrangements for visits should be made through the Registrar who can advise about travel and accommodation during a visit to Winchester.
- Assessment: The school conducts an assessment for both academic and social compatibility. This usually involves a day visit to the school, however very occasionally a virtual assessment can be sat in exam conditions, and an interview can be conducted online. In the latter case a visit to the school is also advised before a place is offered. A confidential reference from the candidate's current school is still required before a place is offered.
- English: Students joining the school from overseas are expected to have a standard of English sufficient to cope with the syllabus which is taught exclusively in English. If required, arrangements can occasionally be made for pupils to maintain proficiency in their native language, for which additional fees are payable. If additional EAL support is recommended by the school, the cost will be borne by the fee payer.
- Visas: The school is an approved Sponsor of Tier 4 visas (see the UK Border Agency website). Sponsorship is offered on boarding places only. Before issue of a sponsorship letter the school will need to see an original passport and proof of parental address: these should usually be presented during the school visit. The sponsorship letter will only be issued once a place has been offered by the school and accepted by the parent and the deposit paid. In certain cases, a term's fees may be requested prior to issue of the letter. In accordance with UK legislation: any unreported or unauthorised absence from the school by a visa holder of over 10 days will be reported to the UK Border Agency.

- Parental Contact: For overseas boarders it is particularly important that regular contact is maintained with parents and family whilst the boy is at school. The school provides email and video call facilities as well as use of mobile phones for calls or texts. The boarding staff will also keep in regular touch with parents by email.
- Travel Overseas: The school is happy to assist with travel arrangements for boys returning home but will normally only use taxi firms who specialise in the carriage of schoolchildren because they have the necessary child protection measures in place. These costs will be passed back to the fee payer.
- Holidays: The school routine is very busy during the term and especially for boarders. We therefore encourage boys to return to their family whenever possible. However, this may not be viable during the half term breaks (1 week each term) and exeats (2 weekends per term). During these breaks, boys should normally go to a family friend or relation in UK (see below, ref Guardians).
- Guardians: Parents are required to appoint a UK guardian for overseas boarders. The guardian becomes the point of contact with the school and will be used for:
 1. The boarder to stay with during short holidays (half term and exeat)
 2. The boarder to stay with in the event of illness or unexpected school closure during term time
 3. As a local point of contact if the parents are not in communication in the event of illness, emergency or pastoral problems
 4. To accompany the boarder on senior school visits, interviews and assessments if the parent or school are unable to do so

It is the parents' duty to appoint a guardian. The guardian must be able to reach the school at short notice at all times, with a maximum journey time of 90 minutes. The school will not appoint a guardian nor make recommendations of any one agency. There is an umbrella body for guardianship agencies called Aegis (www.aegisuk.net) who can assist in locating guardians, but The Pilgrims' School is not responsible for the advice they offer. However, the school does have an existing relationship with the following guardianship agencies currently being used by boarding families:

- Oxford Guardians
- Regal Education
- Health: All students will be expected to meet the accepted UK standards for health and immunisations. There may be additional requirements arising from the country of origin and all potential overseas students and their parents will be given an opportunity to discuss this with the school medical staff before entering the school.

The School's Contractual Terms and Conditions

A copy of the Registration Form, Acceptance Form and School/Parent Contract will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Further details about the tests themselves can be found in the ***Assessment for Entry Policy***