



Admissions Policy

Review cycle: Two Years

Last Review Date: September 2022 (updated October 2023)

Next Review Date: September 2024

Staff responsible: Lucy Walton (Registrar & Director of Communications)

Committee Responsible: Main Board

(This policy applies to the whole School including EYFS)

Willington School reserves the right to update all policies on a regular basis



ADMISSIONS POLICY

GENERAL

Willington School is an independent preparatory school with around 200 pupils and small class sizes. On 13th June 2019, the Governors announced exciting changes for the future of Willington. These comprised:

1. From September 2020, Willington will open a co-educational Nursery and will introduce girls into Reception.
2. From September 2021, we will become an 11+ school with all pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 to their Senior School.
3. By September 2026, we will be a fully co-educational school for pupils aged 3 to 11.

Willington seeks to develop its pupils in a wide range of areas, including physically, personally, morally and culturally, through a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the Willington values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility and the school motto, 'We learn not for School but for life'.

Families are invited to visit the school by attending an Open Morning (held twice yearly on a Saturday), a mid-week Headmaster's coffee morning or by booking a private appointment with the Headmaster. If required, appointments with the Headmaster may be held online via Zoom.

It is a requirement of our admissions policy that we meet all families and children before offers of places are given (see Entry Procedure below).

THE ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE – EARLY YEARS

We offer the 15 hours Free Entitlement Funding for all eligible pupils from three years old in the Nursery only. The hours for this offer are 8.30am to 11.30am from Monday to Friday (three hours daily). Parents are not able to use the funding for education outside these hours. Additional hours each day will be charged according to the current fee for the Early Years. For parents wishing their child to attend for just the 15 hours provided, there will be a limit of three pupil places each academic year. There will be a waiting list for any pupils above this allocation, with siblings given priority and a first-come-first-served basis after that.

Most pupils will join the School at the age of 3 into Nursery, or at the age of 4 into Reception.

Registration - prospective pupils may be registered for admission at any time after birth. The Registration Form, available online at www.willingtonschool.co.uk/registration, should be completed and submitted with the non-refundable Registration Fee of £150.

Entry into the Nursery (3+)

All children registered for the Nursery will be invited to attend a Stay and Play Session, 6 months in advance of their expected start date. Additional sessions may be run during the course of the year if places become available. A remote option may be made available to families applying from overseas. The sessions are led by the Deputy Head of the Pre-Prep and members of the EYFS team. Offers of places will be sent to families following these sessions. We aim to take 18 children into our Nursery. As the children are so young, we explain to all prospective parents that no child fails at this age but, as we have excess demand, we have to filter the entry to the best of our ability. Families may be offered a waiting list place.



Offering Places at 3+

When offering places, Willington Prep takes into consideration the overall diversity of the student body. Priority is also given to siblings who have met the admissions criteria.

Consideration is given to a child's development in preschool (nursery) via a confidential nursery reference and their attendance at Willington Prep's stay and play session. During this session the EYFS team will informally observe language, social skills, enthusiasm and interest levels, ensuring that we can meet a child's individual needs. The session allows us to gauge their readiness for a more rigorous academic setting.

Parental involvement - we will consider the level of engagement, involvement and commitment of the child's parents to the school and the child's education. Consideration is also given to those parents who demonstrate an understanding and alignment with the School's values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility.

Space availability - admissions decisions are also based on the limited number of places available.

Waiting List at 3+

Pupils may be placed on the waiting list and will be offered a place in line with the above considerations and when a space becomes available. Offers from the waiting list will be given with a two-week acceptance deadline before moving to the next family on the waiting list.

Accepting a Place

Parents will receive an offer letter and must return the signed Parent Contract, deposit payment (non-refundable if child is withdrawn before joining), and a copy of the child's passport or birth certificate for date of birth verification. Non-British/Irish citizens must provide evidence of right to live and study in the UK, such as EU Settlement Scheme status for those from EEA countries and Switzerland.

Offers are given with a two-week acceptance period.

Children joining the Nursery are expected to transition to our Reception class, unless under exceptional circumstances.

Entry into Reception (4+)

All children registered for Reception will be invited to attend a Stay and Play Session, 18 months in advance of their expected start date.. The session is led by the Deputy Head of the Pre-Prep and members of the EYFS team. Additional sessions may be run during the course of the year if places become available. A remote option may be made available to families applying from overseas. As the children are so young, we explain to all prospective parents that no child fails at this age but, as we have excess demand, we have to filter the entry to the best of our ability. Offers of places will be sent following these sessions. We will typically offer around 18 places into Reception, as children from our Nursery will be automatically enrolled into this year group.



Offering Places at 4+

When offering places, Willington Prep takes into consideration the overall diversity of the student body. Priority is also given to siblings who have met the admissions criteria.

Consideration is given to a child's development in preschool (nursery) via a confidential nursery reference and their attendance at Willington Prep's stay and play session. During this session the EYFS team will informally observe language, social skills, enthusiasm and interest levels, ensuring that we can meet a child's individual needs. The session allows us to gauge their readiness for a more rigorous academic setting.

Parental involvement - we will consider the level of engagement, involvement and commitment of the child's parents to the school and the child's education. Consideration is also given to those parents who demonstrate an understanding and alignment with the School's values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility.

Space availability - admissions decisions are also based on the limited number of places available.

Waiting List at 4+

Pupils may be placed on the waiting list and will be offered a place in line with the above considerations and when a space becomes available. Offers from the waiting list will be given with a two-week acceptance deadline before moving to the next family on the waiting list.

Accepting a Place

Parents will receive an offer letter and must return the signed Parent Contract, deposit payment (non-refundable if child is withdrawn before joining), and a copy of the child's passport or birth certificate for date of birth verification. Non-British/Irish citizens must provide evidence of right to live and study in the UK, such as EU Settlement Scheme status for those from EEA countries and Switzerland.

Offers are given with a two-week acceptance period. The first term's fees will be payable by the first day of the preceding Summer term.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE - OCCASIONAL PLACES

Parents looking for places outside the normal entry points of Nursery and Reception should contact Lucy Walton to determine space availability. When offering places, Willington Prep takes into consideration the overall diversity of the student body. We will also consider the level of engagement, involvement and commitment of the child's parents to the school and their demonstration of, and alignment with, the School's values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility.

Academic assessment for occasional places in Year 1 and above is required in order to ensure a prospective pupil can access and benefit from our broad curriculum at an age appropriate academic level. The application and assessment process includes:

1. Registration
2. Recent report from the present school
3. Attendance at a Taster Day/Morning within the proposed cohort



4. Satisfactory completion of standardised assessments in both Maths and English.
5. Confidential pupil reference from present school, confirming satisfactory attitude and conduct on the part of parents and applicant.

Remote assessments may be offered to overseas applicants, or, where circumstances dictate. In order for new joiners to fully participate in our programme of 11+ preparation, we do not accept new pupils to Years 5 and 6, unless under exceptional circumstances.

Offering Occasional Places

Offers will be given to those children who have met the above admissions criteria and taking into consideration the overall diversity of the student body. We will also consider the level of engagement, involvement and commitment of the child's parents to the school and their demonstration of, and alignment with, the School's values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility.

We firmly believe in creating a positive learning environment for all students, and we carefully consider each applicant to ensure they will fit in with the existing cohort. By prioritising the needs of our current students, we ensure a harmonious and supportive atmosphere in the classroom.

Accepting a Place

Parents will receive an offer letter and must return the signed Parent Contract, deposit payment (non-refundable if child is withdrawn before joining), and a copy of the child's passport or birth certificate for date of birth verification. Non-British/Irish citizens must provide evidence of right to live and study in the UK, such as EU Settlement Scheme status for those from EEA countries and Switzerland.

Offers are given with a two-week acceptance period.

CLASS SIZES

Willington pupils benefit from small class sizes with a preferred maximum of 18. However, in exceptional circumstances the school may make it possible for a class to exceed this if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the children involved and at the Headmaster's discretion.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Willington School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability or social background. The School's aim 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 today's world. A limited number of means-tested Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for deserving pupils, whose parents might otherwise be unable to afford the fees, to attend the School. Further details are available from the Bursar on bursar@willingtonschool.co.uk.



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY, LEARNING SUPPORT & SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

We welcome pupils with SEND or Learning Support needs, however, Willington does not have the resources of a special needs school and the number of places for pupils with SEND or Learning Support needs is limited by the ability of the school to accommodate them successfully, while at the same time continuing to cater well for other pupils. All pupils must meet our admissions criteria and be able to access and benefit from our broad curriculum at an age appropriate academic level.

Relevant reports, such as Educational Psychology or medical reports and school or nursery reports should be submitted at registration for review by the SENCO. Provision will be made, where necessary, for Access Arrangements to be put in place for entrance testing.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

We are proud to be a school with a diverse community. To meet the demands of our academic curriculum, pupils must have enough familiarity with English to pass our entrance requirements.

OUT OF YEAR

We expect all pupils to enter our School in the appropriate year with their peers. The year is determined by the age of the pupil on 1st September. Therefore, pupils born on 1st September will be the oldest in the year group and pupils born on 31st August will be the youngest in the year group. Where parents wish to make out-of-year requests, the School will require details of exceptional circumstances and will assess these on a case-by-case basis.

SIBLINGS

Willington has a strong family ethos. Siblings are offered priority places to the Reception and Nursery, subject to the usual entry requirements being met. We currently have about 50 younger pupils receiving the sibling discount of 10% of the fees.

MEANS-TESTED BURSARIES

The School offers a limited number of means-tested Bursaries, either for potential pupils whose parents declare in advance that they would otherwise be unable to afford the full fees, or for current pupils whose family circumstances change unexpectedly. Levels of bursary support awarded take into account the family income and assets, the family circumstances and the pupil benefit. In the most extreme circumstances, Bursary support can be as much as 100% of the fees. Parents who might need Bursary support should email bursar@willingtonschool.co.uk for an application form.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Although Willington School has Christian roots, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief and it welcomes pupils from all religious backgrounds.

SCHOOL'S CONTRACTUAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

Copies of the School's contractual terms and conditions will be sent to parents as part of the admissions process.



COMPLAINTS

The School hopes that parents and pupils do not have any complaints about the School's admissions process; but copies of the School's complaints procedure are available on the website and can be sent to parents on request.

Review period: Annual

Review by: Registrar