



# Admissions Policy

**Review cycle:** Two Years

**Last Review Date:** December 2025

**Next Review Date:** December 2027

**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 co-educational preparatory school with around 220 pupils and small class sizes. Willington seeks to develop its pupils academically, socially and emotionally through a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the Willington values of kindness, honesty, respect and humility.

The purpose of this policy is to set out a clear, transparent and fair admissions process fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the Independent School Standards, and the expectations of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

We welcome applications from families of all backgrounds and aim to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged during the admissions process on the basis of race, gender, linguistic background, disability, religion or family circumstances.

Families are invited to visit the school by attending an Open Morning (held 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 pupil before offers of places are given.

### **COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND INCLUSIVE ADMISSIONS**

Willington is committed to:

- treating every applicant fairly and consistently
- making reasonable adjustments where required
- ensuring that assessments are age-appropriate, play-based and not academically selective for EYFS
- removing barriers for pupil with SEND or EAL
- communicating clearly with families throughout the process

All admissions decisions are based on the School's ability to meet a pupil's educational, pastoral and developmental needs within the context of our setting.

### **REGISTRATION**

Prospective pupils may be registered at any age. The Registration Form is available on our website (<https://www.willingtonschool.co.uk/registration>) and should be submitted with the non-refundable registration fee. Registration does not guarantee a place but ensures that families are invited to the next relevant admissions event.

### **ENTRY TO NURSERY (3+)**

#### **Assessment Process**

All registered pupils are invited to a Discovery Morning led by the EYFS team, or an individual meeting with the Head of Pre-Prep approximately six months before entry. Sessions are play-based and designed to help us understand each pupil's developmental stage, communication, social interaction, and readiness to join a group learning environment. No formal academic testing takes place.



We request a confidential nursery reference to support transition planning.

### **Admissions Criteria**

When offering places, we consider:

- the pupil's developmental readiness and ability to benefit from our setting
- the balance of the year group
- the ability of the School to meet the pupil's needs
- sibling priority, provided entry criteria are met
- the importance of a positive educational partnership with parents

### **Equality Considerations**

We ensure that all observations are inclusive, age-appropriate and fair. The pupil's home language or stage of English acquisition does not influence the decision to offer a place.

### **Offers**

Offers are made according to the criteria above and the availability of places. Some families may be placed on a waiting list.

### **15 hours Free Entitlement Funding**

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 pupil 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.

### **ENTRY TO RECEPTION (4+)**

#### **Discovery Morning (18 months prior to entry)**

Registered pupils attend a play-based Discovery Morning led by our EYFS team. Observations focus on:

- communication
- social interaction
- problem solving and curiosity
- readiness for a school environment

Remote options may be offered to overseas applicants. For later applicants, pupil will be invited to meet with the Head of the Pre-Prep.



### **The Willington Offer**

To support families managing different school timelines, Willington may invite individual pupil (who already hold an offer elsewhere) for a short play session with the Head of Pre-Prep and may make an early offer. All early offers remain subject to the same admissions criteria as standard offers.

### **Admissions Criteria**

As with Nursery entry, we consider:

- developmental readiness
- balance within the cohort
- sibling priority (subject to criteria)
- ability to meet needs within our setting
- positive educational partnership with parents

### **EAL Considerations**

Baseline EAL screening may be carried out for support-planning only and does not influence the offer of a place.

### **ENTRY TO YEARS 1-6 (OCCASIONAL PLACES)**

Where places are available, applicants follow a staged assessment process:

1. Registration
2. Recent school report
3. Confidential reference
4. Attendance at a Taster Morning/Day
5. Standardised assessments in English and Maths and completion of a creative writing task to understand the pupil's current attainment
6. Meeting with the Headmaster, where appropriate

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

For pupils with SEND or EAL, reasonable adjustments are made during assessments (eg additional time, simplified instructions, visual prompts, or the use of translation aids).



## Admissions Criteria

We consider:

- the pupil's ability to access and benefit from our curriculum
- the needs of the current cohort, ensuring a harmonious learning environment
- the School's ability to meet the pupil's specific needs
- parental partnership

We do not normally accept new pupils into Years 5 and 6 unless under exceptional circumstances, given the demands of 11+ preparation.

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Willington welcomes pupils from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds.

### Admissions

A pupil's level of English is not a criterion for admission. Where English is not the pupil's first language:

- a short baseline screening may take place to identify support needs
- this screening does not influence admissions decisions
- reasonable adjustments are made during any assessments

### Post-Admission

Once a pupil joins the School, the SENDCo/EAL Lead conducts a full EAL assessment to identify strengths and support needs.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND)

Willington welcomes applications from pupils with SEND (including EHCPs) where the School can meet the identified needs, and we will liaise with parents and relevant professionals to review reports and plan reasonable adjustments and provision. Parents are encouraged to share any relevant reports at the earliest opportunity so that we can consider appropriate reasonable adjustments during the admissions process.

Admissions decisions for pupils with SEND are based on:

- the ability of the School to meet the pupil's needs
- the provision available within the School
- ensuring the learning environment remains appropriate for all pupils

Having SEND does not prejudice a pupil's chance of admission.



## **Equal Treatment**

Willington is committed to equal treatment for all applicants regardless of:

- race
- sex
- gender identity
- linguistic background
- disability
- faith
- social background
- sexual orientation

We value diversity and seek a balanced, inclusive cohort that enriches the whole community.

## **OUT OF YEAR REQUESTS**

Requests for out-of-year placement will be considered on a case-by-case basis in exceptional circumstances, taking into account professional recommendations, developmental readiness and the best interests of the pupil.

## **CLASS SIZES**

Our preferred maximum class size is 18. Occasionally, and only where it is in the best interests of pupil, the Headmaster may admit an additional pupil.

## **ACCEPTING A PLACE**

Parents accepting an offer must return:

- the signed Parent Contract
- deposit
- proof of identity (passport or birth certificate)
- documentation confirming right to study in the UK where applicable

The deposit is refundable against the final term's invoice, except where a place is withdrawn prior to joining, and in line with the terms and conditions of the Parent Contract.

## **BURSARIES**

A limited number of means-tested bursaries are available. Parents may apply once an offer of a place has been made.



## **RELIGIOUS BELIEF**

Although Willington has Christian foundations, we warmly welcome families of all faiths and none. No admissions decisions are made on the basis of religion.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Any concerns about the admissions process may be raised under the School's Complaints Procedure, available on our website or from the School Office.

Review period:        Annual

Review by:        Registrar