St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Admissions and Transition Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Head and the Head of the Junior School.

Last review: March 26

Next review: March 27

Overview

This Policy is intended to cater for the needs of all prospective pupils from Early Years to Sixth Form pupils, including boarders.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy (SEND), the Bursary Policy, the Scholar's Policy and the statement of the School's vision, mission, values and ethos which can be found on the School website.

St Mary's School Cambridge (the School) is an independent Christian school in the Catholic tradition for Girls from ages 3 to 19. The School has both day pupils and boarders.

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 our School. We hold several open events throughout the year, which give a general introduction to the School. Details are published on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. For enquiries, please contact our admissions team or email admissions@stmaryscambridge.co.uk to arrange a visit.

Pupils usually transfer from the Junior School into the Senior School unless the School has cause to believe that this will not be in the best interest of the pupil.

Admission

The Entry Procedure

St Mary's School, Cambridge is an academically selective school in that it accepts about 60% of the ability range. Selection is based upon academic merit which is assessed through entrance assessments, an interview at the School and references from the candidate's previous nursery/ school (or agreed other references in the case of home-schooled applicants). Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who can benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

The Senior School accepts approximately 100 pupils, and the Junior School accepts approximately 40 pupils each year at different entry points. The School retains a degree of flexibility about the number of places offered/girls admitted.

The usual points of entry/ usual admission numbers are:

- from 3 years of age/Preschool (up to 15 girls are admitted)
- from 4 years of age/Reception (up to 20 girls are admitted inclusive of the girls from Preschool)
- from 8/9 years of age/Year 4/5 (up to 20 girls are admitted)
- 11+/Year 7 (up to 72 girls are admitted, inclusive of girls from the Junior School)
- 13+/Year 9 (number of students admitted cannot exceed the maximum of 96 students in the year group)
- 16+/Year 12 (between 10-20 girls are admitted)

The School may also have occasional places at other ages. If this is the case, children may enter the School at any other stage provided that there is a space available. This may be the start of term or part way through a term. Please contact our admissions team for details.

Applicants for admission should register of the year preceding the desired year of admission. The School's Application Form is available on the School's website and from the admissions office.

A small number of pupils are also accepted in other year groups, space permitting. In truly exceptional circumstances only, will we consider accepting a pupil into Year 11 or Year 13.

St Mary's School, Cambridge does not use the 1 September birthday watershed for determining the applicant's eligibility for entry into a particular year. This date is used as a guide when determining which year group an applicant should enter.

Equal Treatment

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. 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.

St Mary's Cambridge is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's or their parents' race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or social background. Please see the School's Equality Policy. The School's provision for bursaries is described below and further information can be found in the Bursary Policy and Scholarships Policy.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The School currently has limited facilities for pupils with disabilities.

St Mary's school, Cambridge does not unlawfully discriminate in anyway regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and\ or special educational needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our pupils, including those with disabilities and\ or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Our policy is to apply our admission criteria to all potential pupils. We require parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's needs with the School

before they sit the entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for them. Parents should provide with the Application Form a copy of an educational psychologist report or a medical report if they have one. This is so that the School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made and so the School can ensure, for example, that their child will be able to access the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others. If information is not declared at this point, but is later disclosed, this may result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place.

Where a prospective pupil has a disability, the School will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the pupil if they become a pupil at the School, to ensure that the perspective pupil is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who are not disadvantaged because of a disability.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, we feel that a perspective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the School.

Sometimes, the situation of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs changes between an offer of a place being made and the pupil starting at the School. The School requires parents to be pro-active in updating the School as to any significant changes which mean that the information provided during the application process is out of date or incomplete. In the vast majority of cases, this will not affect a pupil's place at the School. However the School may, in exceptional circumstances, need to reconsider the offer of a place if a pupil's circumstances change materially. It is in the pupil's interests that any such decision is made as early as possible to avoid any disruption to their education, so parents are urged to be forthcoming in their communications with the School about any material change to their child's circumstances.

The Assessment Process

Admission preconditions

The Admission preconditions are as follows:

- The Applicant and her parents are supportive of the aims of the School and its Roman Catholic ethos as expressed in the curriculum, the co-curricular activities provided and the religious values at the heart of the School. (Applicants of all Christian denominations, other faiths or a secular background are welcome at St Mary's School, Cambridge.)
- The Applicant is of appropriate age and has sufficient maturity.
- The Applicant enjoys satisfactory general health. We will do all that we reasonably can to accommodate a girl with a disability so that every pupil will be able to attend lessons and participate in the life of the School. The School should be notified of any change in health occurring between the acceptance of a place and the entry date.
- The Applicant's learning difficulties (if any) are within the School's capacity to make reasonable adjustments.
- The Applicant's current school reports (or LEA home school report) indicate satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the Applicant and the parents.

Academic criteria

The academic criteria for selection are:

- Success in the St Mary's School, Cambridge entrance assessments.
- A positive recommendation from the Head of the Applicant's present nursery/school.

- A satisfactory interview.
- The Applicant is sufficiently proficient in English to access the curriculum.

Additional factors

The preference factors (in no particular order) are borne in mind when considering the applicant:

- There is a sibling currently attending the School.
- Difficult family or personal circumstances indicate that the Applicant needs to be educated in a school with a strong pastoral emphasis such as St Mary's.
- The Applicant's mother is a former pupil of St Mary's School, Cambridge, or another CJ school.

Documentary evidence

A confidential form of the Admissions Record will be completed for each applicant.

As part of the admissions process a copy of the pupil's passport is requested and an electronic copy held by the school both to prove identity as part of safeguarding procedures and to comply with the Immigration Act (as amended).

All documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes will be kept for 25 years from the date of birth or up to 7 years from the date of leaving. If an applicant is not admitted, up to 1 year from that decision.

The Assessment Process/Admissions Timetable

The aim of the process is to identify potential. The School is looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

In the Summer and Autumn Term each year, the School writes to parents of girls registered for the September intake the following year. The mailing gives details of the Scholarships and Bursaries that are offered and information about special events, including our Open Morning. We expect confirmation of those intending to sit the entrance assessments for day places in the Senior School by the 1st December in the year preceding the entry date.

The parents or guardians of applicants are encouraged to make an appointment to tour the School and meet the Headmistress or Head of Juniors in the year preceding their entry to the school.

Applicants are required to sit the St Mary's School entrance assessments (other than Early Years and pre-prep children) and have an interview. In the Early Years and pre-prep children are assessed for their social interaction and communication, motor skills, basic letter sounds and number recognition.

The dates for Junior School and Senior School day place assessments are usually:

- 4+, 7+: Summer term or Autumn Term prior to entry
- 16+: November prior to entry
- 11+. 13+: January prior to entry

Assessments for international applicants are scheduled shortly after the application is made, and offers are made on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Parents of applicants are normally notified of the results within two weeks of sitting the assessments.

Parents are asked to accept or decline the offer of a place by a date set by the guidelines issued by the Girls' Schools Association. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for the rejection of an applicant.

Girls applying for places later than January can be assessed at any point in the year prior to entry, at a time that is mutually convenient to the School and the family.

The dates for the assessment process for the current year are published on our website, together with the dates that results are posted to families and the closing date for acceptances.

Girls who wish to be considered for a Scholarship must sit the entrance assessments.

Entrance Assessments

All candidates undertake some form of assessment.

Junior School

3+, : Candidates are invited to a guided play session which lasts for approximately 30 minutes.

4+, 5+: Candidates are given informal tasks to complete, such as puzzles, reading, maths and creative writing task, in order to establish their current level of learning.

6+, 8+, 9+, 10+: Candidates sit an online adaptive test to assess vocabulary, mathematics, non-verbal ability and skills as well as a Creative Writing assessment. They will also attend an informal interview.

In the Junior School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils for whom English is not their first language are assessed in their English language skills through interview and discussion with parents.

Senior School (UK pupils)

11+ and 13+: Candidates sit an online adaptive test to assess vocabulary, mathematics, non-verbal ability and skills. There is also a 30-minute creative writing assessment. They will also attend an informal interview

12+: Candidates are tested in one of the schools own English and Mathematics written papers. They will also attend an informal interview

14+: Candidates are tested in English, Mathematics and Science. They will also attend an informal interview

16+: For pupils already at a British curriculum school, who do not require Child Student visa sponsorship, six GCSE passes at 9 – 4 are required, with at least a 6-9 grade in the subjects wishing to be studied at A Level and other dependent subjects. We will make the applicant an offer of a place based on an applicant's predicted grades, conditional on the applicant's final GCSE grades achieved in the following August. Please visit the school website for up to date information of what GCSE subjects and grades are required to study particular A Level subjects.

All candidates are interviewed on the day of the entrance assessments by a senior member of staff.

A pupil can apply to sit a 'pre-test' for 11+ and 13+ entry. A pre-test is when a pupil is assessed, at 9+ or 11+ entry level and, if successful in the appropriate entry test, an offer of a place is given to the pupil for a deferred place in Year 7 or Year 9. This is particularly popular for pupils in both state schools for 11+ deferred entry and prep schools who finish their school at the end of Year 8. This then allows the pupil (and parents) to finish their time at their current school secure in the knowledge that they have a secured a place for the start of Year 9.

Senior School (International pupils)

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at St Mary's Cambridge as a boarder provided that she has a relative or responsible adult living in the UK with whom she can stay for some weekends, more details of which are contained in the School's Terms and Conditions and on the School website: http://www.stmaryscambridge.co.uk/boarding/guardianship.htm

However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expects overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study such as Years 9-11, or Years 12-13.

Any Senior School pupil for whom English is not their first language will instead take a number of different online assessments specific for student where English is not their first language. For Sixth Form entry, there are some additional assessments depending on the A Level subjects the pupil wishes to study. Please see the school website for further details: http://www.stmaryscambridge.co.uk/admissions/international-admissions.htm

Pupils who cannot easily attend the School may sit the assessments at an approved centre, their agents office (if using an Educational agent), their current school or at a British Council Office. The Deputy Head – Data and Operations and Head of Admissions, or another delegated senior member of staff, will interview pupils who are not able to attend the School for their entrance assessment by zoom.

Arrangements can be made for late applicants to sit the assessments at other times if there are places available in the School at the required entry point. Parents will usually be notified of the results within two weeks of sitting the examination and may be placed on a waiting list.

Successful late applicants must accept or decline their offer within two weeks of the offer being made.

All international pupils' proficiency in English will be re-tested at St Mary's School, Cambridge before they commence their programme of study, and in the case of a significant discrepancy with the entrance assessment scores, the School reserves the right to withdraw the place. The final decision in individual cases is made by the Headmistress.

Sibling Policy

Most female siblings join us at St Mary's School, Cambridge. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

Religious Beliefs

St Mary's School, Cambridge welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith.

Although St Mary's has Catholic Christian roots, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and it offers the opportunity for Christians, Jews, Hindus, Muslims etc to practise their own faiths.

However, parents should be aware that Religious Studies is a core part of the school curriculum and is taught from a scholarly rather than confessional standpoint. The major World Religions are taught at different stages in the girls' education including the GCSE programme. GCSE Religious Studies is a compulsory subject choice and it is our practice to teach inclusively so that all girls learnt together, thereby increasing their understanding on each other's views and cultures.

Parents should also be aware that the School celebrates key Holy Days in the Catholic calendar, such as Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, Sr Peter and Paul and All Saints.

School's Terms and Conditions

Copies of the School's Terms and Conditions are on the School website and will be made available 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 Policy and Procedure are available on our website and can be sent to parents on request. The complaints procedure is not available for use by prospective parents.

Records and Review

Applicants' details will be held on file with you due regard to data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice and retention and deletion guidelines.

The School will not hold personal data review or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no more than 12 months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain for longer might include e.g., if the parents express an interest in the applicant re-applying for any reason at a later date, or in the potential candidacy of another sibling; or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.

Transition from Junior School to Senior School

We expect that most students will move from Year 6 to Year 7, and a full transition programme is organised which runs throughout Years 5 and 6 to help the pupils prepare for the move to the Senior School. This involves lessons and activities at the Senior School site, as well as opportunities for parents to meet with members of the Senior School team. However, there are occasions when moving to the Senior School would not be in the best interests of the pupil. We want to ensure that, as for new students joining the Senior School, pupils will benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School, coping with the increased academic demands and displaying the maturity and independence that is required to thrive in the Senior School.

The school will consider the following aspects to decide if a student is able to Join the Senior School in Year 7:

- Performance Data
- Behaviour
- Teacher Feedback
- Level of Support required

If there are any concerns about a pupil potentially not moving into Year 7, conversations between the Junior School and parents will begin in Year 5. The School will work closely with parents of the child to explore all options and to put in place programme of support. The School will make its final decision about whether a place in Year 7 will be available by the end of the Spring Term of Year 6, to enable both sufficient time for pupil progress to be made, as well for parents to find alternative schooling for their child from the September if required.

Transition from Senior School to Sixth Form

We expect that most students will move from Year 11 into the Sixth Form, and the process to support this begins in Year 10. All parents and students are invited to the A Level subject fair, to meet with all departments to discuss the A Level specifications, as well as to find out more about life in the Sixth Form. All parents and students are also offered the opportunity to meet with a member of staff, to have a tour around the Sixth Form centre, and to meet for an A Level guidance meeting, during which current academic performance, subject combinations and future plans are discussed.

The entry requirements for each subject are available on the School website, and places on the chosen courses are confirmed once GCSE results are published. In the event that a required grade has not been achieved, the School will make contact with the student and parents to discuss options available, which often involve pursuing the course, if the Head of Department supports the decision.

In the event that a student's academic performance in Year 11 indicates that the required grades will not be achieved in a range of subjects, the School will make contact with the parents in the Autumn of Year 11 to discuss options for post-16 study.