

## **Notre Dame School**

### **Admissions Policy & Procedures**

#### **Introduction**

1. Notre Dame School (“the School”) is an independent Catholic School for girls aged between 2 and 18 and boys between 2 and 7. The School is organised into the following divisions:
  - The Preparatory School (for girls aged 2 to 11 and boys aged 2 to 7);
  - The Senior School (for girls aged 11+ to 18)
2. The Head of the Preparatory School and the Head of the Senior School are responsible for admissions and the operation of this policy in their respective Schools.
3. The aims of this policy are:
  - To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes;
  - To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and fair to applicants, providing equality of access, while ensuring that we are the right place for our students to flourish;
  - To identify applicants whose academic and other abilities appear to match the ethos and standards of the School and whose personal qualities suggest they have the potential to contribute sufficiently to the school community and benefit from the many opportunities that are offered here.
4. The admission process at each School is supervised by the appropriate Head. The selection criteria and interview procedure is determined and reviewed from time to time by the Governors of the School. Those involved in selection and interviewing have received appropriate training.

#### **PART I - THE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

##### **Entry Points**

5. The usual entry points in the Preparatory School are at Early Years (2, 3 or 4), Reception (under 5) and Year 3 (under 8). Although pupils may be accepted at other points if places are available. Occasional places often become available throughout the year.

##### **Admissions to the Preparatory School**

6. Open days are held throughout each academic year. Prospective parents are encouraged to attend at least one of these with their daughter(s) and/or son(s) prior to applying for admission in order to assess the suitability of the School for their daughter(s) and/or son(s). Parents who are interested in applying for a place in the Preparatory School for their daughter(s) and/or son(s) should either contact the School Admissions Office

([admissions@notredame.co.uk](mailto:admissions@notredame.co.uk)) to arrange a meeting and/or a tour of the School with the Head or a member of the Senior Management Team.

7. Prospective parents must complete a registration form and pay the registration fee to register their interest for a place at the Preparatory School. The registration form must be signed by both parents if both have parental responsibility.
8. The School will contact the parents to either:
  - (a) arrange for the Applicant to attend an observation/assessment day at the School. The Applicant will spend a day in the appropriate year group and may be asked to complete an assessment test; or
  - (b) inform them that a place is not currently available at the School, but that they may still progress with an observation/assessment so that, if successful, the Applicant's name can be placed on the waiting list.
9. If the Applicant receives learning support or has any specific learning difficulties or relevant medical conditions, parents must notify the School prior to the observation/assessment day. Copies of any relevant documentation, such as any Education Psychologist report or ECHP, must be provided where available.
10. Parents will be notified in writing within two weeks of the observation/assessment day whether a place at the School is available and is being offered or not. The School will not be obliged to state its reasons for not offering a place.
11. Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes ("the records") will be retained by the School for at least one year after the interview, whether or not a place is offered.
12. In order to accept the offer of a place, the Admissions Form and Acceptance Form must be returned along with the acceptance deposit. Any place at the School is not secured until this documentation is received and may be offered to another family if the offer period has expired. Parents are advised to take particular care to read the School's Terms and Conditions when prior to confirming acceptance.

### **Selection**

13. The preconditions for admission are that:
  - The Applicant and her parents are sympathetic to the Catholic ethos of the School.
  - The Applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
  - The Applicant enjoys satisfactory general health and will be able to attend lessons and participate fully in the life of the School.
  - The School is able to provide adequately for any learning difficulties and other special needs (if any) the Applicant may have.
  - The present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of parents and Applicant (if applicable)
  - Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid.
  - The current school has been informed of this application.
14. The academic criteria for selection in the Preparatory School are:

- A grasp of basic skills at a level that corresponds to at least the average level expected of children in the same age cohort as the Applicant (ie.sitting in the top 50% of their cohort nationally in terms of academic skills).
  - Demonstration of this ability during the observation/assessment day and performance on a standardised test for maths and English and in reading.
  - A positive recommendation from the Head of the Applicant's present school.
15. Waiting lists may be in place for specific year groups from time to time. Applicants who apply and sit assessment later during the year and who gain higher marks than those already on the waiting list may be placed higher up on the waiting list than those who sat assessments earlier.
16. Factors which will not be taken into account in the assessment of a pupil for admission are: the Applicant's skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, area of residence or socio-economic group.

## **PART II - THE SENIOR SCHOOL**

### **Entry Points**

17. The usual entry points are at 11+, 13+ and 16+, although pupils may be accepted at other points if places are available.
18. The Senior School usually accepts up to 80 pupils at 11+ (year 7), which includes girls transferring from Notre Dame Prep School.

### **Admissions to the Senior School**

19. Open days are held several times per year. Prospective parents are encouraged to attend at least one of these with their daughter(s) prior to applying for admission in order to assess the suitability of the School for their daughter(s).
20. Prospective parents must complete a Registration Form and pay the appropriate Registration Fee for the Entrance Examination which for 11+ and 13+ entry must be received by the Admissions Office by the relevant published closing date in the November in the year prior to intended entry. In-year and ad-hoc entries may occur during the year, but the requirement to complete an entry form and pay the appropriate examination fee applies.
21. After the closing date, prospective parents who have completed a Registration Form will be sent details of the date and times of the Entrance Examination together with information relating to the tests and criteria relating to the award of Scholarships. In-year and ad-hoc Applicants will be informed of the results of the examination usually within two weeks of sitting the papers. These Applicants are not eligible to apply for scholarships or awards.
22. If the Applicant receives learning support or has any specific learning difficulties or relevant medical conditions, parents must notify the School on the registration form. Copies of any relevant documentation, such as any Education Psychologist report or ECHP, must be provided where available. The School shall determine whether reasonable provision for special conditions will apply to the pupil in the Entrance Examination based on the information provided.

23. The School shall ask for a written reference to be given by the Applicant's current school.
24. All 11+ and 13+ Applicants are required to sit Entrance Examinations on the dates set by the School which are usually in early January. Applicants will be interviewed on the same day as the Entrance Examination. Other entrance exam dates will be offered for in-year entrance or those who are applying later than the January examination days if there are places available. These Applicants will not be eligible for scholarships or awards. Those wishing to apply for 13+ scholarships must take the 13+ examinations. Results of the Entrance Examination are confidential to the School and are not normally released.
25. Letters offering places and scholarships will normally be sent out by the end of January. Parents will be asked to accept the offer, complete and return the Admissions Form and Acceptance Form and pay the acceptance deposit. If no response to an offer has been received within five weeks the School will assume that the offer has been declined and the place and award may be offered to another family.
26. Letters will also be sent out to those parents whose child has not gained a place and to those whose name has been placed on the waiting list by the end of January. Applicants who apply and sit examinations later during the year and who gain higher marks than those already on the waiting list may be placed higher up on the waiting list than those who sat the papers earlier.
27. At 11+ all students who are currently pupils at the School will be assumed to be staying at the School unless written notice is received. Fees in lieu will be due if a full term's notice is not given.
28. At 16+ all students who are currently pupils at the School will be assumed to be staying at the School unless written notice is received. Non-return of the options choices will not be taken as written notice. Fees in lieu will be due if a full term's notice is not given.

### **Selection**

29. The preconditions for admission are that:
  - The Applicant and her parents are sympathetic to the Catholic ethos of the School.
  - The Applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
  - The Applicant enjoys satisfactory general health and will be able to attend lessons and participate fully in the life of the School.
  - The School is able to provide adequately for any learning difficulties and other special needs (if any) the Applicant may have.
  - The current school has been informed of this application.
  - The present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of parents and Applicant and that the Applicant has a satisfactory grasp of competencies appropriate to her age. (if applicable)
  - Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid.
30. The academic criteria for selection in the Senior School are:
  - Success in the Notre Dame Senior School Entrance Examination.
  - A positive recommendation from the Head of the Applicant's present school.
  - A satisfactory interview at Notre Dame Senior School.

- Sixth Form entry requirements are: at least Grade 6 or above in at least 6 GCSE subjects; at least a Grade 6 (Grade 7 for maths, English and sciences) in the subjects to be studied A Level; maths and English Grade 5 or above. Students should also meet the specific requirements of the subjects to be studied at A Level as stated in the current Sixth Form Prospectus.
31. Factors which will not be taken into account in the assessment of a pupil for admission are: the Applicant's skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religion, area of residence or socio-economic group.

### **Interview**

32. The interview is only one of a number of the selection criteria.
33. The aim of the interview will be to explore the criteria above. The style of the interview is intended to be informal and natural.

The interview will be carried out by an experienced and senior member of the academic staff. It will not include questions that imply racial bias and interview procedure will be regularly monitored to ensure its objectivity.

### **Admissions from the Preparatory School to the Senior School**

34. Most of our students from the Preparatory School will be expected to transfer to the Senior School following the meeting of an admissions panel (comprising the Head teachers, SENCO and members of SLT) based on standardised assessments and progress during Year 4 and 5. There is no requirement to sit the 11+ entrance examination unless students . Parents will be informed of the outcome of the admissions panel during the Summer Term of Year 5, and will be required to accept places by the first Tuesday in March of Year 6. The parents of students for whom the Senior School would not be educationally appropriate will be informed by the Head teacher of the Preparatory School during the Summer Term of Year 5. Full advice and support will be given in the process of looking for senior education places. Candidates not offered places as part of this process may, without prejudice, sit the entrance test in the usual way.
35. Music, art, drama and sport scholarship candidates will need to follow the usual scholarship process. Candidates wishing to be considered for an 11+ academic scholarship will need to sit the entrance examination papers (although their place will not be dependent on the outcome if a place has already been offered), as detailed in section 7 and 8 above.

### **Bursaries**

5. Each year, at the discretion of the School, a number of means tested bursaries are made available in selected year groups to existing pupils and pupils joining Notre Dame School. Please refer to the separate **Bursary Policy** document for details.

### **Scholarships**

6. A number of Scholarships are awarded for academic merit or ability in Art, Music, Drama or Sport at 11+ and 13+ entry. The value and number of awards made each year depends on the calibre and strengths of the particular cohort. Each scholarship is worth 10% of

fees per year. There are up to 15 Scholarships available at 11+ and 13+ entry. The closing date for scholarship applications is in the November prior to the year in which the scholarship award would commence.

7. Academic Scholarships are awarded based on performance in the entrance examination. If more than one entrance examination date is offered, only girls sitting on the main (first) exam day will be eligible. Art, Music, Drama and Sport Scholarships are awarded on the basis of performance in the relevant audition/assessment. Both internal and external candidates may be considered for scholarships.
8. A scholarship will be subject to certain conditions which parents will be asked to agree to when accepting the offer of an award. The 11+ scholarships are normally tenable for five years, and the 13+ for three years, subject to an annual review and provided the conditions of award are met.
9. At 16+ up to four Academic Scholarships, worth 25% of the tuition fees, are available and are offered as a result of performance in a two hour General Examination, which covers aspects of logic and argument, and is not subject specific. Those eligible for extra time or other access arrangements will be allowed those as usual for examinations. Up to four Awards, worth 25% of the tuition fees are available in either Art and Design, Music, Drama or Sport. Girls applying for Awards will be assessed in a practical situation or by submission of a portfolio, by a professional in the appropriate field. Girls applying for an award will also need to provide evidence of excellent potential to achieve a high grade in that subject at A Level and good results in other subjects. The allocation of the awards across the categories depends on the calibre and strengths of the particular cohort.
10. A scholarship will be subject to certain conditions which parents will be asked to agree to when accepting the offer of an award. These scholarships and awards are tenable for two years, subject to an annual review and provided the conditions of award are met.