

15a: Admissions Policy		Implementation Date		
Author	Admissions Officer	Reviewer	Deputy Head	

PURPOSE

Thetford Grammar School is a co-educational day independent school aged 3 – 19 years.

The Admissions Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process.

The aims of this policy are:

- to set selection criteria and procedures that are fair to all applicants. No applicant will be treated less favourably during the application process or during assessment on the grounds of their special educational needs or because of a “protected characteristic” under the Equality Act such as their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender reassignment, religious faith or belief, sexual orientation or disability.
- 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.
- to comply with the School’s obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

POLICY

It is a condition for admission that: -

- all applicants meet the selection criteria for admission
- any conditions of entry to the School are fulfilled
- the School receives payment of an Acceptance Deposit
- the applicant is of appropriate age and maturity.
- the School can adequately cater for and meet the needs of any disability and/or special educational needs. Please refer to the SEND policy concerning the SEND support on offer to children and how we support families to choose the right setting for their child with SEND.
- Admission to the School is at the Head’s discretion.

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SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for entry to the School are fair to all applicants and entails: -

- achieving a satisfactory entrance examination mark, for entry to the senior school
- spending a day with the applicant's current year group, for entry to the preparatory school and early years provision
- satisfactory reference from the applicant's current School (if any)
- an interview with the Head (for entry to the senior school) or the Head of Prep (for entry to the preparatory school including early years provision) to ensure the applicant has the potential to contribute and benefit from school life and educational opportunities offered by the School.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Pupils may enter the School at any age. Prospective parents are encouraged to visit the School or attend an Open Day if they are interested in applying for a place for their child at the School.

The admissions procedure is then as follows:

1. **Registration.** Every parent is asked to register their child by completing the Registration Form and paying a non-refundable registration fee. This does not constitute an offer or guarantee of a place at the School. As part of the registration process, parents/carers will be required to provide documentation to evidence their child's date of birth. This is to confirm they have reached the eligible age for the free entitlements. A copy of the document will be retained and will be stored securely and destroyed when there is no longer a good reason to keep the data.
2. **Interview and Assessment.** Prospective pupils and their parents will be invited into school to meet with the Head or Head of Prep School. Applicants will be required to sit an entrance examination in English and Mathematics. Some applicants may also be required to sit a Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning test to help determine suitability for admission. Applicants for the prep school will be required to spend a day with their relevant year group. Applicants for the senior school are also encouraged to spend the day with their year group, although this is not mandatory.
3. **Offer of a place.** An offer of a place may be made to those applicants who successfully pass the admissions process. Any conditions of an offer of a place will be set out in the offer letter. An offer of a place will not be confirmed until satisfaction of any conditions of entry. An offer of a place at the School will be subject to the School's terms and conditions.
4. **Acceptance of a place.** Parents accept a place by completing the Form of Acceptance and paying an Acceptance Deposit.

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) AND DISABILITIES

The School welcomes all children who can make the most of the opportunities offered and can flourish in its caring environment. The School's Admissions Policy aims to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any substantial disadvantages which may be encountered by applicants with disabilities.

The School will treat every application from an SEN and disabled pupil in a fair, open-minded way. However, the School will assess all pupils for admission on the basis of its standard selection criteria from time to time.

The School's facilities (physical and otherwise) for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are currently limited. The School will do all that is reasonable to comply with the Equality Act 2010 so that the School may accommodate the needs of disabled applicants for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.

The School will do all that is reasonable to ensure the application procedure (and any information about the School) is accessible for disabled applicants and will make such reasonable adjustments as necessary.

The School endeavours to ensure that it is able to fully support the needs of all prospective pupils. Parents of children with disabilities, SEN or learning difficulties are advised to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the School considers the application for a place and before they sit the School's entrance exam so that adequate provision can be made for them on the day. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support a request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements.

Before an offer of a place is made, the School will assess whether it is able to adequately cater for and meet any SEN and disabilities (if known) through discussion and meetings with parents, consideration of any professional reports and references from previous schools, assessment of the pupil when they visit the School, as appropriate.

An offer of a place may not be made if the School determines, following consultation with parents, that they are unable to meet and provide for a child's needs. The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

We aim to identify all children that may attract any additional funding such as EYPP, DAF, SEND Inclusion Fund and any locally available funding streams with a view to submit a claim / application to support and improve their outcomes.

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BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Bursaries

A bursary is a means tested award and therefore awarded on the basis of financial need rather than academic merit. Bursary assistance may be available upon entry to the School, or to existing pupils where a significant deterioration in financial circumstances occurs. Parents with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for assistance. Like all bursary awards these are subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

Every application is considered on its own merits and is subject to the School's ability to fund the award. Therefore, in determining the appropriate level of assistance, in addition to family income, other factors will be considered, including:

- Family circumstances: The School may take family circumstances into account including the need to care for dependants. The School may also consider whether there is potential for the family to improve its financial position.
- Opportunities to release any capital: significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would realisable equity in property owned.
- In cases of separation: the contribution made by the absent parent.
- Contribution to household costs or school fees: by others inside or outside the immediate family.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities): any bursary awarded will take into account these outgoings.

Bursary awards are subject to a review of parental means each year and may be varied as a result.

The Finance Officer and Head assesses all applications and may request a meeting with the parents to ensure that the information declared has been correctly interpreted and that the assessment has been carried out in a fair and consistent manner. All decisions to award or withdraw a bursary are final.

The School may reduce or withdraw an award in circumstances set out in the conditions of award. These may be, for example, where a pupil's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees.

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Scholarships

The School may award academic scholarships for entry to the school based on exceptional performance in the entrance examinations and an interview with the Head or other senior member of staff. An academic scholarship is an honorary award awarded to the strongest candidates and highest achievers.

Scholarships into the Sixth Form are also available for both internal and external candidates based on the result of a scholarship paper or in recognition of outstanding GCSE performance in the Summer.

The number and levels of scholarship awards for the school are not fixed but are based upon performance and merit relative to the size and strength of the field. The value of any Scholarship is at the discretion of the head.

The following Scholarships are available at the School:

Academic Scholarship: 7+ (Y3), 11+ (Y7), 13+ (Y9) and 16+ (Y12)

Art Scholarship: 11+ (Y7), 13+ (Y9) and 16+ (Y12)

Drama Scholarship: 11+ (Y7), 13+ (Y9) and 16+ (Y12)

Music Scholarship: 7+ (Y3), 11+ (Y7), 13+ (Y9) and 16+ (Y12)

Sporting Scholarship: 11+ (Y7), 13+ (Y9) and 16+ (Y12)

The award of a scholarship does not prevent parents also applying for financial assistance under the normal bursary criteria and assessment.

The School may reduce or withdraw a scholarship award in circumstances sets out in the conditions of award.

Further details are available on request from the Admissions Team.

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EARLY EDUCATION

Early Education is offered within the national parameters –

- No session to be longer than 10 hours
- No minimum sessions length
- Not before 6.00am or after 8:00pm
- A maximum of two sites in a single day

Early Education is offered to families 35 weeks of the year. The funded hours can be claimed to the maximum available hours of 15hrs per week.

We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours / sessions that can be taken as free provision are convenient for parents' working hours.

REVIEW

Date	Summary of Changes	Author	Approver
June 2019	Updated details	Admissions Officer	Deputy Head

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Author Admissions Officer

Reviewer Deputy Head