

ADMISSIONS - Further Guidance for external candidates – St Dunstan's College Junior School

1 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The standard points of entry to St Dunstan's College are Nursery (age 3+), Reception (age 4+) and Year 3 (age 7+)

1.1 Junior School

1.1.1 Nursery (3+)

Pupils in Nursery are 3 years old by 1 September of the academic year into which they enter the College. We have thought creatively about how we can learn as much as possible about the children we assess for entry and our admissions process is designed to enable us to learn as much as possible from their key worker, or appropriate adult within the home setting. Our process also ensures that parents are able to learn more about our unique St Dunstan's Nursery offering and ask any questions of key members of staff.

Consultation with current settings in lieu of assessments

You will be required to inform your child's current Nursery setting about your application to St Dunstan's College and provide us with details of your child's key worker. If your child does not currently attend a Nursery, we will require details of a primary contact (e.g. parent, family member, au pair), so that we can make contact with this person as an alternative.

A thorough questionnaire will be sent to the appropriate key worker or primary contact, in order for us to find out as much as we can about your child and their current developmental stage. Our Head of Early Years Foundation Stage may follow up by phone to discuss the answers to the questionnaire that has been submitted in more detail, which will enable them to ask any additional questions they may have about your child.

Following on from the above process, we look forward to inviting all the children to visit our Junior School and enjoy a morning with some of our teachers, in order that we can get to know your child a little more in person. Parents will be present throughout the in-school session. Our highly skilled team will run a play session with your child, where their interactions with other children will be observed, as well as their interest in particular activities and ability to talk to the staff and answer questions. We will also make time to read the children a story, monitor their engagement and identify simple inference skills.

Offer letters are usually sent in December.

We accept registrations for our Nursery from birth, and early registrations are welcomed. Families who miss the opportunity for an assessment at 3+ are encouraged to register for entry at 4+ the following year.

Any acceptance should be accompanied by the payment of a £2000 deposit, which is non-refundable. Due to the high level of demand in this year group, we operate a “first come, first served” basis at the acceptance stage. In any event, should an acceptance be received after the acceptance deadline, a place at the College cannot be guaranteed. Some candidates may be placed on a waiting list. It is not College policy to reveal where children sit on the waiting list.

1.1.2 Reception (4+)

Pupils in Reception are 4 years old by 1 September of the academic year into which they enter the College. Assessments for entry take place during the November of the calendar year prior to entry. The process is designed to help the children demonstrate the best of their abilities, and is undertaken in a thoughtful, caring, and friendly manner. During the assessment, children are invited to:

- Listen and respond to a story
- Draw a picture
- Match letters and words
- Identify and order numbers
- Play memory games
- Discuss shapes and colours
- Follow patterns
- Engage in conversation and play with others

The children are assessed in small groups, enabling observational notes to be made of their social skills and interactions.

All Reception places are allocated on the basis of these assessment days and offers are usually made in November or December.

Any acceptance must be accompanied by the payment of a £2000 deposit, which is non-refundable. Due to the high level of demand in this year group, we operate a “first come, first served” basis at the acceptance stage. In any event, should an acceptance be received after the acceptance deadline, a place at the College cannot be guaranteed. Some candidates may be placed on a waiting list. It is not College policy to reveal where children sit on the waiting list nor is it policy to provide feedback on how children performed in the assessments.

1.1.3 Year 3 (7+)

Assessment for entry into Year 3 involves spending a full day at the College in early January of the academic year prior to entry. The process involves:

- an assessment of the child’s cognitive ability, with tests focussing on Maths and English
- an evaluation of their in-class learning behaviours

- an evaluation of the child's social skills and interactions with both peers and adults; consideration of reports and/or references from their current school

Parents of children who have completed the Year 3 (7+) entry assessment are invited to ask any questions of the Head of Junior School or Junior School Leadership Team at drop off and/or collection.

All Year 3 places are allocated on the basis of this assessment day and offers are made by the end of January. Some children may be placed on a waiting list. It is not College policy to reveal where children sit on the waiting list nor is it policy to provide feedback on how children performed in the assessments.

Any acceptance should be accompanied by the payment of a £2000 deposit which is non-refundable. Should an acceptance be received after the acceptance deadline, a place at the College cannot be guaranteed.

1.1.4 Occasional and other points of entry (Junior School)

Occasional places do become available from time to time across all year groups. In order to be considered for an in-year place, families should register their interest online by way of the Enquiry Form.

Assessments for in-year places or non-standard years of entry in the Junior School are arranged as required. These involve your child spending part or all of a school day with us. They will experience a mixture of time in class alongside more formal, age-appropriate, academic assessments. Observations of a child's learning behaviours and social interactions are considered alongside the results of any assessments taken. We will also contact your child's current school or educational setting to ask for a reference and/or recent school report. These will also be taken into consideration when the offer of a place is being discussed.

Start dates for in-year applicants will vary, and, as a rule of thumb, successful pupils will be given a date at the start of a new term. The College is open to having a conversation should a family's circumstances require an earlier start date.

Any acceptance should be accompanied by the payment of a £2000 deposit which is non-refundable. Should an acceptance be received after the acceptance deadline, a place at the College cannot be guaranteed. Some candidates may be placed on a waiting list. It is not College policy to reveal where candidates sit on the waiting list nor is it policy to provide feedback on individual performance or results.

2 BURSARIES

The bursary programme is designed to help as many as possible of those who meet our entry criteria to take up a place at St Dunstan's. The College offers a number of means-tested awards annually to entrants at Year 3, Year 7, and Year 12. Bursaries are not usually available for candidates applying to the College outside these entry points.

Both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need but can extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need. To qualify for consideration for a bursary, the gross family income must be below £75,000 per annum. Our assessors, Bursary Administration Limited (BAL), do take into account anything that can be realised as a high value asset. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the College's ability to fund these within the context of what is viable within its overall budget.

It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be a personal matter. However, the College has a duty to ensure that all bursary awards are well focused, therefore, in addition to current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of award will include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family – i.e. where there are two partners, both would be expected to be employed unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for children under school age or other dependants, or the requirements of their partner's work.
- Opportunities to release any capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for payment of school fees as would equity values in houses. Families with a second home or buy to let properties will be required to show willingness to release capital accordingly.
- Where parents do not live together, the financial circumstances of both parents' households will be assessed unless there is sufficient evidence that it would not be reasonable to do so. BAL's assessment is based on both parents' ability to contribute to the school fees and contributions to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
- Where fees are already being paid to other schools BAL's assessment will take this into account.

Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the College considers that the following would not be consistent with a family in receipt of a bursary:

- Frequent or expensive holidays;
- New or luxury cars including those on hire purchase;
- Investment in significant home improvements which are not required as part of the essential maintenance of the family home;
- A second property/land holdings unless part of a business which is providing adequate income to be considered as such;
- Regular, excessive expenditure;
- The use of disposable income to repay loans for any of the above or to repay, for example, Director's loans to personal companies;
- 50% or more equity in the family home

Every year, the number of bursary applicants greatly exceeds the amount of funding available. Bursaries are therefore awarded on the basis of academic merit.

Bursaries are normally offered for a whole academic year and can be up to 110% in exceptional circumstances, covering the cost of uniform, lunches, and other essentials. However, to ensure that the College is providing the appropriate level of financial assistance an annual review is undertaken for bursary award holders in Years 4 – 10, this review will normally take place in the Trinity term.

All bursary awards are subject to an ongoing duty of disclosure. Along with an annual review, families in receipt of a bursary are required to inform the College of any improvement in their financial circumstances, such as an increase in salary or receipt of an inheritance, whenever it occurs, even if it occurs outside of the annual review period.

Bursaries are only offered to families who are resident in the UK. If applications are being made for more than one child at the same time, there is no guarantee all applicants will receive the same level of bursary.

The College's practice is to allocate its entire bursary funding, available for the year, on entry. The College's expectation is that parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed, will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the College, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

To apply for a bursary, families should tick the box on the online registration form and the College Admissions Team will send an activation link to the bursary portal which will allow families to present their financial situation and upload supporting documents.

Forms returned incomplete, without supporting documentation or after the official deadline will not be processed.

The College respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families; therefore, recipients are expected to do likewise, and awards should not be discussed between families.

Please note that an external independent company Bursary Administration Limited will assess all bursary applications received and some bursary offers may be made subject to a home visit taking place.

There are limited funds available for Bursaries each year and they represent a unique opportunity for students who would not otherwise have access to the renaissance education on offer at St Dunstan's College to benefit from a state-of-the-art education. As such, in order to allow St Dunstan's College to offer financial assistance to as many future applicants as possible, we would encourage parents and students who have benefited from such awards to support others in turn if circumstances at a later stage of life permit.

4 EXPECTATIONS OF AWARD HOLDERS

Obligations of Bursary award holders: The pupil who is the subject of a Bursary award is required to fulfil the purpose of the Award by:

- demonstrating an excellent approach to learning, as evidenced by strong learning scores.
- demonstrating the required levels of academic attainment at common assessment points for English and Mathematics.

- contributing positively to the life of the College through contribution to House activities, academic enrichment, and the Co-Curricular programme.
- setting an excellent example to other pupils and demonstrating the values of the College by adhering to the College Rules and demonstrating the positive behaviour outlined in the *Expected Pupil Behaviour Policy*.

The above information is correct as at 24.05.2024