

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

1 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The standard point of entry to St Dunstan's College Senior School is Year 7 (age 11+).

1.1 Senior School

1.2.1 Year 7 (11+ entry)

We hold one whole College Saturday Open Day during the Michaelmas Term, as well as other regular smaller tours and virtual Q&As throughout the year. We encourage all families to attend an open event; more details can be found on our website.

Once a child is registered via our online registration form, an acknowledgement email is sent by the Admissions Department, and the latest school report is requested from the child's current school. The College uses GL Assessment's online adaptive tests, which are age-standardised measures of ability and attainment, for entry into Year 7 in the Senior School. These entrance assessments in English, Mathematics, Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning take place in the December prior to the year of entry. Candidates who have performed well in the online assessments will then be called to attend an Assessment Day at the College where they will participate in a taught, observed lesson, followed by a written English assessment which includes comprehension and an extended writing task, as well as a further Mathematics assessment.

Following the Assessment Day a decision is made on which candidates to call for an interview. Candidates are interviewed by members of the Leadership and Pastoral Teams and parents have the opportunity to meet with a member of senior staff at the College. We interview many more candidates than we have places to give, to gain as complete as possible an understanding of each child being considered for a place. Being called for interview does not automatically ensure a place at the College.

Those who have not performed well enough to be considered for the January onsite assessments or for interview will receive a letter by email to that effect in the days following assessments.

Final decisions and offer letters, including offers of scholarship and/or bursaries, are sent on a set date with a fixed acceptance deadline, publicised on the College's website and in the offer letter. Acceptance must 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.

As part of the offer pack, parents will also receive an invitation to our optional series of post-offer events, which will take place between February Exeat and the final acceptance deadline. This is a further opportunity for parents to meet our current Senior School students and senior members of staff.

Occasional and other points of entry (Senior 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 using the Enquiry Form.

Assessments for other points of entry or non-standard years of entry in the Senior School are arranged as required. Candidates will sit an age-appropriate academic assessment. Observations of a child's learning behaviours and social interactions are considered alongside the results of any assessments taken. The assessments are followed by interviews with the Head of Year/Section. We will also contact your child's current school to ask for a reference and/or recent school report. This information will also be taken into consideration when the offer of a place is being considered.

2 SCHOLARSHIPS

Academic and co-curricular scholarships carry a fee remission usually up to 35% for one or more awards. The maximum aggregate value of non-means tested awards would normally not exceed 35%.

Scholarships are expected to be held for the duration of a student's time at the College, provided their conduct fulfils the expectations as stated in the *Terms and Conditions of Acceptance* and that their progress is in line with College expectations as outlined in our *Scholarship Policy*. There is an annual review of all scholars, held in the Trinity Term by the Awards Committee, to reflect on the year preceding, with support available to any scholar not achieving in line with their potential.

2.1 Academic scholarships at 11+ (Year 7)

Academic scholarships recognise and reward academic excellence. It is not possible to apply for an academic scholarship. All external candidates sitting the Senior School entrance assessments are automatically considered for an academic scholarship. Candidates who perform particularly well in the entrance assessments will be invited to attend a series of

academic scholarship interviews and assessments. At the same time, their parents will meet with a member of senior staff.

Academic scholars follow an academic enrichment programme, tailored for each age group which may include lectures, project-based learning and trips.

Additional candidates for academic scholarship may be proposed in any of the annual review meetings. At that meeting, the committee will consider the proposal on the basis of the academic excellence in evidence, alongside any available monies for reward, according to the year group. Parents are not able to make applications directly to the Awards Committee.

Parents will be formally notified if the committee agrees the student is credible for an award to be allocated and when there is sufficient funding available for it to be awarded.

Should concerns about an academic scholar's performance be raised in the annual review, notification will be made to parents and will be revisited in the ensuing follow-up committee meetings. Should it be necessary to remove an award, one term's notice will be provided.

2.2 Co-Curricular Scholarships at 11+ (Year 7)

To encourage and develop potential in particular areas of College life, a number of co-curricular scholarships are available in the fields of Art, Drama, Music, and Sport, at all official entry points. Whilst fee remission is a part of the scholarship offer, successful candidates will also be inducted onto carefully designed, progressive programmes that support each scholar to thrive. The criteria are not linked to academic ability and any applicant that passes the entrance assessments is eligible.

Applications should be made by selecting the relevant scholarships on the online registration form. Whilst applicants can apply for more than one co-curricular scholarship, we do recommend applying for no more than two. Receipt will be acknowledged by email, and then specific application forms can be completed detailing suitability. All applications must be received by the published deadline to be considered.

2.2.1 Art Scholarships at 11+

Criteria

Art Scholars at St Dunstan's make a significant contribution to all aspects of artistic provision, and to do so effectively they must be able to demonstrate an infectious passion for the subject. We would expect applicants to be self-reflective and have a clear idea of how they can develop their own work; to be curious, visiting galleries and museums on a regular basis and to have a broad range of artistic skills. Their passion for the subject should be combined with a high level of creativity.

Application

1. A digital portfolio of between 5-10 pieces of work in a variety of mediums e.g. drawing, painting, sculpture, textiles, photography, video, etc. Please ensure quality photographs and include the medium used in the file name.

2. Up to two references from an Art teacher or external tutor or mentor highlighting student's commitment, aptitude, and interest in Art.

Assessment Day

Two assessed examinations:

1. Realistic, observational, tonal drawing.
 - Assessing technical graphite skills and understanding of proportions, textures, and shading.
2. A creative, personal response to a given artwork
 - Assessing original and creative approaches to the reinterpretation of an artwork through colour and mixed media.
 - On the assessment day, we also ask that applicants bring their physical portfolio of work, which will be reviewed and evaluated by the department.

2.2.2 Drama Scholarships at 11+

Criteria

At St Dunstan's we hold a firm belief in the power of the ensemble, which is why an applicant's ability to inspire others when working as part of a group is such a key part of the assessment process. Clearly individual performance skills are key indicators of potential, but this must be combined with the ability to think imaginatively and creatively, in order to create performances that are both high quality and unique. We believe in the value of a broad range of experiences and invite applications from candidates with backgrounds in a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to; acting, directing and dance.

Application

Each candidate will need to submit a personal statement, recounting a memorable experience with the world of theatre, before commenting on how this has contributed to their desire to apply for scholarship. It should be no more than 300 words. We also invite up to two references in support of each application. The candidate will also need to submit a short recording of up to 2 minutes long which should be an original piece on the College's 'Five Cs'; Courage, Confidence, Curiosity, Compassion and Creativity.

Assessment Day -

Applicants will be invited to spend a day at the College in the company of current scholars and members of the Drama Department. Students are not expected to prepare anything before the day but are encouraged to arrive in attire that is appropriate to the tasks highlighted below. Please note that break and lunch will also be provided for all candidates.

Introductions and Ice Breakers

All candidates will meet in the morning for an ice-breaker session with the department, with current scholars and the department also being introduced.

Stage Acting

Each candidate will be provided with an unseen duologue from a published play text at the beginning of this session. They will attend an acting session where they will be given direction and acting notes on the piece. Following time given to rehearse, they will then be invited share their work with the group.

Devising

Each candidate will take part in a devising session based on an unseen stimulus that will be provided to them on the day. Candidates will work in groups to respond in a creative way to the stimulus they have been given and share their work with the group.

Musical Theatre

Each candidate will attend a Musical Theatre session, where they will be led through an unseen musical theatre number that they will perform in small groups. The focus is on characterisation and physicality as opposed to choreography.

Dance and Movement

Each candidate will attend a dance and movement session with a professional choreographer, in which they will be taught a choreographed number and then invited to share their work within small performance groups.

Q&A Session with Current Scholars

Candidates will partake in an open Q&A session with current scholars who will provide an insight into their experience of the College as well as providing clarity on any questions that may arise.

2.2.3 Music Scholarships at 11+

Criteria

Music Scholars define the ethos of the Music Department in their high levels of enthusiasm, motivation, individual achievement and group collaboration. The audition process assesses these qualities and aims to discover the candidate's musical potential and ambitions, as well as their current standard. Candidates are normally required to be at a level akin to at least Grade 4 in their main instrument, though scholarships can also be awarded based on a candidate's potential. In addition to a fee remission, the scholarship also includes free tuition in the candidate's principal instrument.

In addition to Music Scholarships, the Music Department also offers standalone Benson Exhibition Awards, providing students with free tuition in their principal instrument, equivalent to £630. Exhibitions may be offered based on potential in an instrument and are awarded through the same audition process.

Application

Each candidate will need to submit a personal statement stating why they wish to apply for a Music Scholarship as well as up to two references in support of their application. The statement should be no more than 300 words. The candidate will also submit a short, 2-3 minute video recording of a Grade 4 piece or above, on their main instrument.

Assessment Day

The audition process comprises:

1. Performance of two pieces on their main instrument or voice, or on two different instruments if preferred. We provide a professional accompanist and a rehearsal on the day of the audition, though the candidate is permitted to arrange a private accompanist.
2. A sight-reading exercise on the candidate's main instrument.
3. A series of aural tests. These include singing back a melody, identifying the notes of a chord, and clapping back rhythms.
4. An informal interview, which will discuss their performances, ambitions as a scholar and their written application.
5. An ensemble activity with some of our current scholars and instrumentalists in the Senior School

2.2.4 Sport Scholarships at 11+

Criteria

Candidates are expected to be actively involved in competitive sport across a variety of disciplines both at school and club level. We would particularly encourage applicants from a football, hockey, or swimming background. Applications from students performing at a high level in other sports are welcomed and will be considered. As a guide, we would expect candidates to be competing at club/county level or equivalent, in addition to representing their school, depending on the sport they currently participate in.

Application

Each candidate will need to submit a personal statement stating why they wish to apply for a Sport Scholarship as well as up to two references in support of their application. The statement should be no more than 300 words.

Assessment day

All applicants will be assessed in three tasks:

- A series of fitness tests, challenges, and multi-sport games, focusing on student physical literacy, but also on personal, social, and cognitive skills.
- A number of sport-specific activities, focusing on technical proficiency and game play across our Core Sports. All candidates will participate in a football and a hockey session on the day, even if these are not their core sport.

3 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 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 be considered for a bursary, the gross family income must be below £75,000 per annum. Our assessors, Bursary Administration Limited (BAL), 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 7 – 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 consider their own support as part of their moral obligation, when circumstances may allow them at a later stage in life to support in turn others in need.

4 EXPECTATIONS OF AWARD HOLDERS

Obligations of Academic Scholars and Bursary award holders: The pupil who is the subject of an Academic Scholarship or Bursary award is required to fulfil the purpose of the Award by:

- demonstrating an excellent approach to learning, as evidenced by learning scores. Academic scholars are expected to have a consistent average learning score of 15 or above across their subjects, and for no subject to be below a Learning Score of 13.
- demonstrating the required levels of academic attainment. Academic Scholars are expected to consistently attain 'Meeting St Dunstan's Expectations' in a majority of their End of Year Examinations, for all 'core' subjects to be at least at 'Meeting St Dunstan's Expectations', and for no subject to be 'cause for concern' at consecutive data review points in their academic journey. For clarity, 'core' subjects in the Lower and Middle School are English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, as these are compulsory GCSE subjects for all students. Data review points occur towards the end of each academic term.
- contributing positively to the life of the College through contribution to House activities, academic pursuits, and the Co-Curricular programme. Academic Scholars are expected to commit to at least two such activities on a consistent basis throughout their time at the College.
- 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*.

Obligations of Co-curricular Scholars: The pupil who is the subject of a Co- Curricular Scholarship is required to fulfil the purpose of the Award by:

- adhering to the College's required standards of conduct and demonstrating a positive approach to learning, as evidenced by learning scores. Co-curricular scholars are expected to have a consistent average learning score of 13 or above, and no subject to be below a Learning Score of 10.
- in the case of a Co-curricular Award (Scholarship), the pupil is expected to commit fully to the subject of that Award with a minimum expectation as per the specifics below:

- **Art** Scholars are expected to independently visit two major art exhibitions each year, to be presented as a double page of research, analysis, and responses reviewing the exhibition in their sketchbooks, alongside attending one of the Forder Art Clubs each week and an active involvement in House Art activities.
- **Drama** Scholars are expected to engage in one dramatic event per term, which could include a school production or workshop as organised by the Drama department.
- **Music** Scholars are expected to attend two ensembles per week (one of which can satisfy the Exhibitioner requirement as outlined in 3.3 below) and perform in all of the ensemble's school performances and/or concerts, as well as being part of scholarship enrichment opportunities through solo work and participation in Music masterclasses.
- **Sport** Scholars are expected to be present punctually at one training session each week for the term's Core Sport outside of curriculum time, and to attend all fixtures for that Core Sport when selected.
- contributing positively to the life of the College through contribution to House activities, academic pursuits 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*.

Obligation of Music Exhibition Award Holders: the pupil who is the subject of an Exhibition Award is required to fulfil the purpose of the Award by:

- evidencing progress through commitment to ABRSM and/or Trinity grades in music (or any other suitable awarding body)
- consistent attendance in private instrumental lessons, as stipulated by VMT in their reporting.
- remaining a member of at least one school ensemble in their awarding instrument and attending the ensemble's rehearsals each week punctually including their formal performances.
- 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