DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR BOYS ENTERING THE COLLEGE FROM THE AGE OF 7 TO 18

Introduction

1. This policy is addressed to prospective parents and pupils and to all members of Dulwich College staff. (The Kindergarten and Infants section of the College, called DUCKS, has its own Admissions Policy.)

2. The purpose of this policy is to explain the College's admissions process to potential applicants and their parents.

3. The Standard Terms and Conditions set out the terms on which pupil(s) transition from one part of the College to another.

Inclusion & Diversity

4. Diversity is a fundamental component of the College's ethos. The College welcomes boys from all ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected, balanced with the lawful needs and rules of the College community and the rights and freedoms of others. All boys applying for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their (or their parents') race, colour or nationality; ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; disability; sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Academically selective

5. The College is academically selective. Places are offered to the applicants who comfortably meet the College's academic standards, and the assessment process evidences they are likely to thrive at the College.

6. The academic potential of its applicants is very important to the College and significance is placed upon the College's assessment of an applicant's academic potential and attainment, as well as their current and past academic results.

Competitive Entry

7. The number of applicants for places normally exceeds the number of places available by some margin; entry is highly competitive.

Entry points

8. The main points of entry to the College are at:

    - Year 3 in the Junior School;

- Year 7 in the Lower School;
- Year 9 in the Middle School; and
- Year 12 in the Upper School.

There are usually a small number of occasional places available for:

- Years 4 and 5 in the Junior School; and
- Year 10 (boarders) in the Middle School.

Prospective parents or applicants should contact the relevant Registrar concerning entry to the College other than at the main points of entry.

Applicant's age

9. In exceptional circumstances the College may offer places to boys one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if in the College's professional judgement that would be in the best interests of the boy.

Assessment and entry tests

10. The College's high academic standards require that applicants for admission undergo rigorous academic assessment and testing.

11. All admissions will be based upon assessments and tests appropriate to the age of each applicant.

12. All test results are confidential to the College.

Entry to Years 3, 4 and 5 (Junior School)

13. Applicants may be granted a Deferred Entry place for Year 3 based on a strong performance in the 4+ assessment at DUCKS (see the DUCKS' Admissions Policy for more detail), or applicants (including pupils at DUCKS who were not offered a Deferred Entry place for Year 3 in the 4+ admissions process) can apply for entry into Year 3 whilst in Year 2.

14. For entry into Year 3 (applying whilst in Year 2) and Years 4 and 5 applicants are assessed in two stages:

    - There is a first round of assessment in which applicants will undertake online assessments covering Mathematics, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. The applicants will also complete short, written assessments of writing and Mathematics.
    - A proportion of those applicants who perform sufficiently well in the first round will be invited back for a further assessment stage in which their literacy, numeracy and academic potential

will be assessed. Offers of places will be made in the Lent term preceding their entry into Year 3, 4 or 5 (as applicable).

Entry to Year 7 (Lower School)

15. For entry into Year 7 applicants are assessed in two stages:

- There is a first round of assessment in which applicants will undertake online tests which include sections on Mathematics, English, reasoning and problem solving. There will also be a handwritten (or computer, if appropriate) creative writing task.
- Only those applicants who perform sufficiently well in the first round will be invited back to the College for an interview. Offers of places will be made in the February of Year 6.

Entry to Year 9 (Middle School)

16. Applicants can apply for entry into Year 9 either: (i) by applying for Deferred Entry whilst they are in Year 6 (see paragraph 17); or (ii) whilst they are in Year 8 (see paragraph 18).

17. Applicants can apply for Deferred Entry into Year 9 whilst they are in Year 6. Deferred Entry is only available for entry into Year 9 by an applicant who is at a UK prep school in Year 6 and will remain at the prep school until they join Dulwich College. Applicants are assessed in two stages:

- There is a first round of assessment in which applicants will undertake online tests which include sections on Mathematics, English, reasoning and problem solving. There will also be a handwritten (or computer if appropriate) creative writing task.
- Only those applicants who perform sufficiently well in the first round will be invited back to the College for an interview. Offers of places will be made in the February of Year 6 for Deferred Entry into Year 9.

About two-thirds of the places in Year 9 are generally filled through Deferred Entry. Applicants seeking scholarships will return to the College in Year 8 for those assessments.

18. Applicants can also apply for entry into Year 9 whilst they are in Year 8. Applicants are assessed in two stages:

- There is a first round of assessment in which applicants will undertake tests which include sections on Mathematics and English (both paper based) and reasoning (online).
- Only those applicants who perform sufficiently well in the first round will be invited back to the College for an interview. Offers of places will be made in the February of Year 8.

About one third of the places in Year 9 are generally filled by applicants undertaking assessments in Year 8.

19. A parent applying for assessment in Year 6 must choose whether to register for 11+ entry into Year 7 or Deferred Entry into Year 9; they may not register for both.

Entry to Year 12 (Upper School)

20. The Upper School provides a demanding academic curriculum that requires both intellectual ability and a strong work ethic. It is therefore suitable only for pupils who have both qualities.

21. Applicants applying to enter Year 12 are required to:

- Sit the College's entrance examinations which are based on the subjects to be studied at Advanced level, and for some subjects, a portfolio or performance recording may be requested; and

- Attend an interview (if they have performed sufficiently well in the entrance exams to be shortlisted for interview) which at the discretion of the Head of Upper School may be held in person or online.

22. Applicant's GCSE grade expectations and/or requirements (as applicable) are stated on the College website from time to time[1].

EAL (English as an Additional Language)

23. There is no EAL paper for entry into the College between Years 3 and 11.

24. New EAL Year 12 applicants will sit an EAL paper in addition to the tests related to their A level subjects.

25. All successful applicants joining the College in the Upper School, whose first language is not English, will be assessed again when they arrive, and if support is needed, they are required to take the English as an Additional Language (EAL) course through Year 12. EAL pupils will be supported, where appropriate, to takethe IELTS qualification, which most universities now require from EAL applicants.

References

26. After receipt of an application, the College will seek a reference from the Head of the applicant's current school, who will be asked, typically, to comment upon academic ability, attitude and behaviour, involvement in the school community, talents and interests, and any other special circumstances such as special educational needs, or a disability but may include additional or

[1] Pupils should be expected to meet these grade requirements in order to transition from Middle School into the Upper School.

alternative questions. Where relevant, the reference request may also ask for the results of tests taken at the school and/or predicted grades at GCSE.

27. Referees may be asked: (a) to state any outstanding commitments the family might have to the school (financial or otherwise); and (b) if the applicant has been guilty of any serious misconduct (e.g., bullying).

Special circumstances

28. The College recognises that an applicant's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example:

- If they are unwell when taking tests or have had a lengthy absence from their school;
- If there are particular family circumstances (such as a recent bereavement); or
- If there is a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system.

29. Parents should disclose any such circumstances to the College as soon as possible. In such cases, the College may request a medical certificate or such further information from the applicant's current school (e.g. samples of work) as the College considers necessary to make a fair assessment.

30. Parents should also disclose in advance if their child has any allergies that the College needs to know about.

Disability and Special Educational Needs

31. The College welcomes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who meet the College's academic requirements, provided the College can offer them the support that they require and cater for any additional needs that they have. The College aims to ensure that all its pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

32. It is the responsibility of parents to make the College aware of any known disability or special educational needs which may affect an applicant's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the College. They should provide the College with full written details (including a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report if they have one) at the time of registration, or by the registration deadline (at the latest). The College needs this information so that it can assess the boy's particular needs and (if required) can consult with their parents about the adjustments which could reasonably be made to cater for those needs, both during the admissions process and if an offer of a place is taken up.

33. There may be exceptional circumstances in which the College is not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability or special educational needs. For example, the College may not be

able to offer a place at the College if, despite reasonable adjustments, the College feels that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that the College is not going to be able to ensure their health and safety or those of other pupils.

34. Sometimes, the situation of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs changes between an offer of a place being made and them starting at the College. The College requires parents to be pro-active in updating the College 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 College, however, the College 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 College about any material change to their child's circumstances.

35. If special educational needs or a disability becomes apparent after admission, the College will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow the pupil to continue at the College.

The admission decision

36. The admission decision will be taken by the Master and will be communicated to each applicant's parent/guardian in writing.

37. A separate Bursary Committee will assess bursary applications and advise the Master in this regard.

38. Admission is subject to the return of the College's Acceptance Form (and all associated documents) agreeing the Standard Terms and Conditions, and receipt by the College of the appropriate deposit (and in the case of a boarding place, the first term's fees or such greater sum that is recommended or required by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) from time to time).

Re-applying

39. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply at a later point of entry. For example, applicants who sit for Deferred Entry into Year 9, but who are unsuccessful, can re-sit for entry into Year 9 through the Year 8 admissions process.

Bursaries and Scholarships

40. Bursaries provide financial support to the families of boys who meet the entry criteria and are offered a day place, but whose financial circumstances mean they cannot afford to pay the school fees, in full or in part. Details of the means-tested bursary criteria and how to apply can be found on the College's website. Bursaries are subject to annual review and may be increased, reduced or removed if the family's financial circumstances change.

41. The College awards academic scholarships and applicants can apply for scholarships in music, sport and art; more information regarding which scholarships are available, at which points of entry, and how to apply is on the College website. Any scholarship can be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which the award is made or in accordance with the College's Standard Terms and Conditions.

42. It is possible for applicants to be offered both a scholarship and a bursary up to a maximum of 100% of tuition fees. The highest amount for a scholarship alone, whether as an individual award or compound of awards, is one third of the tuition fees. All scholarship amounts above this are honorary. If a pupil has a full bursary then any scholarships are honorary.

The integrity of the admissions procedure

43. The College relies on the truthfulness of the information provided by the applicant and their parents/guardians throughout the application procedure. Where any such information proves to be false and/or deliberately misleading, the College reserves the right to deny the applicant admission or, where a boy has already entered the College, to request that the pupil's parents/guardians remove the pupil immediately.

Immigration law

44. The College is a registered sponsor with UKVI and accordingly is licensed to support the admission of pupils who are non-UK nationals. More information can be found on the College website[2].

45. The College will comply fully with its duties as a licence holder which apply throughout the admissions process and ensure all relevant staff comply with those obligations. The College reserves the right to request all information / documentation required in support of a visa application process and the College's obligations as a Sponsor and the College reserves full discretion over whether to not sponsor a child.

Anti-Bribery and Sanctions

46. The admissions process is subject to the College's anti-bribery and sanctions policies and procedures.

Enquiries

47. Enquiries about admissions to the College should be directed to:

- the Junior School Registrar for Years 3, 4 and 5;
- the Registrars for Years 7, 9 and 10; and

[2] NB: The College does not sponsor day pupils.

- the Upper School Registrar for Year 12.

Policy Owner:	Director of Admissions, Libraries & Archives
Last Reviewed:	September 2025
Date of Next Review:	Academic Year 2026-27