



Culford School

Admission Policy

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1. General

Culford School is a co-educational independent school for pupils aged 9 months to 19 years. We are proud to provide a supportive and inspiring environment that is academically ambitious for over 850 pupils.

Choosing the right school for your child is an important decision, and we warmly encourage you and your child to experience the School first-hand. Each term, we host an open event, offering a relaxed introduction to our community, facilities and ethos. Full details are available on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children for a personal visit at other times. Please contact the School's registrar on 01284 385308 or email admissions@culford.co.uk to arrange a visit.

2. The Entry Procedure

Culford School is an academically selective School. Selection is based upon academic merit which is assessed through an entry examination (observations in EYFS), references and other relevant information from the candidate's previous School. Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School. We also expect applicants and their parents/guardians to act in accordance with our ethos and values and – during the admissions process and beyond – conduct themselves in a respectful and reasonable manner. Our Parent Protocol applies to prospective as well as current parents.

Applicants for admission should register by 1 September of the year preceding the desired year of admission. The School's Registration Form is available on the School's website.

3. Equal Treatment

Culford's aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 during the Admissions Process. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. The School has a small bursary fund in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School. The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

Culford School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.

4. Information Sharing

We require parents to inform the School at the outset of the application process about any needs (including special educational needs) which their child may have or any other significant matters which the School should reasonably be aware of because, for example, it would necessitate tailored provision and/or would materially impact on their child's

attendance at School and/or ability to engage in day-to-day School life. We also require applicant parents to be transparent about any circumstances which may materially impact their ability to comply with the School's Parent Contract, for example, in respect of fees.

The School may wish to discuss these matters with the parents and/or require some further information.

Parents must ensure that information provided is accurate, complete and not misleading and relevant details and information (or changes to them) are shared in a timely and transparent manner.

A failure to disclose relevant information and/or the provision of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information may - in some cases - lead to the withdrawal of an offer or termination of the School's Parent Contract.

5. Special Educational Needs

Culford School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can reasonably offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Our policy is to apply our admission criteria to all potential pupils. We require parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities or allergies (suspected and diagnosed) to discuss their child's needs with the School at the outset of the admissions process so that we can consider and make – to the extent reasonable – appropriate provision for them.

Parents are required to provide with the Registration Form full details of all relevant information about their child, including any reports (including any educational psychologist reports, medical reports or assessments or other relevant expert third party reports), materials or information about their child's needs (educational, health or otherwise), and this may include any final or draft EHC needs assessments (or applications for a needs assessment) or final or draft EHC Plans (or applications for an EHC Plan) or equivalents. This is so that the School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about any adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that the School can ensure, for example, that their child will be able to meaningfully access the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others. This information should be provided prior to the admissions assessment process.

Where parents of a prospective pupil feel their child requires adjustments (in respect of the admissions process and/or with regards to education at School and participation in School life in the event they are offered and take up a place at the School), parents should raise these with the School at the outset and the School may – depending on the circumstances - require some further information from parents or request further assessments in respect of the needs identified and will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if

appropriate) the adjustments proposed and whether they can reasonably be made for the child if they were to become a pupil at the School.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs and/or disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments (in the case of disability), we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, or where the School cannot reasonably accommodate the adjustments required or reasonably provide the nature or level of the support required.

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

In the event your child has an EHC needs assessment or EHCP (or equivalent) (whether at the application stage, draft or final form) it is important that these (and the applicable supporting documentation, e.g. educational psychologist reports or other expert assessments) are shared promptly with the School and that the School is kept up to date with respect to any relevant decisions of the Local Authority or changes in provision.

6. The Assessment Process

The aim of the process is to identify potential. Culford is looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The School has strong traditions in sports, music, drama, art, outdoor education and community activities. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for our entrance tests is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude.

6.1 For UK-based applicants

Assessment for Reception is based on observing informal play in small groups.

All candidates for entry (below 16+) sit online tests in English and Maths, which are designed for their age group,

Offers are conditional upon pupils gaining at least six GCSE passes, at grade 5 or above. For all subjects, pupils need a minimum grade 6 in the three subjects they will study at A

Level. Additional higher-grade criteria for some subjects are in place to ensure success at A Level.

Confidential references will be sought from the Head of a candidate's current school as part of the assessment process and any offer of a place will be conditional on receiving satisfactory references. Reports from the previous two years must be submitted as part of the application process.

6.2 International Applicants

International candidates and/or those who do not follow GCSE courses at their current school sit online tests in English, Maths and non-verbal reasoning. An online English language test is required of those candidates for whom English is not their first language and who require a visa.

International Candidates who wish to study mathematics at A-level will also sit a hand-written Maths test.

In addition, each international applicant will write an essay and have an online interview with a Culford representative to assess their level of English.

If the pupil uses the services of one of our partner agents to assist with the application, a reference from the school may not be required. If the application is made directly to the school a confidential school-to-school reference will be requested. In all cases, reports from the previous two years must be submitted as part of the application process.

7. Progression Through The School

Culford is one school split into three inter-linked parts: Nursery and Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior. This covers five stages of education: Nursery (9 months to 3 years), Pre-Prep (ages 3-7), Prep (ages 7-13), Senior (ages 13-16) and Sixth Form (ages 16-18). No part of Culford will admit a pupil if it believes it cannot properly meet his or her educational needs. To do so would be to fail the child and we put their educational interests at the forefront of our selection process.

No part of Culford School will admit a pupil in the belief that they will not qualify for the next stage of their education within the School. It is, however, recognised that, especially at younger ages, making such judgements may be difficult and there may, on occasion, be pupils within the School who do not qualify for transfer to the next stage of the School. Any decision to refuse such progress, however, will be made with timely, documented and open discussions with the parents, and with regard to the best educational interests of the child concerned.

It is also recognised that it may be in the best educational interest of a child to admit them to one part of the School, whilst, nonetheless, having severe reservations about their ability to make sufficient progress to access the next stage. The decision to admit such a pupil will be made:

- with full, open and formally documented expression of all reservations

- with expression of specific areas of concern and the strategies to be used to tackle them
- with regard to the best educational interests of the child concerned

Parents whose children are admitted with such reservations will be informed regularly of the likelihood of progression. Any parent whose child is deemed likely to fail to progress to the next stage at Culford will be invited to attend a meeting in order to outline concerns at least one year prior to the year of transfer.

8. Sibling Policy

We are proud to be a family school, and most siblings join us at Culford. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

9. Scholarships

Culford offers a number of scholarships a year for excellence in academics, sports, music, drama, art and DT. Parents are invited to familiarise themselves with our Scholarship booklet available on our website.

A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Parent Contract.

9.1 Purpose of Scholarships

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered an enriched Scholars' Programme relevant to their award. . In addition:

- Music scholars are offered free tuition in two musical instruments;
- The Drama Scholarship award includes one free LAMDA lesson per week;
- Academic, art, DT and sports scholars are offered enriched scholarship programmes appropriate to their award.

Parents are asked to indicate on the Registration Form whether they are interested in applying for a scholarship. Details of the arrangements will be sent to all who express an interest.

We encourage parents of scholars who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the tuition fees to apply (at the same time as registration of their child) for one of the School's means-tested bursaries described below.

9.2 Academic Scholarships

Candidates who apply for academic scholarships sit a separate entrance exam and may also be selected from the most outstanding performers in the general entrance examinations. Scholarships are held for the duration of a pupil's time at the School, provided their conduct is satisfactory.

All candidates will be interviewed in addition to sitting papers in three of the following subjects: English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish, PRE, history or geography

9.3 Music Scholarships

Music scholarships are awarded to outstanding musicians who play any instrument or sing with exceptional ability. Candidates must obtain a specialist reference from their current Head of Music in addition to a reference from their current Head. They will be required to perform two short pieces on two instruments, sight-read a short extract on their primary instrument, and complete aural tests. There will also be an interview with the Director of Music. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to music and will be expected to make a contribution to the musical life of the School throughout their time at the School.

Music scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

9.4 Sports Scholarships

Sports scholarships are awarded to outstanding pupils who demonstrate a high level of competency in two or more sports (cricket, football, hockey, netball and rugby). Pupils also demonstrate excellence in balancing both sporting and academic commitments. Sports scholarships are offered at 11+, 13+, and 16+. At 16+, applicants may specialise in a single sport in which they compete at a high level. Single sport scholarships are available in golf and tennis, regardless of the point of entry. Applicants will be assessed on their technical, tactical, physical and psychosocial qualities within their chosen sports. Successful applicants will be required to participate in wider sporting opportunities at the school and are expected to represent the school in competition. Furthermore, sports scholarship recipients should contribute to the wider school community by demonstrating key characteristics such as honesty, courage and compassion, embracing challenges and a desire to learn.

Sports scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

Full details about the School's scholarship programme can be found on the School's website.

10. Bursaries

Culford's bursary programme is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet the School's entry criteria to take up a place here. The School offers a number of means-tested awards annually to entrants from Year 7 upwards, where the parents have indicated on the Registration Form that they require financial support. Bursaries are means-tested and 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 50% remission in cases of proven need and up to 100% for pupils of exceptional talent. Before

the offer of a bursary is confirmed, a member of staff or external assessor appointed by the School may visit the family at their home.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or wealth.

The School'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 School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or otherwise in accordance with the School's Parent Contract.

10.1 Financial Information

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary or scholarship is granted). As noted above, we expect applicant parents to be transparent with the School in respect of any concerns they may have about their ability to meet their obligations under the Parent Contract, including in respect of fees.

11. Overseas Applicants

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Culford School as a boarder provided that they have the legal right to enter, live and study in the UK and they have a guardian living in the UK with whom they can stay if required, more details of which are contained in the Parental Appointment of Guardian Form. The majority of overseas pupils complete a course of study such as Years 9-11, or Years 12 -13 with a limited number of pupils taking part in a one year integrated study programme in years 9,10 and 12. A small number of one-term places are available in specific markets to allow pupils to develop their language skills, experience a British education and take advantage of one of Culford's individual sports programmes.

12. Fluency in English

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Culford, pupils must have attained the criteria set for their year group of entry. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) is offered at an additional cost.

13. Religious Beliefs

Culford School welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith.

Although Culford has Methodist roots, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and it supports all pupils to practice their faith.

However, parents should be aware that there is a compulsory weekly Collective Worship service with hymns, prayers, a Bible reading and a short inclusive talk. This enables us to come together as a community and embeds our Christian ethos and core values of honesty, courage and compassion. All boarders attend the Saturday morning activities programme, and all pupils are expected to attend occasional Saturday events such as Prize Giving.

14. School's Terms & Conditions (Parent Contract)

The terms upon which the School educates each pupil are set out in the School's Parent Contract which are on the School's website and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

15. Complaints

The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website and can be sent to prospective parents on request. The Complaints Procedure is not available for use by prospective parents.

16. Records And Review

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation. Please see the School's Parent and Pupil Privacy Notice for further information about how the School collects, uses and processes personal data, its lawful basis for doing so, and your rights in relation to your personal data.

Any pupil reference received from another school will be treated as confidential and as such exempt from a data subject access request. We will assume that any information that is supplied to us relating to your child is accurate and any opinion given about him/her is fair. However, we cannot be responsible for any loss you or your child is alleged to have suffered resulting from opinions reasonably given, or correct statements of fact contained, in any reference or report given to us.

The School is committed to storing your data in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Personal data will not be stored for longer than is needed and in accordance with our Retention of Records and Documents Policy.