



Admissions Policy

September 2025

This policy is published in compliance with the requirements of paragraph 32(3)(a) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and was approved by the governors on 1 September 2024.

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Orchard House School - Admissions Policy

Key objectives

Our aim during the admissions process is to get to know you, and to make sure you have everything you need to get to know us. This Admissions Policy is based upon a transparent and fair process and reflects the values and ethos of Orchard House and Dukes Education. The key objectives of this admissions policy are:

- To admit children regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, or social background.
- To give priority to siblings of children who are pupils of the school, children of Orchard House alumni, and children applying from other Dukes Education institutions.

Information for prospective parents

1. A copy of the school's prospectus is available from the school office and can be sent to you on request. The prospectus can also be seen on the school's website at www.orchardhs.org.uk.
2. Tours of the school are given by the Head of Admissions followed by a meeting with the Head, when parents of prospective pupils can see the school in operation. There are also open mornings or afternoons throughout each year. To arrange a visit to the school, please contact our Admissions Department via the enquiry form on our website: <https://www.orchardhs.org.uk/visit-us/>

Entry points & requirements

3. The main point of entry into the school is the Nursery (3+). Children enter Nursery in the September following their third birthday. Children joining the school in Nursery receive automatic entry into Reception the following year and are expected to progress through the school.
4. Approximately 55 places are available to join the Nursery in September of each year group.
5. Children may also join the school at any other age, subject to a place being available (occasional place).
6. The school does not believe in testing very young children, and it is non-selective for entry to the Nursery, and for occasional places in Reception and Year 1. However, parents of any child entering the school in any year group are expected to notify the school of any physical or educational impairment which may affect a child's progress at school so that these may be discussed with the head with full candour and, where necessary, appropriate, and reasonable adjustments put into place.

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7. A child wishing to join the school for an occasional place will normally be required to spend some time in the school during a Taster Day to ensure that he or she is able to meet a reasonable level of attainment for the year group and will be able to benefit from the education offered.
8. For children wishing to join the school above Year 1, they may also be asked to sit an English, Maths and Non-Verbal Reasoning assessment during their Taster Day. If necessary, these tests can be taken in their current school, or over a supervised Zoom session.
9. The School prepares children to leave the school at 11+ at the end of Year 6 and does not prepare children to leave at any other point.

Entrance Procedure

Registration

10. Registrations are accepted and encouraged as soon as possible after birth.
11. To register, parents must complete the registration form on our website and pay a non-refundable fee of £100 (+VAT if applying for a Reception place or higher). To register your child, please visit: <https://www.orchardhs.org.uk/apply-for-a-place/>. Registration is treated as effective only once the school has received both the registration form and the registration fee.
12. Once the registration form has been completed and the fee has been received, the school will acknowledge receipt of the registration and the child's name will be placed on a waiting list for the preferred year of entry.

Offers

Nursery Entry

13. The offer making cycle for entry into Nursery begins approximately 18 months before the child is due to start at Orchard House. Offers are sent out in batches starting in the early Spring of the year prior to entry, and continue until all places in the year group have been filled.
14. Applicants with a connection to the school or Dukes Education receive priority entry into Orchard House (see Table A below).
15. The first batch of offers are sent to the applicants with priority entry. Once these applicants have responded to their offers, the remaining places are offered in order of registration at the discretion of the Head.
16. Once all the places are filled, registrants will be kept on the waiting list for the relevant year group and places will be offered to those children if they become available at any other point.

17. To retain our co-educational commitment, we try to replace a boy with a boy and girl with a girl aiming to achieve an even spread of boys and girls in a class.

Reception Entry & Nursery Deferrals

18. Children in the Nursery are guaranteed a place in Reception. It is unusual for any children to not continue their Prep education with us. As a result, there is a limited number of places available each year for entry into Reception. To guarantee a place in Reception, we recommend children join us for Nursery at 3+.
19. Those who receive offers for Nursery are given the opportunity to defer their place to start the following year in Reception.
20. Places for Reception entry will be allocated on a first come first served basis, in the order that deferral requests are received.
21. Deferral requests must be received in writing to admissions@orchardhs.org.uk
22. Once the limited number of places for Reception entry have been filled, further deferral requests will be offered the following options:
- a. Accept their existing offer of a place in Nursery
 - b. Join the waiting list for Reception entry
23. If a place becomes available in Reception, offers are made in order of deferral requests.

Occasional Places

24. Offers of occasional places in other year groups are dealt with on an individual basis and subject to assessment (see paragraph 7 and 8 above).
25. Once a child is registered for an occasional place, we will request their latest school report and any assessment data available from their parents. Prior to offering a place, we may contact their previous school or Nursery for reports or references. Once these are received, the child will be invited to visit the school and, where appropriate, sit the entrance assessments.
26. Offers are made on the receipt of the relevant references and reports, and subject to the child's performance in the assessment that he or she can meet a reasonable level of attainment for the year group and will be able to benefit from the education offered.

Priority Entry

27. Priority entry is given to those applicants who have a connection to Orchard House, Chiswick & Bedford Park Prep School, or Dukes Education.

28. To be given sibling priority, the younger child must be registered at the same time as the older sibling whose attendance at the school would qualify the younger sibling for sibling priority or within 3 months of birth, whichever is later.

29. Registration of a sibling is accepted whenever received within reason but if registration is made after all places for a year have already been offered, the sibling will only be offered the next available place (if any): offers already made to other registrants will not be withdrawn.

30. Where any older child in a family has left the school, then that child's siblings yet to join the school will no longer enjoy priority status on the registration lists.

Thus, the school's offers are issued as illustrated below (Table A):

Entry Point	1 st offers	2 nd offers	3 rd offers	4 th offers	
Nursery 3+	Siblings of current pupil	Sibling of child who has already accepted a place to start at the school Children from within the Dukes family Children of Alumni	Date of registration		
Reception 4+	Children in the School's Nursery class (automatic entry)	Children in receipt of a Nursery offer who request to defer, in order of requests being received	Sibling of current pupil	Sibling of child who has already accepted a place to start at the school Children from within the Dukes family Children of Alumni	Date of registration
Other years	Siblings in order of registration and subject	Sibling of child who has already accepted a	Date of registration		

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	to assessment	place to start at the school Children from within the Dukes family Children of Alumni (all subject to assessment)			
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31. Offers embody the school's standard terms for its contract with parents. These include the requirement for a full term's notice of the intended removal of a pupil.
32. Admission to the school is always at the discretion of the Head. If parents wish to appeal the Head's decision, they can do so by contacting the school Governors.

Accepting a place

33. To accept an offer of a place in any year group, parents must complete the acceptance form, which will be sent alongside the offer letter, by docusign, by the deadline stated within the offer.
34. The acceptance form must be accompanied by payment of a £3,000 deposit at the time of acceptance, paid either via the secure Stripe payment link provided or directly into the school's bank account. Acceptance will only be considered confirmed once both the form and deposit have been received.
35. The deposit **will not** be refunded should your child not take up their place at the school after the offer has been accepted.
36. Assuming your child takes up their place at the school, the deposit will be returned to you not later than two weeks after the end of your child's last term at the school provided that (unless your child is leaving at the end of the summer term in Form 6) (a) you shall have given to us, on or before the first day of your child's last term at the school, notice in writing that your child will be leaving the school at the end of that term; and (b) you have made payment to us of all moneys due to us. If you fail to give such notice, then you will have no right to the return of the deposit unless in lieu of such notice you have paid the fees for the following term.
37. One term's fees (at the new academic year fee cost) will be payable in advance on or before March 1st of the year of entry, preceding the child's entry into the school in September. Parents who accept an offer of a place after March 1st prior to their child starting at the school in September, or for entry mid-year, are required, on accepting the offer, to pay the first term's fees alongside the deposit. This is applicable to children joining the school in any year group.

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38. The cancellation of a place that has been accepted can cause long term loss to the School, especially if it occurs after other families have made their decisions about schooling for their children. If the Parents cancel their acceptance of a place or the Pupil does not join the School after a place has been accepted, the deposit and any fees paid in advance of entry will be retained by the School.

Disabilities

39. When any place is offered, parents are required to inform the school if their child has special needs of any kind. This includes children with a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan from the local authority. This allows the consideration by the school of whatever reasonable adjustments may be appropriate so that children with any special need can be accommodated.

English as an additional language (EAL)

40. Parents of children for whom English is not their primary language (EAL) should also notify the school prior to entry so suitable provision may be made.

Right to reside

41. The school is required to check your child's right to reside in the UK. Along with the signed acceptance form, parents must provide the school with a copy of the child's passport.
42. If your child has a UK passport, a copy of this will be sufficient.
43. If your child does not have a UK passport, parents must provide a copy of their child's passport, and provide either evidence of their child's settled/pre-settled status (for EU nationals living in the UK before 1 January 2021) or evidence of their child's right to reside in the UK (visa/BRP for all other nationalities).
44. If their child holds a visa/BRP (Biometric Residence Permit), parents must provide the school with a copy of the passport, visa, entry vignette or current valid BRP (both sides of the card) or share code for both the dependent child and parents.

Increases in fees

45. Fees are increased with effect from the start of each new academic year and the fees at the increased rates are generally announced to parents and published on the school's website in the second half of the previous term. The fees payable may be seen on the Fees page of our website.

On & Off Rolling

46. The school is committed to fulfilling all obligations to the Local Authority with regard to the pupil roll.
47. All pupils will be included in the admissions register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils, the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.
48. The school will report to the local authority all joiners and leavers at non-transition times, ie, when a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year. The school will do so by using the reporting template provided by the local authority. This will be done on a rolling basis within 5 working days of the change occurring.
49. The template will include, full name, age, date of birth, gender, full home address, contact details, full address of the previous school and/or full address of the future destination, date of the first day of attendance as notified by a parent, and then date confirmed by destination school to our school through telephone, email or scholarship notification. Contact details of future school staff members confirming the child's attendance will also be ascertained.
50. Schools are also under a duty to provide information to the Local Authority for standard transitions if requested.
51. Schools are also obliged to notify the local authority when a child or pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous).
52. From September 2016, a school's right to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after an authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days of unauthorised absence (in both cases, in the absence of illness or other unavoidable cause), does not arise until the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries (described in the guidance) as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed.
53. As an independent school, the School's right to remove a pupil is also subject to the Terms & Conditions.

Status of policy

54. This policy is intended to provide general guidance for the parents of prospective pupils. It should not be regarded as having legal effect and if there is any conflict with the Terms & Conditions, the contract prevails.