



## Admissions Policy

### Document control

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|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy title              | Admissions Policy                                                                      |
| Policy category           | Governance                                                                             |
| Policy owner              | The Head                                                                               |
| Senior leader responsible | The Head                                                                               |
| Effective date            | 1 September 2026                                                                       |
| Review cycle              | Annual                                                                                 |
| Next review               | September 2027                                                                         |
| Version                   | 2026SeptV1                                                                             |
| Statutory status          | Required under Part 6 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 |
| Applies to                | All applicants and their parents, and all staff involved in admissions                 |
| Availability              | Published on the School website and available in hard copy on request                  |

### Policy summary

This policy explains how Cokethorpe School admits pupils: our points of entry, entrance assessments, interviews and references, how we treat candidates fairly and support those with disabilities or special educational needs, our arrangements for scholarships, bursaries and financial information, and how we handle applicants' personal data.

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## 1. Why this matters

Choosing the right school is one of the most important decisions a family makes. We want every child who joins Cokethorpe to flourish, academically, personally and socially, within a community shaped by our commitment to a broad and balanced education. This policy explains how we admit pupils fairly, consistently and lawfully, and what families can expect from the admissions process.

Cokethorpe School is a selective, co-educational independent school for pupils aged four to eighteen. This policy is a requirement of the Independent School Standards and applies to all applicants and their parents and to the staff involved in admissions.

## 2. What we are seeking to achieve

The aims of this policy are:

- to support the School's charitable purposes;
- to identify and admit children who will benefit from the education and academic environment we offer and who will contribute to, and gain from, the ethos and activities of our community;
- to apply our admissions arrangements fairly, consistently and transparently, and in line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## 3. Scope, authority and application

This policy has been authorised by the Board of Governors of Cokethorpe School.

It is addressed to prospective parents and pupils and to all members of the teaching and support staff. It is published on the School's website and made available to prospective families.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

| Role                                        | Responsibility                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Board of Governors                          | Approval of this policy and oversight of the School's admissions arrangements.                                                    |
| Head                                        | Ownership of this policy; admissions decisions, including interviews and the exercise of discretion in individual cases.          |
| Registrar                                   | Day-to-day management of the admissions process, registration, assessment arrangements, references, offers and applicant records. |
| Head of Prep School                         | Assessment and admission arrangements for the Prep School, including taster days.                                                 |
| Head of Learning Development                | Advice on reasonable adjustments and on the School's ability to meet a candidate's identified needs.                              |
| Bursar (designated data protection contact) | Financial information requirements and the handling and retention of applicants' personal data.                                   |

## 5. Equal treatment

We welcome applications from children of all backgrounds, ethnicities, faiths and none, and we are committed to treating every candidate fairly. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 throughout the admissions process. A diverse community enriches school life and helps prepare our pupils for the wider world.

All candidates are treated equally, irrespective of their own or their parents' race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, property, birth or other status, while always having regard to our overriding duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

## 6. Working together during the admissions process

Admission works best as an open, respectful partnership between families and the School. We expect applicants and their parents to engage with the process honestly and courteously, and to act in accordance with our ethos and values.

## 7. Disability and special educational needs

We welcome applications from pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and we will make reasonable adjustments so that, wherever we can, these pupils can take full part in the life of the School. We will comply with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and have regard to relevant statutory codes of practice and guidance.

Our facilities have some limitations, and our related arrangements are set out in the School's Accessibility Plan which is available on request.

So that we can consider a child's needs properly, parents must share full written details of any known or suspected disability or special educational need at registration, or as soon as it becomes known, and in any event before accepting the offer of a place. This enables us to assess those needs and to discuss with parents the reasonable adjustments that can be made both during the admissions process and, if a place is offered, during the child's time at the School.

Where parents feel their child requires adjustments, they should raise this with us at the outset. We may request further information or assessments (for example an educational psychologist's or medical report) and will discuss with parents, and, where appropriate, their child's advisers, whether the adjustments identified can reasonably be made.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we cannot offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs or disability, for example where, despite reasonable adjustments, a child would not be able to access the education we offer, or where the health and safety of the child, other pupils or staff would be put at risk. Where a child's circumstances change materially between an offer and starting at the School, parents must

keep us informed promptly; in the great majority of cases this will not affect the place, but in exceptional cases the School may need to reconsider an offer.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs Plan (or equivalent), whether in draft or final form, this and the supporting documentation must be shared with the School promptly, and the School kept up to date with any relevant decisions of the Local Authority.

## 8. Our admissions procedure

Our assessment is designed to identify potential and to get to know each candidate as an individual. It has four elements:

- competitive entrance assessments;
- interviews;
- academic and social references;
- consideration of any disability or additional needs, where applicable.

No specific preparation is needed for our assessments; all candidates start on an equal footing.

### Points of Entry

The main points of entry are at 4+, 11+, 13+, 14+ and 16+. We also consider candidates for occasional vacancies in other year groups. Please contact the Registrar for current details, registration dates and the number of places available at each point of entry.

### Entrance Assessments

- At 4+, candidates take part in a stay-and-play session, on which offers are based for children considered ready to learn in a classroom setting.
- At 11+, candidates sit online assessments in Mathematics, English, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning, take part in an Attitude to Learning challenge.
- At 13+, candidates sit online assessments in Mathematics, English, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning, and participate in an Attitude to Learning challenge.
- At 14+, candidates sit online assessments in Mathematics, English, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning.
- At 16+, offers are based on GCSE performance: for A Level, an average of at least 5.5 points across the top eight GCSEs; for BTEC, an average of at least 5 points across the top eight GCSEs, together with any subject-specific requirements.

For admission to other year groups, Prep School candidates take online assessments in Mathematics and English and meet the Head of Prep School during a Taster Day; Senior School candidates sit online assessments in Mathematics, English, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning and attend an interview with the Head.

### Assessment days include

**Candidate conversation**, a one on one conversation with a member of staff in a group setting in which candidates talk about their interests or a hobby, particular subject or sport that they enjoy.

**Heads Activity**, a small group discussion with the Head.

### Academic and Social References

Where appropriate, the Head of a candidate's current school will be asked to provide a written reference covering academic ability, attitude and behaviour, involvement in school life, talents and interests, and any special circumstances such as special educational needs or disability. A reference may include test results and predicted GCSE grades. Any offer of a place is conditional on receipt of a satisfactory reference. We may also seek recommendations for scholarships and awards.

### Candidate's Age

Very occasionally we may offer a place a year ahead of or behind a candidate's standard year group where, as a matter of professional judgement, we consider this to be in the best interests of the pupil and the School.

### Special Circumstances

We recognise that a candidate's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example:

- illness at the time of assessment, or a lengthy absence from school;
- family circumstances such as a recent bereavement;
- a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system;
- a disability or specific learning difficulty;
- English being an additional language, candidates for whom English is an additional language sit adapted online assessments in line with the CEFR.

In any of these cases we may request further information, such as a medical certificate, an educational psychologist's report, correspondence or samples of work from the current school, so that we can make a fair assessment.

### Disclosures

Parents must disclose, as soon as possible, any known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities and emotional or learning needs. Full, accurate and timely disclosure allows us to plan the right support. A failure to disclose relevant information, or the provision of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information, may in some cases lead to an offer being withdrawn or, after admission, to action under the Parent Contract.

### Additional Factors

Where we must decide between two or more candidates who meet our admission requirements after all appropriate allowances have been made, we may give preference to:

- a child who already has a sibling at the School, or whose parent is a former pupil;
- a child whose parent is a current member of staff;
- a child with a particular skill, talent or aptitude.

## 9. Scholarships

Scholarships recognise and celebrate exceptional talent. Cokethorpe offers scholarships for excellence in academic subjects, music and sport. Parents are asked to indicate on the Registration Form if they wish to apply, and details are sent to all who express an interest. A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms on which it is awarded or with the Parent Contract. Families who anticipate difficulty in meeting the balance of the fees are encouraged to apply at the same time for a means-tested bursary (see below). Scholarships attract only a small fee concession awarded annually of either £200 or £300.

## 10. Bursaries

The school does not have material endowments and bursaries are funded by the schools operational budget and availability is limited, priority is given to pupils in the senior school. Where bursary funds are available, means-tested awards are intended to make a Cokethorpe education possible for as many families as possible who meet our entry criteria, eligibility does not guarantee a bursary offer. Bursaries are means-tested against published criteria, require evidence of income and assets, may involve a home visit, and are reviewed annually. A bursary is normally expected to be in place throughout the pupils time at the school but may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms on which it is awarded or with the Parent Contract.

## 11. Financial information

Any applicant, including those applying for financial support and overseas applicants, may at the School's discretion be asked to provide additional financial information to confirm the ability to meet the fees (or any balance payable where a scholarship or bursary is granted). We ask parents to be open with us about any concerns regarding their ability to meet their obligations under the Parent Contract.

## 12. Overseas applicants

Where the School admits overseas pupils, they must have the legal right to enter, live and study in the UK, and appropriate arrangements for their care in this country as set out in the Parent Contract.

### 13. Fluency in English

Because our teaching and school life are conducted in English, pupils need to be able to access the curriculum in English. Support in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged where appropriate and is chargeable, normally delivered by school or peripatetic staff during the school day subject to availability.

### 14. Religious beliefs

Cokethorpe welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of none. While the School has a joint Roman Catholic and Church of England foundation, it does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief.

### 15. Terms and conditions (Parent Contract)

The terms on which the School educates each pupil are set out in the School's Parent Contract, which is made available to parents as part of the admissions process. Families should read this policy alongside the Parent Contract; where a question of interpretation arises, the Parent Contract prevails.

### 16. Complaints

The School's Complaints Procedure is published on the website and can be sent to prospective parents on request. As is usual for independent schools, the Complaints Procedure is not available for use by prospective parents in relation to admissions decisions.

### 17. Records, data protection and retention

We handle applicants' personal data in accordance with data protection law. Please see the School's Privacy Notice for details of how we collect, use and protect personal data.

We keep unsuccessful applicant data no longer than necessary, generally 12 months in accordance with our Retention of Records arrangements, retaining information for longer only where there is a lawful reason to do so.

### 18. Training and communication

This policy is published on the School website and is made available to prospective families. Staff involved in admissions, including those who interview candidates, invigilate assessments or handle applicant records, are briefed on this policy, on the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and on the confidentiality expected of them.

## 19. Monitoring, review and publication

The Head, supported by the Registrar, keeps the admissions arrangements under review to confirm that they are applied consistently and fairly and that they continue to meet the Independent School Standards. This policy is reviewed annually, and sooner if the law, authoritative guidance or the School's arrangements change.

## 20. Related School policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and procedures

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Learning Support Policy
- Accessibility Plan (available on request)
- Guidelines on the Storage and Retention of Records
- Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions)
- Separated Parents Policy

## 21. Legislation, regulation and guidance

Relevant authoritative sources include:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended), Part 6
- Equality Act 2010
- EHRC Technical Guidance for Schools in England (admissions, Chapter 2)
- DfE guidance on the Independent School Standards
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force 1 September 2026), via the linked Safeguarding Policy