

NOTRE DAME SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

NOTRE
DAME
SCHOOL



Part 1 – Key Principles (All Entry Points)

1. Introduction

Notre Dame School (“the School”) is an independent Catholic Day School for girls aged between 2 and 18 and boys between 2 and 4. The School is organised into the following divisions:

- The Preparatory School, including Nursery (for girls aged 2 to 11 and boys aged 2 to 4);
- The Senior School (for girls aged 11 to 18)

The Head teacher of the Preparatory School and the Head teacher of the Senior School have final responsibility for admissions and the operation of this policy in their respective Schools.

The aims of this policy are:

- To set out selection criteria and procedures that are transparent, fair to applicants and reflective of the School’s ethos and values, whilst providing equality of access.
- To identify Applicants whose academic profile would enable them to sit comfortably within their cohort so that they will flourish and be happy in the School.
- To ensure compliance with the School’s charitable status.

The admission process at each School is overseen by the appropriate Head teacher. The selection criteria are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Governors of the School. Those involved in the assessment process have received appropriate training. The School does not discriminate based on gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. Please see our website for our policy on Equal Opportunities.

The main intake points are Nursery, Reception, Year 3 (7+), Year 6 (10+), Year 7 (11+), and Year 12 (16+). Applications are welcomed throughout the year for other year groups, subject to availability of places.

Open Events are held several times a year. Private visits and a range of information events are also available depending on the entry point. Prospective families are encouraged to attend an event or a private tour prior to registration in order to find out about the school and assess the suitability of the School.

Parents who are interested in the School for their daughter(s) and/or son(s) should in the first instance contact the Admissions Office (admissions@notredame.co.uk).

Other than for Nursery entry, Notre Dame is a selective, School and all Applicants are required to complete assessments appropriate for their age. Results of the entrance assessments are confidential to the School and are not normally released to parents.

2. Preconditions for Admission

Preconditions for admission are that:

- The Applicant meets the School’s academic entry criteria for their specific entry point in the judgement of the relevant Notre Dame Head teacher.
- The Applicant’s current school has been informed of the application.
- The Applicant’s current school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the Applicant (if applicable).
- The School is equipped to support the Applicant’s medical or other support needs, and they will be able to participate in the life of the School.
- Accounts (if applicable) at the current school have been fully settled.
- The family respects the School’s ethos and Catholic values, although there is no entry criteria relating to religion and families of any religion or none are welcomed.

3. Registration Form and Fee

To begin the formal admissions process, a Registration Form must be submitted online via the School's online admissions portal, along with a non-refundable registration fee as stipulated in the fee schedule at the time of registration.

4. Specific Learning Difficulties, Disabilities and Medical Conditions

If the Applicant receives learning support or has any specific learning difficulties or relevant disabilities or medical conditions, parents must notify the School at the point of registration or as soon as such information becomes available.

Copies of any relevant documentation, such as any Education Psychologist report, ECHP or medical report, must be provided where available. If such information is not disclosed, the School may be forced to withdraw any offer of a place that may have been made if in the judgement of the Head teacher the School is not equipped to support the Applicant's needs.

The School shall determine whether reasonable accommodations will apply to the pupil in the entrance assessment based on the information provided and the nature of the assessment.

One-to-one Learning Support Lessons are available at additional cost following admission to the school.

5. School Reference

Other than for Nursery Applicants, the School, in line with best-practice guidelines, will contact an Applicant's current school for a reference and latest school report as part of the admissions process. Any offer of a place cannot be made until such a request is acknowledged by the current school and the requested information supplied.

Part 2 – The Prep School, including Nursery

1. Entry Points

The usual entry points in the Preparatory School are at Early Years (age 2, 3 or 4), Reception (rising 5), Year 3 (7+). Pupils may be accepted at other points if places are available. These 'Occasional places' may become available throughout the year.

2. Nursery and Preparatory School Admissions Process

Prospective parents must complete a Registration Form and pay the non-refundable registration fee (as stipulated in the fee schedule at time of registration.) to apply for a place at the Nursery/Preparatory School. The Registration Form must be signed by all those with parental responsibility.

The admissions process varies for different entry points:

- Nursery – the Applicant and a parent are invited to visit our Early Years Department. We do not ordinarily undertake a formal assessment for Nursery entry.
- Reception – Applicants are invited into our current Pre-Reception class for an hour's informal observation through play.
- Year 1 to 6 – Applicants are invited in to the School to complete age appropriate entrance assessments. Preparation is not required. Successful Applicants are then invited to attend a Taster Day, to spend time with their current cohort.

The academic criteria for selection in the Preparatory School consists of assessment results and an academic record that place the Applicant above the average level expected of students in the same age cohort (that is, typically within the top 40% of their cohort nationally).

Parents of Applicants who are successful in their assessments and for whom a place is available will receive a formal offer. Those who are not successful will be advised verbally of the outcome and next steps will be discussed. The School is not obliged to divulge assessment data.

Waiting lists may be in place for specific year groups, and families are advised in this regard as early in the admissions process as possible.

Part 3 – The Senior School

1. Entry Points

The main entry points are at Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+), although applications are welcome for other entry points subject to availability of places.

Students in Year 10 may not be admitted later than the start of the Spring Term in January.

The School is not able to accept students Year 11 or 13, as two-thirds of the GCSE or A Level syllabus will have been completed by that point.

2. Selection Criteria – Years 7 to 10 Entry

The academic criteria for selection in the Senior School consists of assessment results and an academic record that place the Applicant above the average level expected of students in the same age cohort (that is, typically within the top 40% of their cohort nationally).

Waiting lists may be in place for specific year groups, and families are advised in this regard as early in the admissions process as possible.

Academic, Art, Drama, Music and Sports Scholarships are available at 11+, 13+ and 16+ (see Part 6 below).

3. 11+ Admissions Process

There is four-form entry to Year 7 (11+) of typically 80-88 students, which includes students transitioning from Notre Dame Preparatory School.

Parents of Applicants are required to submit Exam and Scholarship Registration Forms and non-refundable registration fee (as stipulated in the fee schedule at time of registration) by the published closing date.

After the closing date, prospective parents who have completed a Registration Form will be sent comprehensive details regarding the Entrance Examination and Scholarships if applicable.

The Entrance Exam takes place in late November of the year prior to entry and offers of results will be confirmed by letter before Christmas. Parents are required to accept the offered place by the first Friday following the confirmation of state school offers, which is in early March.

Past papers are not available.

Waiting lists may be in place for 11+ entry, and families are advised in this regard as early in the admissions process as possible.

4. 11+ Transition for Preparatory School Students

All students already in Year 6 at the School will automatically take part in the Year 7 transition programme, which includes a range of events for students and parents and it is expected that Preparatory School students will transition, subject to entry criteria.

Offers of places in the Senior School are determined by the Admissions Panel (comprising the Head teachers, SENCO and members of SLT) based on standardised assessments and progress during Year 4 and 5. Formal offers will be sent to parents during the Summer Term of Year 5, and students receiving a Senior School offer are not required to sit the 11+ entrance examination. Parents are required to accept the offered place by the first Friday following the confirmation of state school offers, which is in early March.

The parents of students for whom the Senior School may not be educationally appropriate will be invited to meet with the Preparatory School Head teacher and other key staff to agree a programme of interventions to support the student in reaching the standard required for Senior School entry. If or when such a standard is reached to the satisfaction of the Senior School Head teacher, a later offer of a Senior School place may be made during Year 6. Full advice and support will be given in the process of looking for alternative senior education places where in the judgement of the Senior School Head teacher such a standard has not been reached. Students not offered places as part of this process may, without prejudice, sit the 11+ entrance assessment.

Preparatory students wishing to apply for Music, Art, Drama and Sport Scholarship candidates will need to follow the scholarship process. Students wishing to be considered for an 11+ Academic Scholarship will be required to sit the 11+ entrance assessment along with external Applicants, although their place is not dependent on the outcome if a place has already been offered.

Year 6 students in the Preparatory School will be assumed to be staying at the School for Year 7 unless a term's written notice is received. Fees in lieu will be due if a full term's notice is not given.

5. Year 9 (13+) Entry

Applicants for 13+ entry may apply during Year 6 via the 11+ Admissions Process described above, for deferred Year 9 entry, or may apply during Year 7 or 8 via the Senior School Occasional Places process described below, the latter being subject to availability of places at the time.

Applicants offered places via the 11+ deferred entry route must return their acceptance documentation and deposit by the end of the first week of January of Year 8. After this date, the place will no longer be guaranteed, will be subject to the availability of places and the Applicant will be added to the waiting list for Year 9 that will be in place at the time. Students who defer their start date beyond Year 9 at that point will forfeit their offer and will be required to re-sit entrance assessments.

Those wishing to apply for 13+ scholarships must sit the 13+ scholarship assessments in the Autumn Term of Year 8 (see Part 6 below).

6. Sixth Form

The School welcomes applications to join the Sixth Form in Year 12. Applicants are invited to meet the Head of Sixth Form for an informal interview and to discuss A Level choices. A Sixth Form Taster Day and Information Events are offered.

The academic requirements for studying A Levels in the Sixth Form at Notre Dame are:

- A minimum of six GCSEs at Grade 6 or above;
- Maths and English at Grade 5 or above;
- For pupil's chosen subjects, at least a GCSE Grade 6 (Grade 7 for English, maths or the sciences)

Students should also meet the specific requirements of the subjects to be studied at A Level as stated in the current Sixth Form Prospectus.

We are not able to accept students into Year 13.

7. Sixth Form Transition for Year 11 Notre Dame Students

Year 11 students already at Notre Dame will participate in the Beyond Year 11 Programme, which includes Sixth Form Taster Lessons and Information Events for students and parents. Students are required to specify their A Level option choice and accept their Sixth Form place by the date published in the relevant communication. It may not be possible to accommodate changes to A Level choices made after the published deadline.

All Year 11 students in the Senior School will be assumed to be staying at the School unless a term's written notice is received. Non-return of the options choices will not be taken as written notice. Fees in lieu will be due if a full term's notice is not given.

8. Senior School Occasional Places

Parents of Applicants are required to submit the Registration Form and the non-refundable registration fee (as stipulated in the fee schedule at time of registration).

Applicants are invited to the School to complete age appropriate entrance assessments. Preparation is not required. Successful Applicants are invited to attend a Taster Day, to spend time with their cohort.

Parents of Applicants who are successful in their assessments and for whom a place is available will receive a formal Offer within a week of completing the assessments. Those who are not successful will be advised verbally of the outcome and next steps will be discussed. The School is not obliged to divulge assessment data.

Waiting lists may be in place for specific year groups, and families are advised in this regard as early in the admissions process as possible.

Part 4 – Overseas Applicants

The School is pleased to accept overseas applications.

Following receipt of the Registration Form and non-refundable registration fee, we are able to arrange assessments in an Applicant's current school – including for 11+ (Year 7) entry. The Admissions Office will contact the current school or alternative assessment centre directly with details of assessments.

Regrettably the School is not able to accept students on their own study visa (called a Tier 4 visa) and is not able to sponsor CAS for the students or Guardian Visa for parents.

Lessons in English as an Additional Language (EAL) are available for admitted students if required, at additional cost.

Part 5 – Offer and Acceptance of a Place (All Entry Points)

Offers are determined by the appropriate Head teacher based on a review of all the information available relating to an Applicant and Head teachers' decisions are final.

In order to accept an offer and secure the place, the Admissions Form and Acceptance Form must be returned along with the acceptance deposit of (as stipulated in the fee schedule at time of registration). The forms must be signed by all of those with parental responsibility.

Offers must be accepted within the timescale stipulated at the time of offer unless an extension is agreed in writing. If formal acceptance is not received within the given timescale, the place may be offered to another Applicant.

Any place at the School is not secured or guaranteed until the acceptance documentation and deposit are received.

Parents are advised to take particular care to read the School's Terms and Conditions before accepting a place.

Documents relating to an application for admission, including assessment results and any selection notes will be retained by the School for at least one year after the entry point, whether or not a place is offered.

An Applicant's offered place will not be held open for an entry point later than that originally agreed at registration, unless this is later agreed in writing.

The outcome of a successful assessment remains valid within one academic year, and re-assessment is not typically necessary for entry during that period, although entry is then subject to availability of places and any waiting list that may be in place. Should the entry point be deferred beyond this period, the offer of a place will no longer stand and the Applicant will be required to re-sit entrance assessments.

An offer of a place cannot be transferred from the Preparatory to the Senior School. That is, all Applicants for 11+ entry are required to pass the 11+ entrance assessment even if they have previously been successful in a Preparatory School assessment. Such Applicants may transfer their original registration form and fee to 11+ entry, although an additional registration fee (of the difference between the Preparatory and Senior School fee) is required to complete the transfer.

An updated Registration Form and fee is required for applications deferred by more than two academic years.

Part 6 – Scholarships

A limited number of Scholarships are awarded for academic merit or ability in Art, Music, Drama or Sport at 11+ and 13+. The number of awards made each year depends on the calibre and strengths of the particular cohort. A scholarship is worth 10% of tuition fees per year. Pupils may apply for and can be awarded more than one scholarship in name however; the 10% scholarship fee discount can be applied only once. The closing date for scholarship applications is in the November prior to the year in which the scholarship award would commence.

Academic Scholarships are awarded based on performance in the entrance examination. If more than one entrance examination date is offered, only students sitting on the main (first) exam day will be eligible. Art, Music, Drama and Sport Scholarships are awarded on the basis of performance in the relevant audition/assessment. Both internal and external candidates may be considered for scholarships.

An 11+ or 13+ Scholarship will be subject to certain conditions which parents will be asked to agree to when accepting the offer of an award. The 11+ scholarships are normally tenable for five years, and the 13+ for three years, subject to an annual review and provided the conditions of award are met.

A limited number of Academic, Art, Drama, Music and Sport Scholarships are available at 16+ and are worth 25% of the tuition fees. 16+ Academic Scholarships are offered as a result of performance in a two-hour examination, which covers aspects of logic and argument, and is not subject specific. Those eligible for extra time or other access arrangements will be allowed those as usual for examinations.

16+ Art, Drama, Music and Sport Scholarships are offered based on the outcome of a practical assessment and portfolio submission. Students applying for an award should have the potential to achieve a high grade in that subject at A Level and good results in other subjects. The allocation of the awards across the categories depends on the calibre and strengths of the particular cohort.

A 16+ scholarship will be subject to certain conditions which parents will be asked to agree to when accepting the offer of an award. These scholarships and awards are tenable for two years, subject to an annual review and provided the conditions of award are met.

Part 7 – Bursaries

Each academic year, at the discretion of the School, a number of means tested bursaries are made available to existing students and students joining Notre Dame School. The closing date for applications is the November prior to the September start of the relevant academic year.

Part 8 – Candidates Who Re-Apply

The following arrangements are in place for candidates who re-apply:

- A Prep school candidate who declines an offer but later applies for the 11+ process, will be required to pay an additional registration fee to cover the administrative costs.
- Candidates (excluding for Year 7 entry) who were offered a place within the last academic year would not be required to pay a second registration fee. There is no cost associated with re-offering a place in this situation.
- Candidates who were not offered a place, would need to reapply, paying the registration fee applicable at the time of re-applying.