

Queenswood



Admissions Policy

Issued by	Principal
Last review	February 2022
Circulation	Governor Portal Queenswood Website Staff Portal

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Aims of this Policy

- To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purpose. Originally established as a Methodist Foundation but today embracing a broader Christian ethos, Queenswood provides independent education for girls between the ages of 11 and 18.
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and that are fair to applicants.
- To identify pupils whose academic and other abilities will enable them to benefit from the opportunities the School has to offer and to contribute to the School community.

Equal Treatment

All candidates for admission will be treated equally as referenced in the protected characteristics under Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, irrespective of their or their parents' situation in relation to the following:

- a. Age
- b. Disability
- c. Gender reassignment
- d. Marriage and civil partnership
- e. Pregnancy and maternity
- f. Race
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation

We expect all of our pupils to attend our chapel services.

Special educational needs

Queenswood does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can 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 and/or disabilities (SEND) to discuss their child's needs with the School before they sit the entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision for them. Parents should provide, with the registration form, a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report and an Education, Health and Care Plan or a medical report if they have one. This is so that the School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be

made and so that the School can ensure, for example, that their child will be able to access the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others.

Where a prospective pupil is disabled, the School will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the School, to ensure that the prospective pupil is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a pupil who is not disadvantaged because of a disability.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the School.

Procedure

Our admission procedure includes:

- Competitive entry examinations
- Interview (and group activity for 11+ entry for UK residents only)
- Confidential reference from the head teacher at the applicant's current school

Entry Points

The main entry point is at age 11 (known as 11+) into year 7.

- 11+ — the School accepts approximately 75 pupils
- 12+, 13+, 14+, 16+ — the School accepts some pupils at each of these stages

Admissions Timetable

We expect applicants to be registered by 1st October prior to the year of entry. We will, however, consider applications after that date if there are sufficient places.

Examinations

11+ Entry

Admission at 11+ into Year 7 is via successfully passing the Queenswood 11+ assessments or the Common Entrance Assessment at the applicant's school. Queenswood examinations take place in November at Queenswood School, prior to the September of entry. Common Entrance Assessments are taken in January. Queenswood examinations are in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning. If applicants sit the Common Entrance Exam at their school, they will also be required to sit the Verbal Reasoning paper at Queenswood and attend an interview and group activity. International applicants will sit entrance assessments in their home country and they will attend an online interview. All applicants resident in the UK will be interviewed on exam day. Should Covid

restrictions be in place at the time of the assessments, exams and interviews will be held online. We will write to the applicant's current school to request a confidential reference or a copy of their latest school report.

A letter confirming the decision on whether a place is being offered is sent to parents before Christmas, unless applicants sit the Common Entrance Exam in January, in which case the decision letter will be despatched to parents by early February. Written acceptance is required by the first Monday in March.

12+, 13+ and 14+ Entry

An assessment day is held at Queenswood in the November prior to the September of entry. Should Covid restrictions be in place at the time of the assessments, exams and interviews will take place online. All pupils are interviewed on the day. Pupils sit entrance papers in English and Mathematics. Year 9 applicants also take a French or Spanish paper if they have previously studied the subject. A confidential reference or a school report is requested from each applicant's current school in the October prior to entry.

A letter confirming the decision on whether a place is being offered is sent to parents before Christmas and acceptances are required within 14 days for 12+ and 14+ and by the first Monday in March for 13+.

16+ Entry

Applicants to join the Lower Sixth are invited to visit Queenswood in November to sit their entrance examinations and be interviewed. Should Covid restrictions be in place at the time of the assessments, exams and interviews will be conducted online. A confidential reference or a school report is requested from each applicant's current school in the October prior to entry. A letter confirming the decision on whether a place is being offered is sent to parents in early December and acceptances are required before the end of the Autumn Term.

Applicants are required to sit entrance papers in the subjects they wish to study at A level.

Summary of Entrance Papers

Year 7 papers in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning (Verbal Reasoning is the only Queenswood paper that applicants who are taking the Common Entrance Assessment have to sit).

Year 8 papers in English, Mathematics

Year 9 papers in English, Mathematics, French/Spanish (language papers are only taken if they have been previously studied)

Year 10 papers in English, Mathematics,

Lower Sixth papers in each of the subjects that pupils wish to study at A Level

Pupils for whom English is not their first language are also required to sit English as An Additional Language (EAL) papers in reading, writing and grammar. Arrangements can be made for pupils to sit their entrance papers overseas if they are unable to come to Queenswood for the assessment day. Entrance interviews can also be conducted online via video conferencing. We would however, urge families to visit Queenswood at some point prior to entry.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted by the Principal or another senior member of staff.

In all cases, the interview will explore matters such as the applicant's interests, attitude to school, personal qualities, ability to contribute to the School community, support available at home and any relevant connection with the School.

References

A confidential reference or school report is requested from the applicant's current school. Comments are invited on the pupil's academic ability, co-curricular interests, personal characteristics and family background and circumstances. When appropriate, examination results/predicted grades are requested.

Applicant's Age

Occasionally we may offer places to pupils one year ahead or behind their standard year group if we consider, as a matter of professional judgment that this would be in the best interests of the pupil and of the School.

Pupils who are more than one year ahead or behind their standard year group will not be considered.

Special Circumstances

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

- If she is unwell when taking the examinations or has had a lengthy absence from her school
- If there are family circumstances such as a recent bereavement
- If there is relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system
- If the candidate has a disability or specific learning difficulties
- If English is not the applicant's first language

If there are such circumstances, we may request further information, such as a medical certificate or an Educational Psychologist's report.

The School should be notified of any special circumstances before sitting entrance examinations; failure to do so may invalidate the offer of a place.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Scholarships and bursaries are offered by the School for two reasons: to encourage and reward excellence, and to make it possible for talented pupils whose parents could not otherwise afford the fees to benefit from an education at Queenswood. To clarify the terminology: scholarships are bestowed in recognition of outstanding achievement or promise in a particular sphere and do not carry financial support; bursaries are awards made to pupils who reach the School's required standards and who would make a significant contribution to the School community, but who need financial assistance. These awards are subject to means testing at the time the offer is made and annually thereafter. Parents are required to make a written statement to support their application and an assessment is then carried out by an external company; this helps to inform the school when granting awards.

Queenswood is not richly endowed and does not have additional resources other than fee income and very limited donations from which to fund awards to its pupils. However, we are committed to widening access to the education we offer. The number of awards made in any one year will vary

according to the quality and circumstances of applicants and the availability of funds within our agreed budget.

In order to ensure that funds are disbursed where they are genuinely needed, the following principles apply:

- Scholarships are honorary with the exception of music scholarships, which carry a modest financial benefit. In addition, fee remission may be available for an exceptional candidate. Scholars will be given opportunities for prominence and leadership within their given specialism.
- Bursaries are means tested and will be awarded according to need, up to 100% of day fees. Bursary awards will not normally cover the boarding element of the school fee or extra chargeable activities.
- A scholarship and bursary could run concurrently in the case of a scholar who needed financial assistance.

Scholarships are available for academic achievement at 11+, 13+ and 16+ and for Art, Hockey, Music, Sport, Tennis, Dance and Drama. In addition, a Design and Technology Scholarship is available from 13+.

Responsibility for Admissions

The Principal is responsible for admissions and the operation of this policy.

The selection criteria and interview procedure are reviewed from time to time.

Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes are retained by the School until an applicant is no longer of school age, whether or not the applicant is offered a place, in case an applicant re-applies for later years. For further information about Queenswood's Privacy Policy, please refer to the Queenswood website at www.queenswood.org

Non UK or Republic of Ireland Passport Holders

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, any applicant who does not hold a UK or Republic of Ireland passport must apply under the Child Student Visa category (formerly Tier 4 Child Student). This applies to all applicants, including EEA/Swiss nationals who wish to study in the UK from 1 January 2021 and have not started living in the UK by 31 December 2020. The only exceptions to this are if the applicant already holds a valid Tier 1 or a Tier 2 Dependent visa or an applicant from the European Union wishes to study for the Autumn Term only or just the consecutive Spring and Summer terms, in which case they only need a visitor's visa stamp at border control when they enter the country.

In order to study in the UK in any circumstances apart from the exceptions listed above, the applicant will require a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from an approved education provider with a Sponsor Licence confirming the offer of a place. Queenswood School is licensed to sponsor migrants under the Student route of the points-based system.

Once a place has been accepted and the deposit paid (please note the acceptance deposit cannot be declared on the CAS), detailed information and assistance will be provided by our Visa Co-ordinator to each family to help them with the initial stages of the visa application process. Once the CAS is issued, further assistance is provided about the online form and submission of the visa

application. Whilst every effort is made by the School to ensure a successful visa application, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents to ensure the necessary child student visa is in place prior to their daughter joining Queenswood School.

Parents' Responsibility to Appoint a Guardian

It is a condition of entry to Queenswood that all pupils whose parents live overseas have a mature and responsible guardian who has permanent residence rights to live in the UK. This requirement applies to all girls throughout their education at Queenswood, regardless of age, including all Sixth Form girls. For further information, please refer to our Guardianship Policy on the Queenswood website at www.queenswood.org

Duties of the School in the Role of Sponsor

Once a visa has been issued to a pupil to study at Queenswood, it is the School's responsibility to:

- Collect the Biometric Residence permit (BRP) from St Albans Post Office on behalf of our Sponsored Students (unless the pupil is studying for one term only, in which case, this is not required).
- Keep copies of all pupils' identity documents (passport and visa)
- Keep up to date contact details for pupils and details of their parents and guardians
- Inform the authorities if a pupil fails to enrol on their course or if the pupil has any unauthorised absence. This must be done within 10 working days of the absence or failure to enrol
- Keep detailed records of all UK arrivals and departures of Sponsored Students (flexi and exeat weekends, half term and main school holidays)
- Keep detailed records of where the students stay for all exeats, weekends, half terms and holidays when the pupil remains in the UK and is not at school

Selection

The pre-conditions for admission are that:

- The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity
- The applicant enjoys satisfactory general health
- The applicant's learning difficulties and other special needs (if any) can, in the opinion of the Principal, be managed within the School's normal provision
- The present school of the applicant reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct
- Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid and the parents are able, if required, to satisfy the Principal that they are in a position to pay the fees for Queenswood

The academic criteria for selection are:

- Satisfactory entrance examination results
- A good reference from the pupil's current school
- A positive interview and for 11+ applicants, and a positive group activity (UK applicants only)

Queenswood is looking for pupils who have all-round abilities and all the above criteria will be taken into account when considering applications.

The Offer of a Place

Parents are informed in writing whether or not a place is being offered after the pupil has sat the examination and been interviewed (and had a positive group activity in the case of 11+ UK applicants), and the school reference has been received. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for rejection of an applicant.

Siblings

Queenswood will endeavour to admit siblings of current pupils, so long as any special circumstances (such as learning difficulties or special needs) can be catered for at the School and they satisfy the normal entry criteria. Parents with more than one pupil at the School are entitled to a 5% discount on fees for the younger daughter(s).

Children of Staff

Pupils whose mother or father works at Queenswood are entitled to a discount on fees (pro rata for part-time members of staff).

Fee Remissions

In line with many other schools, Queenswood offers discounts for children of personnel in Her Majesty's Regular Armed Forces and staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Disclosures

Parents must disclose on registration, any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties.

Additional Factors

When the school is oversubscribed and we have to decide between two or more applicants who meet our admissions requirements, we may give preference to:

- Boarders over day pupils
- A pupil who already has a sister at the School or whose mother or grandmother is a former pupil of Queenswood
- A pupil with a particular skill, talent or aptitude

School procedures relating to the Admission Register and government guidance (September 2016) 'Children Missing in Education' are found in an internal document 'Procedures relating to Children Missing in Education', and are also covered in the Safeguarding Policy.