



Admissions Policy

Academic Year 2025-2026

Aims and Principles

St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian, co-educational community which holds to the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust in its life and practice, to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and where the safety, welfare and emotional well-being of each child is of the utmost importance.

The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum. It aims to give each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. All pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and to achieve standards of excellence in all of their endeavours.

Through the corporate life of the school, and through good pastoral care, the school encourages the independence of the individual as well as mutual responsibility. It aims to make its pupils aware of the wider community, espouses the democratic process and encourages a close working relationship with parents and guardians.

1 Admissions Policy

1.1 This document sets out the school's policy on admissions.

1.2 St Paul's Cathedral School is an academically selective school. Our admissions procedure is designed to offer places to pupils who demonstrate a capacity to take full advantage of the rich and rigorous curricular, extra-curricular and social opportunities which the school provides. We also look for indications that pupils will make an active and positive contribution to community life. There is no such thing as a typical St Paul's Cathedral School pupil, however attributes of cooperation, kindness, effort and good social skills are highly valued.

1.3 This policy applies to all pupils in our school, including those at the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), Day Pupils and Boarders, and is written with reference to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014) and the Equality Act 2010.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 The Head is responsible to the Governing Body for all aspects of the running of the school, oversees the admissions process and is responsible for this policy. The Head and Cathedral Director of Music make admissions decisions jointly with respect to applications for Chorister places.

2.2 Day to day management of the admissions process is delegated to the Admissions Team consisting of the Registrar, Head of Marketing, the Boarders Administrator and the Head, supported by the Deputy Head Academic.

3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

3.1 Our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible.

3.2 All applicants for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of: age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

3.3 St Paul's Cathedral School is an inclusive community and welcomes applicants with disabilities and special educational needs for which the school can cater adequately with reasonable adjustments.

3.4 Facilities for disability access are limited but the school seeks to do all that is reasonable to comply with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, making reasonable adjustments on an individual basis.

3.5 Parents of a prospective pupil who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the school with full details on registration, ensuring that the school is aware of any particular requirements which may affect a child's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and to take full advantage of the education provided at the school.

3.6 The school will determine the reasonable adjustments that are required for an individual applicant based on the information provided, in accordance with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3.7 The school will consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to ensure that the application process is accessible for the child and that the school can cater adequately for the child should an offer of a place be made. Where the pupil is a prospective Chorister, the Cathedral Music Department may also be consulted regarding reasonable adjustments.

3.8 The language of instruction at the school is English; where a prospective pupil is learning English as an Additional Language and has not been learning in an English language instruction programme, the SENCO or Deputy Head Academic will assess the pupil's capacity to access the curriculum in English as part of the assessment process.

4 Admissions Criteria

4.1 Places are offered on the basis of:

- success in the relevant entrance assessments which may include
 - academic tests
 - teacher observation of learning and social skills, including: teamwork, independent work skills, social interaction and attitude to learning
 - interview (this generally takes the form of informal interaction with teachers during a visit day for applicants at entry points before 11+)
- a positive confidential reference from the applicant's present school or nursery

4.2 Chorister places are offered to pupils who meet both the entrance standard set by the Music Department and the general admission requirements set by the school. Suitability for full boarding is also carefully considered. Further details about Chorister applications are available on the Cathedral website.

4.3 The total number of places in any year group will vary, in order to ensure that an adequate number of places is available for Choristers, within the total number on the school roll.

4.4 Choristers have priority on any waiting lists, irrespective of their date of registration.

5 Day pupil entry points

5.1 The main ages for entry into the school for day pupils are 4+ (Reception), 7+ (Year 3) and 11+ (Year 7). Occasional spaces are available in other year groups and waiting lists are maintained when year groups are full.

6 Assessment at 4+:

6.1 Children are assessed informally for entry to the Reception form in the Pre-prep department when rising four. This assessment takes place in the January of the year of entry.

6.2 In line with Department for Education guidance, the parents of a summer-born child may choose not to send their child to school until the September *following* their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather

than Year 1. Please discuss with the Admissions Team if your child is summer-born; the Pre-prep team will be happy to advise.

6.3 The assessments take place on a day in January: children are sent a video of the Reception classroom and key members of staff a few days beforehand to familiarise themselves with the surroundings. On the day of the assessment, parents will be asked to leave their children with the Pre-Prep staff who will assess the children in the Reception classroom in group play sessions of 10-12 children. Staff will be watching how the children interact socially and they will also ask each child to undertake a few tasks separately such as drawing a picture or building a tower from blocks. An important aspect of the assessment is that no preparation is required. The School will request a report from a child's nursery, if applicable.

6.4 The first 80 children who are registered on the 1st of September, 12 months before entry to the school, will be invited to be assessed for the 4+ places available (up to 40, though this may vary as set out in 4.3 above).

6.5 Parents will be informed of the school's decision of whether their child has been offered a place, is on the waiting list or has not been offered a place, within two weeks of the assessment.

6.6 Parents of children who are placed on a waiting list or who are unsuccessful will be asked if they wish their children to be considered for a place at 7+ (Year 3); no further registration fee will be required in these circumstances.

6.7 Progression to Prep School: Subject to their attaining the appropriate academic standard, Pre-prep pupils progress at the age of seven to the Prep School. This progress is not, however, automatic. Where progress to the Prep School is not considered in the best interest of the child, parents will be informed of the concerns and consulted before a decision is taken.

6.8 In line with the terms of the parent contract, (see Clause 7) the Head may require the removal of a child from the school, at the Head's discretion, if the Head considers that: the child's attendance or progress at the School is unsatisfactory and, in the reasonable opinion of the Head, the removal is in the School's best interests and/or those of your child or other children.

7 Assessment at 7+

7.1 Occasional places are available for pupils who have not attended the Pre-Prep department. Assessment for entry at this level takes place in the January before their entry into the school in September. **The closing date for entries is December 31st.**

7.2 Where no places are available, parents will be informed and may enter the child for assessment in order to be placed on a waiting list, should a place become available.

7.3 Registered candidates will be invited to attend a day at the School during the first weeks of the Spring Term. Pupils will join Year 3 classes for the day and will take part in a wide range of activities which may include: Music, Art, Drama, P.E., problem solving, play and group work. During their lessons with our Year 3 teachers, they will complete verbal and non-verbal

reasoning papers and a short written exercise. No preparation is required for these tests, and pupils will have an opportunity to complete practice exercises before each paper.

7.4 In addition to their performance on written tasks, consideration will also be given to their behaviour, social interaction and co-operative group work and their attitude to learning, as observed by the teachers and leadership team.

8 11+ Entry

8.1 Applications and assessments for children wishing to join us at 11+ can take place at any time in the school year.

8.2 Where no places are available, parents will be informed and may enter the child for assessment in order to be placed on a waiting list, should a place become available.

8.3 Parents will be invited for an initial discussion with the Head, and the child will spend a day in the school during which time an assessment is made in English and Maths.

8.4 Once again, in addition to performance on written tasks, consideration will also be given to the applicant's behaviour, social interaction and co-operative group work and their attitude to learning, as observed by the teachers and leadership team.

9 Confidential Reference

9.1 The school will request a completed confidential reference (and may additionally request the pupil's most recent report) from the pupil's current school or nursery if the child is in an education setting; this must be received before an offer of a place can be confirmed. Where the child has been in their current school for a short time or is being home-schooled, a report may additionally be requested from a previous school.

10 Special Circumstances

10.1 We recognise that a prospective pupil's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example: being unwell when taking tests, a recent family bereavement, education outside the British system, as a result of disability or special educational needs, or if English is not the pupil's first language. In any such cases, we may request further information such as a medical certificate or education psychologist's report, or samples of work from the current school.

11 Admissions Decisions and Responses

11.1 Within two weeks of the assessment visit and receipt of the confidential reference, parents will be informed of the outcome of the assessment: an offer of a place, a place on the waiting list or a decision not to offer a place.

11.2 Waiting lists will operate on the basis of performance in the assessments. If a place becomes available, the next pupil on the waiting list will be offered a place, taking into account Chorister priority for places and the school's sibling policy (see below under 'Other information').

11.3 Parents must accept the place offered by the deadline (no less than two weeks) included in the offer letter; where the place is not accepted by the deadline it is automatically withdrawn.

11.4 Declining (including failing to respond to) an offer is in effect de-registration; any future application will require a new registration form and fee.

11.5 A non-refundable deposit of £5,500 is required when accepting an offer of a place. £500 is held until the child leaves the school, and the balance is offset against the first term's fees.

12 Scholarships and Bursaries

12.1 Scholarships (academic and music scholarships) are awarded on merit for pupils progressing to Year 7 or joining the school at 11+. Please consult the Admissions Team for further information.

12.2 The Governors of St Paul's Cathedral School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering to eligible parents and guardians means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees: this support is known as a bursary. Bursaries may be awarded in the form of a discount of up to 100 per cent on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other relevant circumstances of applicants. Existing pupils may also apply.

12.3 Even where families meet the criteria for means-tested support, bursaries are not guaranteed as the School has a finite bursary fund.

12.4 All bursary awards are reviewed annually.

12.5 Please contact the Director of Finance and Operations on dfo@spcs.london.sch.uk for further details of the bursary process.

13 Choristers

13.1 Choristers are admitted to the Choir of St Paul's Cathedral from the age of seven. They may have attended our Pre-prep department or come from another school. Up to 30 places are available in the girls choir and 30 in the boys choir.

13.2 Choristers are first admitted as Probationers as they undertake training and then are admitted as Choristers. All Probationers and Choristers are boarders at the school. No boarding places are available for pupils who are not enrolled in the Chorister programme.

13.2 Parents of prospective Choristers are asked to contact the Director of Music, Mr Andrew Carwood MBE via choristerrecruitment@stpaulscathedral.org.uk to arrange an informal audition in the first instance. If asked to progress to a formal audition (voice trial), the candidate will be invited to follow the same admission procedure as for day pupils.

13.3 Formal voice trials are held throughout the year for children of 7-9 years old; these are designed to assess quality of voice and potential musical ability rather than to seek evidence of formal voice training. Further information is available on the Cathedral website.

13.4 If an application to be a Chorister is successful, a Chorister's tuition fee and music lessons are paid for by the Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral. Parents pay the boarding fee. Means-tested assistance with boarding fees is available in cases of financial hardship from the

Chorister Trust. Please contact the Director of Finance and Operations on dfo@spcs.london.sch.uk for details. Please note that under the Chorister Contract, all places offered to Choristers are offered on the expectation that the pupil will remain in SPCS until the end of Year 8.

14 Religious Beliefs

14.1 Although St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian foundation, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief. We welcome pupils of all faiths and none.

14.2 However, parents should be aware that our regular assemblies in School and in St Paul's Cathedral are Christian, in the Anglican tradition. There are several services throughout the year which all pupils, particularly from Years 3 – 8, are expected to attend (e.g. Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday – where it falls in term time – and Advent Sunday).

15 Sibling Policy

15.1 The school seeks to support families by keeping siblings together where possible, and so priority is given at 4+ entry to siblings of existing pupils. However, a place is not guaranteed to siblings as they must also meet the admissions criteria and there must be sufficient places available. Priority is not given to siblings at other entry points.

16 Registration

16.1 Assessment for entry requires registration to the school by completion of our Registration Form accompanied by a non-refundable registration charge of £100.

17 Admissions Register

17.1 When pupils are admitted to the school, the school will maintain an admission register and inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the school's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with its statutory duties.

18 Data

18.1 A confidential admissions record will be kept for each candidate. All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies on the retention and destruction of records.

19 Disclosures

19.1 Parents must disclose, as soon as possible, any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties.

19.2 When accepting the offer of a place, parents will be required to confirm that no other person with parental responsibility is required to consent to the child joining the School; or to provide details of all others with parental responsibility for the child.

20 Further information

20.1 The Admissions Team will be happy to help with all aspects of registration and the admissions process and can be contacted at admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk.