



Trinity term 2020

ADMISSIONS POLICY

The School is an academically selective school for girls, aged 9-18.

The School aims to recruit able candidates from both independent and maintained schools who demonstrate the potential to meet the academic and general standards commensurate with the ethos of the School. The School must be reasonably sure that it will be able to develop the individual talents and strengths of the prospective student so that she may have a happy and successful school career and become a confident, well-rounded adult. This policy is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Standard entry points

Whilst our standard entry points are Years 5 and 6 (ages 9 and 10), Year 7 (age 11), Year 9 (age 13) and Sixth Form (age 16), applications from all ages may be considered if there is a vacancy in the relevant year group.

Registration

The parents/guardians of all candidates must complete a registration form and return it to the Admissions Office with the appropriate fee.

Following registration, details about the entrance assessment and the relevant forms and paperwork will be sent to parents/guardians at the appropriate time. This information will include details on how to apply for a bursary. The suitability of candidates will be determined as set out below. Sisters of current students are also expected to meet these requirements.

Entry requirements

Junior Department: Year 5 (9+) and Year 6 (10+) entry

Prospective parents and their daughters will be invited to attend a Junior Open Doors Afternoon in May/June to learn more about the Junior Department and the admissions process. Details about the entrance assessment, which takes place in late January, are sent to registered candidates in mid-October of the year prior to entry. Candidates take assessments in mathematics and English; a reference will be required from the candidate's current school; and each candidate will be interviewed in the week following the assessment by the Head of Junior Department or the class teacher. Candidates will also attend a Taster Day in school in November.

Year 7 (11+) entry

Details about the entrance assessment, which takes place in early January of Year 6, are sent to registered candidates in mid-October of the year prior to entry. Candidates are required to take assessments in mathematics and English, and a reference will be required from the candidate's current school. Each candidate will be interviewed by the Headmistress as well as taking part in a discussion group with a senior member of staff at a Taster day which takes place during October–January and forms part of the admissions process.

Academic Scholarships are awarded to students who show excellent performance in the entrance assessment. Selection for Music Scholarships is by audition and All Rounder

Awards are awarded at the discretion of the Headmistress. Ability in art, sport and/or music can be recognised within an All Rounder Award at 11+. The application deadline for scholarships is stated on the website.

Year 9 (13+) entry

Registrations for entry at this level may take place up to the beginning of November, before entry into Year 9 the following September. There is the opportunity for candidates to attend a Year 9 Activities Afternoon in Trinity term of Year 7 and all registered candidates will attend a Year 9 Taster Day in Michaelmas term of Year 8. Details of the entrance assessment held at the end of November of Year 8 are sent to candidates in October. Candidates are required to take assessments in mathematics and English. We require references from the candidate's current school and all candidates will be interviewed on their Taster Day by the Head of Middle School.

Academic Scholarships are awarded to students who have shown excellent performance in the entrance assessment and then excel at a scholarship interview. Selection for Art, Music and Sport Scholarships is by skills test/audition and interview, and All Rounder Awards are awarded at the discretion of the Headmistress. Ability in art, sport and/or music can be recognised within an All Rounder Award at 13+.

13+ scholarships – internal candidates: Academic Scholarships are awarded to students who have shown excellent academic performance during Lower School and then excel at a scholarship interview. Candidates who have achieved at an appropriate level throughout Lower School will be invited to take part in the process and do not need to make an application. Candidates do need to apply for selection for Art, Music and Sport Scholarships; selection is by skills test/audition and interview, and All Rounder Awards are awarded at the discretion of the Headmistress. Ability in art, sport and/or music can be recognised within an All Rounder Award at 13+.

The application deadline for scholarships is stated on the website.

Sixth Form (16+) entry

Entry is determined by pastoral and academic interviews together with assessment in verbal reasoning, and is conditional on (I)GCSE results and a satisfactory reference from the current school. Candidates are invited to bring recent work and art portfolios with them to interview. Interviews will normally be held in November of Year 11. A second round of interviews may be held in March, however, candidates should note that the 16+ scholarship programme has been completed and therefore no longer available for application.

We expect candidates to progress straight from Year 11 into Lower Sixth, aged 16, unless there are extenuating circumstances such as ill health, necessitating recovery and delaying (I)GCSE examinations. We do not normally accept candidates who have had to repeat their (I)GCSE.

Academic, Music, Art, Drama, Sport and All Rounder Scholarships are available; the application deadline is stated on the website. Selection for Academic Scholarships is by examination and interview. All academic applicants will take a critical thinking examination and write an essay exploring philosophical or scientific issues. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview with a member of senior staff and a Governor. Performance at this interview will decide the academic awards. Selection for Music, Art, Drama and Sport Scholarships is by skills test/audition and interview, and All Rounder Awards are awarded at the discretion of the Headmistress. Sixth Form art and drama scholars are required to study the A-level of the relevant subject for the full two years. While it is preferred that music scholars study A-level Music, this is not a requirement. Sport scholars are not required to study A-level Physical Education.

Entrance to other year groups or at other times

Applications made outside the normal timescale may be considered if the School has a vacancy in that year group. Candidates are assessed at the appropriate level in mathematics and English, and formally interviewed by the Head of Section.

The Headmistress's decision on all admissions is final.

Diagnostic assessment

In certain circumstances candidates may take the Year 5 or Year 6 assessment for diagnostic purposes with a view to entering the School at a later point; candidates who have taken the Year 5 diagnostic assessment may not take the Year 6 diagnostic assessment. Such testing allows parents to ascertain their daughter's current level of ability and thus suitability for the School. These assessments will only be available to registered candidates on the published assessment dates. Candidates taking the diagnostic assessments will not at that time be asked for references or be interviewed.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the admissions process for an applicant with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Evidence from a suitably qualified medical practitioner, assessor or educational psychologist is required at the time of registration. The Admissions Office will pass on SEN information given on the registration forms to the Learning Support Coordinator, who will advise on reasonable adjustments for candidates in line with regulations issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications. Where a candidate with an Educational Health Care Plan or statement is registered at school, this information will be passed on by the Learning Support Coordinator to the local authority for annual review. Parents, together with their daughter, are invited to the School to discuss any special arrangements required. A copy of the SEN policy is available on the school website.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The School uses information and reports submitted in the registration process, performance in the entrance assessment and benchmarking assessments to identify candidates in this category. The Admissions Office will liaise with the Learning Support Coordinator regarding reasonable adjustment for EAL candidates in line with regulations issued by the Joint Council for Qualifications.

Overseas candidates

The School accepts applications from overseas candidates who have the necessary passport/visa arrangements to study in the UK throughout their time at the School. The School **does not** operate as a Tier 4 sponsor. Candidates are expected to attend assessments/interview at the School, although in exceptional circumstances assessments can be arranged at a candidate's current school with agreement. If a candidate is unable to attend St Helen's for an interview, due to their country of residence, alternative arrangements may be made.

Scholarships

Our scholarship provision seeks to recognise and reward excellence. Scholarships at 11+, 13+ and 16+ can be awarded to recognise ability and potential in one or more academic or extracurricular areas (art, drama, music, sport, all rounder); not all types of scholarship are awarded at each of the entry points, as detailed above, and scholarships vary in duration.

All scholarships are open to both internal and external candidates; All Rounder Awards are awarded at the discretion of the Headmistress, with no formal application or assessment required. Progress of scholars will be monitored and supported throughout their time at St Helen's. The School can make two awards to one individual student, one of which must be academic, the second being honorary.

Sixth Form art and drama scholars are required to study the A-level of the relevant subject for the full two years. While it is preferred that music scholars study A-level Music, this is not a requirement. Sport scholars are not required to study A-level Physical Education.

The financial value of a scholarship is modest and is not subject to means testing: Academic Scholarships hold the value of £500; Music Scholarships offer free tuition for one instrument; Art, Drama, Sport and All Rounder Scholarships hold the value of £300 per annum.

Bursaries

The Governors invite applications for means tested bursaries for students from Year 7 whose parents could not otherwise afford the fees. Those parents who indicate an interest in applying for a bursary will be requested to complete an application form at the appropriate time and submit this by the published closing date. This will be prior to the entrance assessment. When a place is offered on the basis of the entrance assessment (or I/GCSE results in the case of the Sixth Form) the letter will also include details of the bursary that the School is offering. The support offered will vary according to individual need up to the full fee. Bursaries are reviewed annually for the next academic year and the amount may increase or decrease according to circumstances.

Governor scrutiny of implementation

This takes place through the Director of Communications and Marketing's termly report to the Governing Body and the annual review of this policy.

Policy last reviewed.....Trinity term 2020
Next review due.....Trinity term 2021
Person responsible for review.....Director of Communications and Marketing