

## Admissions Policy

### Introduction

This policy applies to all sections of Ackworth School (the School) including the Senior School, the Autism Resource, the Junior School (Coram House), and the Nursery.

This Policy has been authorised by the School Committee (Governing Body), of the School. It is addressed to prospective parents, guardians and pupils and to all members of the teaching and administration staff.

### Policy Statement

1. The School is a Quaker co-educational, independent, boarding and day school for pupils from ages 2½ to 20. The School's purpose is to create a happy and secure environment in which all pupils realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others.
2. The School is an inclusive learning community catering for pupils including those who are 'gifted and talented' and those with mild to moderate learning support needs and disabilities; whilst taking into account the need to balance the learning needs of each class as a whole.
3. The School accepts pupils throughout the year from Nursery to Year 9. Pupils are able to join examination Years 10 and 12 up to one term late, at the School's discretion, but it will not normally accept pupils into Years 11 and 13.
4. The School has carefully developed an admissions procedure alongside this policy to enable parents and pupils to learn more about the School, its educational approach, ethos and leadership.
5. Details are published on our web site. We are also very happy to welcome prospective families at other times for a personal visit. Please contact our Admissions Office on 01977 233621 or by email on [Admissions@ackworthschool.com](mailto:Admissions@ackworthschool.com) to arrange a visit.

### Policy Aims:

6. The **aims** of this policy are:
  - To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes,
  - To ensure that the School identifies and welcomes children who will benefit from an academic education and who will contribute to and benefit from the ethos and activities of our school community.
  - To set out an admissions policy and procedure that is fair to all who apply;
  - To comply with the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Equal Opportunities**

7. In applying the policy and procedure, the School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, welcoming pupils from all ethnic groups and backgrounds whilst balancing human rights and freedoms with the lawful needs and rules of the School community, and the rights and freedoms of others. The School will treat all prospective pupils for admission equally, irrespective of their race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, disability or special educational needs. The School does however, expect all its pupils to attend Meetings for Worship which are fundamental to its ethos.

8. The School is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has an Equal Opportunities Policy and a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice Policy.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

9. We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can cope with the specific need. However, at present the School's facilities for pupils with disabilities are limited, but it will do all that is reasonable to ensure that we make our premises, culture, policies and procedures, accessible to pupils with disabilities. The School is not academically selective beyond an expectation that each pupil is able to access the School curriculum as a whole, subject to reasonable adjustments being made.

10. Parents and guardians must inform the School when making an initial inquiry of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School and keep the School appraised of any changes. Parents and guardians should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.

11. When the School becomes aware of a pupil's disability or special educational need, the Director of Marketing, Admissions and Communications or a member of the admissions team will consult with the School's Assistant Head - Inclusive Learning and SENCO and parents/guardians to consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to the admissions procedure (although not to the admissions assessment itself which enables the School to ascertain the pupil's ability without adjustments) and access arrangements, to enable a pupil, if they are able, to satisfy the admission requirements.

12. Parents of disabled children may be invited to a preliminary meeting with the Head to discuss ways in which any disadvantages could be lessened or eliminated to ensure that the applicant can be adequately catered for should an offer of a place be made.

13. If, after due consideration, the School considers that it cannot make suitable provision, or appropriately meet the pupil's needs, it will inform the parents of its decision and the reasons for it. A review will also take place at the transition stage between Coram House and Senior School to ensure that pupil needs can continue to be met.

14. If an applicant's disability or special educational need becomes apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents and guardians about what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made in order to allow the child to continue at the School. If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School is unable to adequately cater for and meet the needs of the pupil, the Head may request parents and guardians to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu will not be payable in these circumstances and the acceptance fee will be returned.

### **Admissions Criteria**

15. The aim of the process is to identify potential. We are looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art, sport and community service. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing well-balanced, confident individuals.

16. No specific preparation for the entrance assessments is needed, all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude.

17. We may interview candidates as part of our assessment process for each age group throughout the year (apart from Nursery and Reception). Year 1 and Year 2 have an informal assessment but no interview.

18. We will offer places to candidates throughout the year, however our entrance assessments for Year 7 are held by the February prior to the September of entry.

### **Nursery**

19. The Nursery admits children between the age of 2½ and 4 subject to availability. Children in Nursery and Reception are offered places subject to a 'taster session' which usually lasts over an hour during which the children's social skills and readiness for learning is informally assessed. Assessment for Reception and Nursery is based on observing informal play in small groups.

### **Coram House**

20. The usual points of entry into the Junior School, Coram House, are at 4+ years of age/Reception and at 7 years of age /Year 3. Prospective pupils below the age of 7 are offered places following a taster day during which informal assessments are carried out.

Prospective pupils aged 7 and over are required to sit the school's entrance assessment and to reach the required standard. Our admission procedure for the Junior School involves an assessment/taster day, a report from the pupil's current school or Nursery setting and any other relevant reports, including SEND assessments if applicable

### **Senior School**

21. The usual points of entry into the Senior School are at 11+/Year 7, and 16+/Year 12. However, we do admit pupils into all year groups depending upon availability of places, throughout the year. All candidates for entry into the Senior School, (below 16+) sit papers in English and Maths which are designed for their age group. If they are not already in Coram House then a report is required from the pupil's current school.

### **Sixth Form**

22. The standard required for studying A-Levels is a significant step up from that of GCSE. For this reason, the normal entry requirement for the Sixth Form is 3 '6' grades and 2 '5' grades or the international equivalent. '6' grades would be expected in the subjects a pupil wishes to study to A-Level. Each pupil is considered on an individual basis taking account of their abilities and their career aspirations. Progression from the Lower to the Upper Sixth is dependent on approach to learning (ATL) and attainment grades in Year 12. Our offer of places into Year 12 is conditional upon a candidate achieving a minimum of 3 '6' grades and 2 '5' grades at GCSE or the international equivalent. '6' grades would be expected in the subjects a pupil wishes to study at A-Level. A report is also required from the pupil's current school if they are not already at the School.

### **Autism Resource**

23. The School accepts pupils with autism or autism conditions/presentations into its Autism Resource. These pupils will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place and, providing there is space available, will be accepted if it is felt, after assessment and discussion with relevant parties, that the school is in a position to fulfil the objectives in the statement and able to meet the pupil's needs. If the requirements of the pupil develop or change, or if key information about pupil needs is unknown at entry, and the school is unable to meet these needs, this will be discussed at an Annual Review and alternative placements sought.

24. Although there are no set criteria for admission in terms of behaviour, language or social or cognitive ability, the Autism Resource will, provided there is space available, admit any pupil whose needs the Assistant Head – Inclusive Learning and SENCO and the Head of Ackworth School feel we are able to meet. Pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school may be referred by their own Local Authorities.

### **International Pupils**

25. We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at the School as boarders, provided that they have a relative or legal guardian living in the UK. Candidates for entry sit online English tests provided by PASSWORD. Tests are supervised by their agent or a member of the School's Admissions Team.

26. Pre-A Level Course: The curriculum is designed to build the four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking) for success in the British education system. Pupils in Pre-A Level sit a range of exams from Cambridge ESOL qualifications (including KET and PET) to Cambridge General IELTS. They also study Maths, English, Business Studies/Economics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), PE and Games lessons in preparation for the Sixth Form. Pre-A Level pupils are placed into Sixth Form Tutor groups which enable them to experience life as an A-Level student.

### **International Pupils Entering the Sixth Form**

27. All International Pupils wishing to take A-Levels in the Sixth Form must have an IELTS score of 5.0 or above (or equivalent). All International Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form must be able to speak and understand the English language. They will be required to sit a test in English and Maths. The test must be conducted under strict examination conditions either at their current school or at an agent's office. The test could also be supervised by a member of the School's Admissions Team. We appreciate that it is not always possible to visit the school for an interview. In these circumstances we may use online meeting tools (or platforms) to interview the pupil.

28. All International Pupils will require a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies) from the School to be able to apply for their visa to study in the UK for the given period of their course.

### **Admissions Procedure - Senior School, Coram House and Nursery**

29. The parents or guardians (as appropriate) should complete a registration form, including any additional information and pay the registration fee (non-refundable) by online payment. The School will seek a character reference from the prospective pupil's current school.

30. The School will send an offer document once a registration is complete, or as soon as a place becomes available for those pupils on the waiting list. Any conditions of an offer of a place will be set out in the offer letter. An offer of a place will not be confirmed until satisfaction of any conditions of entry. An offer of a place at the School will be subject to the School's terms and conditions as set out in the parent contract.

31. The pupil's parents or guardians must read the legally binding parent contract before signing and returning it with the acceptance fee to the Admissions Manager, in order to confirm the place. The amount of the acceptance fee will be advised at the time

of application. The acceptance fee is non-returnable and will form part of the general funds of the School.

32. Prior to an offer being made, a confidential reference will be requested from the pupil's current or most recent school or nursery setting, and possibly from other previous schools.

33. Pupils may be interviewed by the Head or other senior staff. Parents are required to inform us of any special educational needs which may require consideration during the entrance procedure or in educational provision should their son/daughter be offered a place.

34. Places will be offered on the basis of the information produced during this entrance procedure, taking into account the pupil's past performance and current potential and the School's ability to realise that potential.

35. As a Quaker School with a strong commitment to the family, wherever possible and in keeping with the school's academic standards, preference may be given to siblings of pupils already in the school and those transferring from one part of the school to the next.

36. When entry into a given year is oversubscribed, the School will take into account performance in entry tests, references and suitability to the School. If we have to decide between two or more prospective pupils who meet our admission requirements after all appropriate allowances and special consideration have been given, we will give preference to children of Members and/or Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends and to the date when registration took place.

37. When entry into the Nursery or Reception years is oversubscribed and all the entrance criteria have been met, preference will be given to pupils with older siblings already in the School and to the date when registration took place.

### **Admissions Procedure - Autism Resource**

38. The Autism Resource accepts referrals and tender consultations from Local Authorities (LA). We are able to give parents and guardians information regarding our assessment and admission process. We encourage parents and guardians to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and make a joint application.

39. Once a referral to the Autism Resource has been received from a parent/guardian and/or LA, the application will be read by the Assistant Head – Inclusive Learning and SENCO, and discussed with the Senior Deputy Head. If we are not able to meet that pupil's needs (Appendix 1) or there are no places available, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and/or Local Authority to inform them that the referral is not going to be



followed up. If the referral is suitable for assessment, the parent/guardian will be invited to visit the school, if they have not already done so.

40. The next step will usually be that the child is invited to attend the Autism Resource for a brief visit with a parent/guardian/member of staff from current school.

41. The Head of Autism Resource may arrange to visit the child at their existing school (or elsewhere if not in school) to carry out an initial assessment.

42. If the visit is successful, a further programme of visit or visits, normally without external support, will be arranged. These will be evaluated and a decision on suitability of placement made by the Assistant Head – Inclusive Learning and SENCO, Senior Deputy Head and Head of the School with the relevant Local Authority.

43. The assessment will typically consist of:

- Discussions with parents and staff who have regular contact with and know the child well.
- Observations in class and/or in the playground.
- Discussions with and paperwork from involved professionals.

44. Once the initial assessment has been completed and all relevant information has been gathered, a brief initial assessment report will be compiled and a decision may be made, at this stage, as to whether the Autism Resource at the School will be an appropriate placement for the child that will meet his or her needs.

45. The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice:

- Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child's needs?  
Current pupils – would the placement be compatible with the ongoing educational needs of the other children with whom the child will be educated?

46. Depending on the source of the referral, the LA and/or parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment. The process is deemed to be complete when all information has been gathered.

47. If the Autism Resource at the School is able to meet the child's special educational needs, an offer of a place, and a start date (which may include a period of transition) will be suggested to the Parent and/or the LA. When the parent/guardian and/or LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up and funding is in place, the School will send a letter confirming this to the LA and to the parents.

48. The parent or guardian is responsible for making transport arrangements with the LA and will inform the school accordingly.

49. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer. Transitions are often difficult for children who have autism. It will be essential to consider mechanisms/strategies (e.g. phasing) that may make the process easier for the child.

50. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and guardians and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the School.

### **Sibling Policy**

51. Most siblings join us at the School. However, admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

### **Fluency in English**

52. In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of the School, pupils entering into GCSE, A-Level and BTEC programmes of study must be proficient English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent or guardians expense.

### **Religious Beliefs**

53. The School is a Quaker School, founded by the Society of Friends. Although the School has very strong Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we encourage applications from those of different faiths and those of no faith.

### **Taster Days**

54. Prospective pupils can take advantage of a Taster Day in the Junior School, Coram House, or Senior School, or a 'Play Session' in the Nursery and Reception. These are specially designed to help families make an informed decision about the school. A Taster Day allows individuals to 'experience' the School, participate in lessons and get a real feel for the school community. If the pupil is planning to become a boarder, an overnight stay in the boarding house may be possible.

### **Prospective Pupil's Age**

55. Very occasionally, we may offer a place to a pupil that means they will be one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider that, as a matter of professional judgement, this would be in the best interest of the pupil and the School.

### **Special Circumstances**

56. We recognise that a prospective pupil's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example:



- If he/she is unwell when taking tests or has had a lengthy absence from his/her school;
- If there are particular family circumstances such as a recent bereavement;
- If there is a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system;
- If the prospective pupil has a disability or specific learning difficulties;
- If English is not the prospective pupil's first language.

57. In any of these cases, we may request further information such as a medical certificate or educational psychologist's report and any associated correspondence or details from the pupil's current school (including samples of work) or any family history of dyslexia, as we consider necessary to make a fair assessment. In the case of EAL pupils, a test will be provided online by PASSWORD to assess the correct level of EAL support required.

### **Guardian Requirement for International Pupils**

58. During their time at the School, all international pupils must have a UK Guardian. Guardians may be a relative or a family friend who is over 21 years of age. They may not be living in pupil or university student accommodation, and must have suitable accommodation available to them. The Guardian must be appointed by parents before the pupil arrives in the UK. If there is no appropriate friend or family member who is able to accept the role, parents or guardians must appoint a Guardian from a professional guardianship agency – the School recommends one registered with AEGIS. The School does not appoint Guardians on behalf of pupils. The Guardian must be able to care for the pupil at short notice, at times of illness, recuperation, in the event of an exclusion, or otherwise as necessary, in addition to liaising with the School as necessary and providing the first point of contact. It is a condition of entry to the School that the Guardianship agreement is completed to the School's satisfaction in respect of overseas pupils. Further information can be found on the school website "About Us" - Policies; Educational Guardianship of Overseas Pupils.

### **International Pupils**

59. All prospective international pupils will also require a Certificate of Acceptance of Study (CAS) from the School to be able to apply for a visa to study in the UK for the given period of their course. All prospective pupils must read carefully the requirements of a Child Student Visa, to make sure they meet the criteria before making an application to the School. These requirements are found on the UK government website ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)). The School has the support of Newland Chase who manage all our visa requirements.

60. A prospective pupil, who has accepted a place at the School but fails to attend the course because a visa has been refused, must pay a full term's fees in lieu of notice. A CAS will not be issued until the School has received the signed acceptance form, deposit and registration fee in full and a copy of the passport.

### **Pupils Who Require Learning Support**

61. The School has a very successful track record for supporting pupils with mild to moderate learning support needs including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. For prospective pupils in need of learning support, parents must send their child's most recent school reports, including any educational psychologist's report, speech and language reports or health report to enable the School to ascertain whether it can meet the pupil's needs in the classroom and with additional lessons. The School will decide whether it can meet the needs of the child based on these reports before taking the enquiry any further. It is important that parents disclose relevant information as close to the beginning of the admissions process as possible. The School will also bear in mind the resources available in each year group before making a decision.

### **Disclosures**

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

### **School's Contractual Terms and Conditions**

63. Copies of the School's Contractual Terms and Conditions are made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

### **Complaints**

64. We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process; but a copy of the School's complaint procedure can be found on the School website or a copy can be sent to you upon request.