



ADMISSIONS POLICY (601)

This policy has been authorised by the Governors of St Mary's School Ascot ("St Mary's" or "the School"). Its status is advisory only.

Aims of this Policy

- to ensure compliance with the School's charitable purpose as a Roman Catholic foundation and girls' school;
- to set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable purpose and fair to applicants;
- to identify applicants whose academic and other abilities appear to match the ethos and standards of the School and whose personal qualities suggest they have the potential to contribute sufficiently to the School community and benefit from the many opportunities that are offered here.

Entry Points

The School accepts about 65 pupils each year, a small number of whom come from overseas. At each intake:

- about 40 will be admitted to Year 7 (11+)
- about 22 will be admitted to Year 9 (13+)
- about 2 - 5 will be admitted to the Sixth Form (16+).

St Mary's takes due note of the 1 September birthday watershed for determining the applicant's eligibility for 11+, 13+ or 16+ entry.

Places are occasionally available at the non-standard entry points 12+, 14+.

Admissions Timetable

Each year, in July (13+), September (16+) or October (11+), the School will write to parents of girls registered for the following September intake. The letter will give details of the scholarships that are offered and the admission requirements at the time.

Parents who have not heard from the School by the end of October are requested to write to the Headmistress and also to telephone the Admissions Office. The School cannot accept responsibility for administrative errors or letters going astray.

Applicants are required to sit the St Mary's Entrance Examinations. The timetable for these examinations is:

- November for 13+ candidates.
- November for 16+ candidates
- December for 11+ candidates

The subjects tested are:

- at 16+ : the subjects the candidate intends to study at Advanced level plus a general paper;
- at 13+: English, mathematics, science, religious studies, history or geography, French or an alternative modern European language, Latin;
- at 11+: English, mathematics and general knowledge/intelligence tests.

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Entrance examinations are conducted in English.

Interviews take place at the same time as the entrance examinations.

The results of applications are normally notified within three weeks of sitting the examination and interviews.

Parents will be asked to accept the offer of a place and pay the acceptance deposit, or decline the offer, within three weeks of letters being sent out for 13+ and within 5 weeks for 16+. Notification of academic awards is sent out at the same time as the offer of a place. St Mary's abides by the guidelines issued by the Girls' Schools Association regarding the dates by which parents are required to notify their decision to the School for 11+ but if a decision has been made, responses by 1st February would be helpful.

Scholarships

Academic scholarships: are awarded annually to two pupils entering the School at 11+ and to three pupils entering the School at 13+. The scholarships are worth 5% of the fees. They are awarded on academic merit based on the School's own entrance examination and interview.

Mary Ward exhibition: this is awarded annually to a pupil entering the School at 11+. The scholarship is worth 5% of the fees. It is awarded on academic merit based on the School's own entrance examination and interview.

All-Rounder scholarships: there is an all-rounder scholarship awarded at 11+ and at 13+ and they take into account ability in two areas of activity outside of the classroom (art, drama, music or sport), as well as academic ability. The scholarships are worth 5% of the fees.

Music scholarship: this is awarded annually to a pupil entering the School at 11+ or 13+. The scholarship is worth 5% of the fees and free-of-charge instrumental or voice tuition, up to a maximum of three thirty-minute lessons per week.

Art scholarship: this is awarded annually to a pupil entering the School at 11+, 13+ or 16+. The scholarship is worth 5% of the fees.

Sports scholarship: this is awarded annually to a pupil entering the School at 13+. The scholarship is worth 5% of the fees.

Academic sixth form scholarship: this is awarded annually to a pupil entering the sixth form. The scholarship is worth 5% of the fees. It is awarded on academic merit.

For further details about eligibility, application and the conditions that apply to the award of a scholarship or bursary, please contact the Registrar or the Bursar.

Responsibility for Admissions

The Headmistress is responsible for admissions and for the operation of this policy and reserves the right at her discretion to refuse admission.

The admission process is supervised by the Headmistress. The selection criteria and interview procedure are determined and reviewed from time to time by the Governors. Those involved in selection and interviewing have received appropriate training.

Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes ("the records") will be retained by the School for at least one year after the interview, whether or not the applicant is offered a place.

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Selection Process

Admission preconditions are that:

- the applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity;
- the applicant will be able to benefit from the education offered and participate fully in the life of the School;
- the applicant will be expected to attend our church services and School assemblies which are fundamental to our ethos;
- to the extent (if at all) that any adjustments are necessary to enable an applicant with a disability (whether physical or learning disability) to benefit from the education on offer or to participate fully in the life of the School, that such adjustments are reasonable for the School to make;
- the applicant's learning difficulties (if any) are within the School's capacity to cope;
- the applicant's present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of parents and applicant;
- fees (if applicable) at the applicant's present school have been paid.

Academic Criteria

Academic criteria for selection are:

- performance in the St Mary's entrance examination;
- a positive recommendation from the Head of the applicant's present school;
- a satisfactory interview at St Mary's.

Preference Factors

The preference factors subject to the above criteria being met are:

- the applicant is a practising Roman Catholic;
- there is a current sibling in the School;
- boarding is preferred;
- the applicant has special aptitudes or gifts. The School is looking for well-rounded and balanced pupils and those with exceptional abilities in sports, music and the arts.
- the applicant's mother is a former pupil of St Mary's;
- St Mary's is the first choice of school;
- early date of registration.

Equal Opportunity

The School operates equal opportunity principles in its selection procedures and will not discriminate against applicants on grounds of race or disability or other protected characteristic.

Any applicant in respect of whom reasonable adjustments need to be made on account of a disability, either to participate in the selection process or to take up a place at the School, should notify the School of any reasonable adjustments which are necessary. The School will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments on an individual basis and will liaise with the applicants and/or her parents in relation thereto. If special education needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow the pupil to continue at the School.

Interview

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The interview is only one of a number of selection criteria. It provides an opportunity for the applicant to display her knowledge and interests and for the School to learn more about the applicant.

The aim of the interview will be to explore the criteria listed above. The style of interview is intended to be informal and natural.

The interview will be carried out by an experienced and senior member of the academic staff.

Special Circumstances

We recognise that an applicant's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example a recent bereavement, illness, disability or specific learning difficulties. We may request further information such as a medical certificate or educational psychologist's report and any associated correspondence or details from the applicant's current school (including samples of work) or any family history of dyslexia, as we consider necessary to make a fair assessment.

The Offer of a Place

The parents of each applicant and the Head of the applicant's school will be informed within three weeks of the entrance examination and interview whether a place is being offered or not. The School will not be obliged to state its reasons for the rejection of an applicant.

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