



# WESTHOLME

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

<b>Reviewed:</b>	Sept 2024
<b>Date of next review:</b>	Sept 2025
<b>Produced by:</b>	<b>Principal, Head of Prep and Deputy Head/s</b>
<b>Cross referencing:</b>	To be read in conjunction with the following policies: Parent Contract Bursary Policy Attendance Policy Staff Code of Conduct Complaints Policy SEND Policy GDPR Policy Safeguarding Policy

## AIMS OF THIS POLICY

To ensure compliance with the school's charitable purpose as a school providing independent day education for boys and girls between the age range of 4 and 18.

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 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.

## GENERAL

Westholme School is a coeducational independent school for pupils from ages 4 to 18. Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We very much hope that you and your child will visit Westholme School. We usually hold two open events per year; a Seniors Open Evening in the Autumn Term, and a Prep Open week in the Autumn Term – both events give a general introduction to the School. Details are published on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. Please contact the School's Registrar on 01254 506088 or email [registrar@westholmeschool.com](mailto:registrar@westholmeschool.com) to arrange a visit. If it is not possible to hold open events or arrange school visits because of circumstances beyond the School's control, then the School publishes on its website the alternative arrangements in place.

## THE ENTRY PROCEDURE

Westholme School is a selective, fee-paying school. Selection is based upon a combination of academic merit, cultural fit and school suitability, which are assessed through an entry examination, an interview at the School and references and other relevant information from the candidate's previous school. Our selection process is designed to identify 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.

The usual points of entry are at Prep Reception, Year 7, Year 9, and Year 12. We admit 22 pupils a year at Prep Reception, 104 pupils at Year 7, and 65 pupils at Year 12. The School may also have occasional places at other ages. Please contact the Registrar for details.

The School's Registration Form is available on the School's website and from the Registrar.

## EQUAL TREATMENT

Westholme School's aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 during the Admissions Process. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Bursaries, subject to financial viability, are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School. The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

Westholme School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or social background.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Westholme School 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, disabilities or allergies (suspected and diagnosed) to discuss their child's needs with the School at the outset of the admissions process so that we can make adequate provision for them.

Parents are required to provide with the Registration Form full details of all relevant information, including any reports (including any educational psychologist reports, medical reports or other relevant expert third party reports), materials or information about their child's needs, and this may include any final or draft EHC Plans. This is so that the School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about any adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that the School can ensure, for example, that their child will be able to meaningfully access the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others.

Where parents of a prospective pupil feel their child requires adjustments, the School will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments proposed and whether they can reasonably be made for the child if they were to become a pupil at the School.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs and/or disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments (in the case of disability), we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully 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.

Sometimes, the situation of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs changes between an offer of a place being made and the pupil starting at the School. The School requires parents to be pro-active in updating the School as to any significant changes which mean that the information provided during the application process is out of date or incomplete. In the vast majority of cases, this will not affect a pupil's place at the School. However the School may, in exceptional circumstances, need to reconsider the offer of a place if a pupil's circumstances change materially. It is in the pupil's interests that any such decision is made as early as possible to avoid any disruption to their education, so parents are urged to be forthcoming in their communications with the School about any material change to their child's circumstances.

## THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The aim of the process is to identify potential. Westholme School is 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, debating, community activities and sport. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for our entrance tests is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude [and extra-curricular skills].

Assessment for children due to start in Prep Reception includes observing interaction and informal play in small groups. They will also complete tasks with the teacher to check they are at an age-appropriate stage. The tasks set will cover the skills in the 3 prime areas of learning.

All other candidates for entry (below 16+) sit standardised entry assessments which include English, Maths and Reasoning, which are designed for their age group.

Our offer of places into Year 12 is conditional upon a candidate achieving the minimum requirements for Sixth Form entry, and individual subjects, as detailed in the INSPIRED Sixth Form prospectus.

We interview all candidates of as part of our assessment process for each age group (apart from Reception, which takes the form of an informal chat).

References will be sought from the Head of a candidate's current school as part of the assessment process.

For mid-stream entrants 2 taster days, to assess whether Westholme is the right fit for the student, are usually required (after the rest of the assessment process has been completed) before an offer can be made.

## REGISTRATION & ACCEPTANCE

Parents are required to complete a Registration Form, which should be returned to the Admissions Officer together with a non-refundable registration fee to cover administration costs, within the prescribed timescales. The registration fee is advertised on the school's website. The completion of a Registration Form does not guarantee admission by the Principal nor does it in any way bind parents. The registration fee is non-refundable. No priority is given to applicants based on the order applications are received.

Upon accepting the offer of a place at Westholme, all parents are required to sign the Parent Contract and Acceptance Form and pay an acceptance deposit which is refundable upon leaving the school, minus any expenses which have been incurred. Fees information can be found on the school website.

## SIBLING POLICY

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

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Westholme School offers scholarships for excellence in:

- Academic subjects
- Music
- Drama
- Dance
- Sport

A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

### Purpose of Scholarships

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered a reduction in the fees throughout their time at Westholme School. In addition, music scholars can be offered free tuition in musical instrument[s]. In addition, scholars of performing arts (music, dance, drama) can be offered free peripatetic tuition. Parents are asked to indicate on the Registration Form whether they are interested in applying for a scholarship. Details of the arrangements will be sent to all who express an interest.

We encourage parents of scholars who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the tuition fees to apply (at the same as registration of their child) for one of the School's means-tested bursaries described below.

Scholarships are held for the duration of a pupil's time at Senior School, provided that they are fulfilling the requirements of their Scholarship. Further scholarships can be awarded in Year 9 and Year 12, subject to staff recommendations and performance.

### Academic Scholarships

Candidates who, through the application process, show themselves to be academically exceptional will be invited to return to sit a further assessment in order to be considered for an Academic Scholarship. This is by invitation only; the Academic Scholarship cannot be applied for.

### Music Scholarships

Music scholarships are awarded to outstanding musicians who play any instrument or sing with exceptional ability. Candidates must obtain a specialist reference from their current music teacher in addition to a reference from their current Head. They will be required to perform 2 contrasting musical pieces of their choice, no more than 5 minutes in length and complete rhythmic, aural, and practical tests. There will also be a formal interview with the Director of Performing Arts and the Head of Music. They will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to music and will be expected to make a contribution to the musical life of the School throughout their time at the School.

Music scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

### Drama Scholarships

Drama scholarships are awarded to outstanding performers who have exceptional dramatic ability. Candidates must obtain a specialist reference from their current drama teacher in addition to a reference from their current Head. They are required to submit video footage of drama performances (either as soloist or lead within a production and/or a recorded monologue/performance of their choosing – no more than 5 minutes in length). On the assessment day they will be required to perform a monologue, selected from a list of 3, specified by the drama faculty. There will also be an informal discussion with the Head of Drama, or a member of the Drama department, to explore their experience and involvement in wider drama activities to date. They will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to Drama and will be expected to make a contribution to the dramatic life of the School throughout their time at the School.

Drama scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

### Dance Scholarships

Dance scholarships are awarded to outstanding dancers of exceptional ability. Candidates must obtain a specialist reference from their current dance teacher in addition to a reference from their current Head. They are required to submit video footage of 2 contrasting dance solo/styles (please do not send group performances) – no more than 5 minutes in length). On the assessment day they will be required to perform [2] contrasting individual short pieces, to complete practical tests and explain their participation and training to date. There will also be an informal discussion with the Head of Dance, or a member of the Dance department, to explore their experience and involvement in wider drama activities to date. They will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to dance and will be expected to make a contribution to the dance life of the School throughout their time at the School.

Dance scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

### Sports Scholarships

Sports scholarships are awarded to outstanding, all-round pupils who have achieved a high level of competence in 1 or more sports. Candidates will be required to provide two specialist reference from their current director of sport/sporting professionals. They will also need to submit a comprehensive list of their sporting achievements. On the assessment day they will be assessed by, and there will also be an informal discussion with, the Director of Sport and they will be expected to demonstrate qualities of leadership and team play of a very high order. They will take part in a practical assessment and fitness tests. They will be expected to make a contribution to the sporting life of the School throughout their time at the School.

Sports scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's entrance examination.

### BURSARIES

Westholme School's bursary programme is generous and is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet Westholme School's entry criteria to take up a place here. The School offers means-tested awards annually to entrants joining the Senior School, where the parents have indicated on the Registration Form that they require financial support. Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria published on the School's website from time to time. Both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need; this will be assessed by an independent specialist for fairness and transparency.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or wealth.

The School's practice is to allocate its entire available bursary funding on entry. The School's expectation is that parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

Our Bursary Policy can be obtained from the Registrar.

A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or otherwise in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary or scholarship is granted).

### OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Westholme School provided that they have the legal right to enter, live and study in the UK and they have a relative or 'responsible adult' living in the UK with whom they can stay with, more details of which are contained in the School's Parent Contract. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expect overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study such as Years 9-11, or Years 12-13.

### FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Westholme School, pupils must be fluent English speakers.

### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Westholme School welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith.

Although Westholme School has Christian roots, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief.

However, parents should be aware that all pupils are expected to attend the Carol Service at the Cathedral, Easter Assembly, Harvest Festival and other events which include prayer/religious elements.

### SCHOOL'S TERMS & CONDITIONS (PARENT CONTRACT)

The terms upon which the School educates each pupil are set out in the School's Parent Contract which will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

### WITHDRAWAL

A full term's notice is required by 12.00 (noon) on the first day of term in respect to withdrawal of a pupil from school after acceptance of a place, or for removal at any time during the pupil's education at the school. A full term's fees become payable in the absence of the notice period given above.

The Registrar will ensure that the Local Authority are notified when a pupil is removed from the school's admission register at a non-standard transition point. The Registrar will also ensure that the Local Authority are informed within five days of any pupil who is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.

### MISBEHAVIOUR AND EXCLUSIONS

Details of the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour and exclusion procedure are detailed in the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

## COMPLAINTS

The School's Complaints Policy is on the School's website and can be sent to prospective parents on request. The Complaints Procedure is not available for use by prospective parents.

## RECORDS AND REVIEW

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation. Please see the School's Privacy Notice for further information about how the School collects, uses and processes personal data.

The School will not hold the personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose and in accordance with our Retention of Records Policy. This will generally be no more than 1 year following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain personal data for longer might include: if the parents express an interest in the candidate re-applying for any reason at a later date; or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.