



## WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

### POLICY ON ADMISSIONS

Westminster School is a School with ancient origins tracing back to 1179 when the Benedictine monks of Westminster Abbey were required by Pope Alexander III to provide a small charity School. The School owes its survival during the dissolution of the monasteries to the intervention of Henry VIII by statute to preserve the school, and to the Royal patronage conferred by his daughter Elizabeth I when she granted the College its Royal Charter in 1560. The School has throughout its history provided boarding and day education for boys, and to this day remains predominantly a boys' school. However, girls were first formally admitted to the School in 1973 and today up to 70 girls are admitted at 16+ for A Level, both boarding and day.

#### 1. Aims of this policy

- a) To ensure compliance with the School's charitable object as a Public School for Young Persons, Westminster provides independent education for young persons, namely boys between the ages of 13 and 18 and girls between the ages of 16 and 18.
- b) To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable object and fair to applicants.
- c) 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.

#### 2. Responsibility for Admissions

The Head Master is responsible for admissions and for the operation of this policy. The selection criteria and interview procedure are determined and reviewed from time to time. Documents supporting each application for admission, together with selection and interview notes, are retained by the School for at least one year after the 13+ interview or 16+ examination, whether or not the applicant is offered a place. Each year the Governing Body reviews the admission statistics.

#### 3. Entry Points

- a) Westminster School accepts about 120 boy pupils at 13+, including those from Westminster Under School, and a further 70 girl and boy pupils at 16+.
- b) The School takes the applicant's age on 1st September to determine qualification for entry at 13+ or 16+. For 13+ entrants their fourteenth birthday, and for 16+ entrants their seventeenth birthday, should fall between 1 September and 31 August of their first academic year at the School. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Head Master, but the

School's aim is to maintain the social cohesion of each year group. Places may occasionally be available at non-standard entry points.

#### 4. Admissions Timetable

##### a) 13+ Entry

- i. Parents may register their son for admission to Westminster School at 13+ at any time up to three years before his point of entry.
- ii. At the School's discretion a boy may in exceptional circumstances be registered for admission at 13+ less than three years before his point of entry but the School reserves the right to refuse such a registration without explanation.
- iii. While an applicant is in Year 6 (the academic year of his 11th birthday), he takes tests in English, Mathematics and Reasoning and the head of his present school is asked to send a report. Following the tests he may be invited to Westminster for interview. (For information about the tests and interview see Section 8 below.) Parents who have not received a letter inviting their son to take the tests by the end of his time in Year 6 are requested to write to the Head Master or to telephone. The School does not take responsibility for administrative errors, letters that go astray or emails that are not delivered.
- iv. Following the interview and the receipt of a report from the applicant's head teacher a letter is sent to parents. Parents who wish to accept the offer of a conditional place must pay the non-refundable entrance fee of 4% of the annual day fee. This is used to defray the reasonable administration costs. This entrance fee must be paid no later than the second Monday in January in the year before a boy is due to enter the School (i.e. 20 months before entry). If payment has not been made by that time the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a conditional place. The entrance fee is not refundable after this time should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered. The entrance fee is not refundable against the final term's fees.

A deposit of one term's fees is required to confirm the place by the first Monday in September in the year before a boy is due to enter the School (i.e. 12 months before entry). This deposit will be held as a credit against the final term's fees, i.e. it will be returned to parents. Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered, the Deposit may be withheld in whole or in part to offset the genuine estimate by the School of the loss it will suffer by the parents failing to honour the contract with the School.

- v. Boys who enter Westminster Under School at the 11+ stage are deemed to have qualified for a conditional place at Westminster School without further test or interview. Parents of such boys do not have to pay the non-refundable entrance fee.
- vi. A boy who has been offered a conditional place must subsequently qualify for his place at Westminster School by sitting either the appropriate Common Entrance Examination or the Westminster Scholarship Examination (The Challenge).

- vii. A boy who enters Westminster Under School at the 11+ stage and is in receipt of a means tested bursary has guaranteed entry to Westminster School, subject to satisfactory work and behaviour.
- viii. Transfer after GCSE from Upper Shell (Year 11) to the Sixth Form (Years 12 & 13) is not automatic. A pupil must qualify for his place by obtaining the required grades at GCSE.

**b) 16+ Entry**

- i. The closing date for registering a girl or boy for admission at 16+ is published annually in June of the calendar year before the applicant's proposed entry to the School.
- ii. Entrance examinations and interviews for 16+ admission take place in November of the academic year preceding the candidates' proposed entry into the school. A candidate's parents must inform the head of their child's present school in advance of their intention to apply to Westminster.
- iii. Those candidates invited for the interviews and additional exams are required to be present in School on the scheduled day.
- iv. Offers of conditional places for 16+ candidates are made before the end of the Play (autumn) Term of the academic year preceding the candidates' proposed entry to the School. Parents who wish to accept the offer of a conditional place must pay a non-refundable entrance fee of 4% of the annual day fee. This entrance fee is not offset against the final term's fees.
- v. A girl or boy who has been offered a conditional place must subsequently qualify for his or her place at Westminster School by obtaining the required grades at GCSE. This requirement may be waived if the candidate attends a school that does not enter pupils for GCSE.

**5. Scholarships and Bursaries**

- a) Eight academic Queen's Scholarships are awarded each year to boys entering the School at 13+ and 4 Queen's Scholarships are awarded each year to girls entering the School at 16+. All Queen's Scholars must board in College.
- b) Award of a 13+ Queen's Scholarship is made based The Challenge which is also open to candidates including those who are not registered and do not, therefore, hold a conditional place. The School is not obliged to offer a commoner place to such candidates if they are not elected to a Queen's Scholarship. Scholarships are not awarded at any other point of entry or other time at the School. Award of a 16+ Scholarship is made based on the 16+ entry examinations and interviews as described above (para 4.b.ii).
- c) The scholarship gives a fee reduction which requires parents of Queen's Scholars to pay the Queens' Scholars' fee which is currently set at half way between the day fee as appropriate and 50% of the boarding fee.
- d) All scholarships may be increased by a means-tested bursary to the value of the full day or boarding fee. The Challenge is also open to candidates who are not registered and do not, therefore, hold a conditional place. The School is not obliged to offer a commoner place to such candidates if they are not elected to a Queen's Scholarship. Scholarships are not awarded at any other

point of entry or other time at the School.

- e) At 13+, Honorary Scholarships are awarded if it is certain that a boy would have been awarded a Queen's Scholarship if he had been prepared to board (i.e. elected themselves, without discussion, at the selection meeting). There is no fee remission.
- f) There are also Music Scholarships and Exhibitions for 13+ and 16+ candidates based on an applicant's musical ability. Candidates must audition for the music scholarships, offering at least two instruments and demonstrating a high level of general musicianship and great potential for development. In addition to this, candidates must also win a place at the School on academic merit as described above (para 4).
- g) The Scholarship gives a fee reduction of 10% of the day fee. It may be increased by a means-tested bursary to the value of the full day fee. Music Scholarships are not awarded at any other time at the School.
- h) The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey support the 16+ Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship at Westminster School which also brings a remission of 10% of the day fee.
- i) Means-tested bursaries up to 100% of the fees are available for boys entering Westminster Under School at 11+ from state primary schools and other schools according to financial need (see para 4.a.v above).
- j) Means tested bursaries up to 100% of the day fees are available for boys entering Westminster School at 13+ and for boys and girls entering at 16+. Boarding bursaries are not awarded except to those Queen's Scholars who may need one (see para 4.d.). Bursary forms may be obtained from the Registrar. Additionally, bursaries are not awarded to overseas applicants (para 10). The definition of an overseas applicant for the purposes of bursary awards is any applicant whose main family home is not in the UK. Where for example a father (or mother) lives and works abroad and is not a UK national but the mother (or father) has residence (whether temporary or indefinite) in the UK but is not a UK citizen, then a bursary will not be awarded. Where there is any doubt, the School Bursar should be consulted.

## 6. Selection

- a) The pre-conditions for admission are that:
  - i. The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
  - ii. The applicant is able to attend School on a regular basis.
  - iii. The applicant's learning difficulties and other special needs (if any) can, in the opinion of the Head Master, be managed with the provision of reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act (2010).
  - iv. Westminster School will accept pupils whose first language is not English, but lessons move at a fast pace and a pupil who does not speak good English will not cope so proficiency in English will be assessed to ensure an applicant has the minimum necessary skills. All pupils experiencing difficulty with their work can receive help from the Study Skills Coordinator.

- v. The present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the parents and applicant.
- vi. Fees (if applicable) at the present school have been paid and the parents are able, if required, to satisfy the Head Master that they are in a position to pay the fees for Westminster School.
- vii. In the case of applicants whose parents are resident outside the United Kingdom, satisfactory arrangements have been made for guardianship. A guardian must take the place of the boy's or girl's parents by being available for consultation, assuming responsibility for them (including weekend arrangements for boarders) and accepting the boy or girl home at short notice if need arises, for example illness.

b) The academic criteria for selection at 13+ are:

- i. A mark of 70% in all the required Common Entrance papers or the equivalent standard in The Challenge.
- ii. A positive recommendation from the head teacher of the applicant's present school.
- iii. A satisfactory interview.
- iv. For special arrangements for boys holding 11+ bursaries see para 4.a.v. above.

c) The academic criteria for selection at 16+ are:

- i. High marks in the competitive entrance examinations.
- ii. A positive recommendation from the head teacher of the applicant's present school.
- iii. Satisfactory interviews.

d) The preference factors subject to 6(a) or 6(b) or 6(c) are:

- i. Relative performance of the applicant in examination, interviews and/or recommendation from his/her present school.
- ii. That the applicant has special aptitudes or gifts. The School is looking for well-rounded and balanced pupils and those with exceptional abilities.

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

Admissions will be in accordance with the School's Policy on Equal Opportunities (Pupils). The Governing Body of Westminster School recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), which established the right for disabled students not to be discriminated against in education.

## **8. Interviews and Pre-Interview for 13+ Applicants**

- a) The aim of the interview and pre-interview tests is to explore some of the criteria set out at Section 6 above. There are tests in Mathematics, English, Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning which are set annually by the Independent

Schools Examinations Board. A candidate who performs strongly in these tests and who has received a satisfactory report from his present school will be invited to Westminster for interview. The style of the interview, which includes tests in reading and mathematics, is intended to be informal and natural.

- b) Boys who are not offered an immediate conditional place may be placed on the waiting list.
- c) The aim is to conduct the pre-interview tests and interviews in such a way that boys who are not offered a conditional place will not feel that they have failed. Parents are encouraged to make their sons feel that the family is making its own decision about the most appropriate school for them.
- d) Experienced and senior members of the academic staff conduct the interviews. The interviews do not include questions that imply racial or religious bias and they are conducted in an objective manner.

## **9. The offer of a place**

Offers of conditional places at both the 13+ and 16+ stages are made in writing and separate letters are sent at the same time to the applicant's present school. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for rejection of an applicant.

## **10. Overseas Applicants**

- a) Westminster School welcomes applications from pupils who live overseas. Westminster School is not, however, a suitable boarding school for pupils under 16 years of age (those in Years 9, 10 & 11) whose parents live outside the United Kingdom. Sixth Form pupils (those in Years 12 & 13) with parents living overseas may board at Westminster, but the School must be satisfied in advance that guardianship arrangements are satisfactory.
- b) Overseas pupils whose parents are citizens of countries in the European Economic Area or of Switzerland do not require visas to study in the United Kingdom.
- c) Westminster School is licensed by the Home Office to sponsor pupils who require visas to study in the United Kingdom. The School will issue a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) reference number to each pupil requiring a visa if he or she has been offered and has accepted a place to study at Westminster School.
- d) A pupil requiring a visa to study at Westminster School should apply for a Tier 4 child student visa.
- e) It is the responsibility of the pupil requiring a visa and of his or her parents to apply to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for a visa at the appropriate time and with the correct documentation and to inform Westminster School that an application is being made.
- f) Westminster School will at all times comply with the rules and procedures of the Home Office.
- g) All enquiries about visa applications should be made to the Registrar or to his assistant, the Admissions Administrator. No one else in the School is authorised to sign a letter supporting a pupil's, or prospective pupil's application for a visa in the UK.

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