



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS AND AWARDS POLICY SEPTEMBER 2025 ENTRY ONWARDS

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INTRODUCTION

Westminster School is an ancient School, whose origins can be traced to a charity school established by the Benedictine monks of Westminster Abbey in 1066 before the Norman Conquest. Its continuous existence is certain from the 14th century. Henry VII personally ensured the School's survival by statute and Elizabeth I, who confirmed royal patronage in 1560, is celebrated as the School's foundress. The School (sometimes known as the "Great School" or "WGS" and referred to throughout this policy as the "School") has throughout its history provided boarding and day education for boys; 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.

Westminster Under School (sometimes known as the "Under School" or "WUS"), which was founded in 1943, provides education for pupils aged between 7 and 13 (Year 3 to Year 8): it is part of the same charity as the Great School. The Under School has its own admissions policy for entry, although those who join the Under School at 11+ are also covered by this Great School policy.

AIMS

- To ensure compliance with the School's charitable object as a Public School for Young Persons, the School provides independent education for young persons, namely boys between the ages of 13 and 18 and girls between the ages of 16 and 18. From 01 October 2024, registration for both girls and boys will open for 13+ entry in 2028.
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with this charitable object and fair to applicants, bearing in mind the School's legislative responsibilities (see below).
- 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.

LEGISLATION

This policy has regard to the following:

- The Equality Act 2010 (replacing a range of previous legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice 2014 (Department for Education)
- Data Protection Act 2018 which implements the General Data Protection Regulation.

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.

ENTRY POINTS

The Great School accepts about 130 pupils at 13+, including those from the Under School, and a further 80 pupils at 16+.

The School takes the applicant's age on 1 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.

ADMISSIONS TIMETABLE

13+ entry

Parents may register their child for admission to the Great School at 13+ when they are in Year 5. A non-refundable registration fee of £360 (including VAT) is payable.

At the School's discretion an applicant may in exceptional circumstances be registered for admission at 13+ less than three years before their point of entry but the School reserves the right to refuse such a registration without explanation.

While an applicant is in Year 6 (the academic year of their 11th birthday), they take the Independent Schools Examination Board tests in English, Mathematics and Reasoning and the Head of their present school is asked to send a report. Following the tests they may be invited for interview and further testing in English and Mathematics. This process applies to those who entered the Under School before the 11+ stage. (For information about the tests and interview see below.) Parents who have not received a letter inviting their child to take the tests by the end of their time in Year 6 are requested to write to the Registrar or to telephone. The School does not take responsibility for administrative errors, letters that go astray or emails that are not delivered.

Those who enter the Under School at the 11+ stage are deemed to have qualified for a place at the Great School without further test or interview, but subject to work and behaviour achieving the required standard.

Following the interview and the receipt of a report from the applicant's Head, a letter is sent to parents. Parents who wish to accept the offer of a place must return a signed acceptance form and pay £6,400 (including VAT) as follows:

1. The non-refundable entrance fee of £2,400 which must be paid no later than the second Monday in January in the year *before* a child 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 place. Once paid, this entrance fee is not refundable should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered. The entrance fee is not refundable against the final term's fees.

Children who join the Great School at 13+ from the Under School do not have to pay a further entrance fee.

2. An acceptance deposit of £4,000 is required to confirm the place by the first Monday in September in the year before a child is due to enter the School (i.e.: 12 months before entry). This deposit will be returned to parents at the start of the term after the child has left the School.

Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered *before* the end of the Lent (Spring) term before the child is due to enter the School, 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.

Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered *after* the end of the Lent (Spring) term before the child is due to enter the School, 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 and a term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

Children who joined the Under School at 11+ entry and who subsequently join the Great School at 13+ do not have to pay a further deposit.

Transfer after GCSE from Upper Shell (Year 11) to the Sixth Form (Years 12 and 13) is not automatic. A pupil must qualify for their place by obtaining the required grades at (I)GCSE and is currently conditional on a pupil achieving a minimum of eight (I)GCSE passes at A / 7 grade, of which at least four are at A* / 8-9 in the subjects to be studied at A Level.

16+ entry

The closing date for registering an applicant for admission at 16+ is the end of September of the calendar year before the applicant's proposed entry to the School. A non-refundable registration fee of £360 is payable.

Entrance examinations and interviews for 16+ admission take place in November of the academic year preceding the candidate's 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.

Those candidates invited for the interviews and additional exams are required to be present in School on the scheduled day.

Offers of conditional places for 16+ candidates are made before the end of the Play (autumn) Term of the academic year preceding the candidate's proposed entry to the School.

Parents who wish to accept the offer of a place must return a signed acceptance form by the December deadline stated in the offer letter and pay £6,400 (including VAT) no later than the second Monday in January in the academic year *before* the pupil is due to enter the School as follows:

1. The non-refundable entrance fee of £2,400. If payment has not been made by that time, the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a conditional place. Once paid, this entrance fee is not refundable should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered. The entrance fee is not refundable against the final term's fees.

2. An acceptance deposit of £4,000 is also required to confirm the place. This deposit will be returned to parents at the start of the term after the pupil has left the School.

Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered *before* the end of the Lent (Spring) term before the child is due to enter the School, 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.

Should a parent subsequently decide not to take up the place offered *after* the end of the Lent (Spring) term before the child is due to enter the School, 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 and a term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

3. Parents living overseas who wish to accept an offer for 16+ pupils must pay a non-refundable entrance fee of £2,400 and an acceptance deposit of £5,000 instead of the amounts noted above.

A candidate who has been offered a conditional place must subsequently qualify for their place at Westminster School by obtaining the required grades at (I)GCSE and is currently conditional on a pupil achieving a minimum of eight (I)GCSE passes at A / 7 grade, of which at least four are at A* / 8-9 in the subjects to be studied at A Level. This requirement may be waived if the candidate attends a school that does not enter pupils for (I)GCSE.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND EXHIBITIONS

Up to eight academic King's Scholarships are awarded each year to children entering the School at 13+ and up to six King's Scholarships are awarded each year to pupils entering the School at 16+. All King's Scholars must board in College.

Award of a 13+ King's Scholarship is made based on The Challenge which is also open to candidates who are not registered and do not, therefore, hold a place. The School is not obliged to offer a regular place to such candidates if they are not elected to a King's Scholarship. Award of a 16+ Scholarship is made to incoming pupils based on the 16+ entry examinations and interviews as described above.

The scholarship currently gives a fee reduction which requires parents of King's Scholars to pay the King's Scholars' fee which is set at the current day rate for 13+ and 16+ entrants.

All scholarships may be increased by a means-tested bursary to the value of the full boarding fee in line with the School's Bursaries Policy.

Scholarships are not awarded at any other point of entry or other time at the School.

Academic exhibitions and subject prizes

Academic Exhibitions are awarded internally at the end of Year 9 for Lower School pupils and the end of Year 12 / beginning of Year 13 for Upper School pupils. Subject prizes are awarded to all year groups at the end of each academic year.

Since 2022 there has not been an option to sit the Challenge for an Honorary Scholarship (day place).

Music awards

Scholarships and Exhibitions

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 awards, typically 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.

The Music 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 in line with the School's Bursaries Policy. Additionally, both scholarships and exhibitions provide up to 75 minutes of free instrumental tuition per week at the School.

Music awards are typically not awarded at any other time at the School; however, occasional discretionary awards are sometimes made.

Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship

The Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship is awarded biennially for 16+ entry and brings a remission of 10% of the day fee. It may be increased by a means-tested bursary to the value of the full day fee in line with the School's Bursaries Policy. Additionally, the Henry Purcell Organ Scholarship provides up to 75 minutes of free instrumental tuition (including organ lessons) per week at Westminster.

Sustaining a music award

All music awards are subject to satisfactory progress and all music award holders will be reviewed, in the form of a solo performance, report and subsequent meeting, in both the Election Term of the Lower Shell and the Play Term of the Sixth Form. At both stages, in the instance of an award holder falling short of the level of progress expected, the Director of Music will meet with the pupil and their parents. Where this meeting takes place in the Election Term of the Lower Shell, a follow-up review will then be scheduled in the first half of the Upper Shell Play Term. For meetings taking place in the Play Term of the Sixth Form, a follow-up review will then be scheduled in the first half of the Sixth Form Election Term. If satisfactory progress is still not in evidence at these follow-up reviews, it is at this point that the music award is likely to be withdrawn.

BURSARIES

Eligible

Means-tested bursaries are available on entry to the School, at 13+ and 16+, where the child will have the right to live and study in the UK on commencement of their studies at the School, and at least one of the parents and the child have lived in the UK for at least two continuous years at the time of applying for a bursary.

Parents who qualify under the above criteria live inside the M25 London orbital at the time of applying for a bursary and whilst their child is in receipt of bursary funding from School. The expectation is that their child will commute from home to School each day.

Other than for King's Scholars in the Great School, bursaries are available for day pupils only.

Not eligible

Bursaries are not available to children of parents who have not lived in the UK continuously in the two years prior to applying for a bursary; or live outside the M25 London orbital at the date of application for a bursary or whilst their child is in receipt of bursary funding from School.

SELECTION

The pre-conditions for admission are that:

- The applicant is of the appropriate age and sufficient maturity.
- The applicant is able to attend School on a regular basis.
- 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).
- The 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 Learning Development Department.
- The applicant has a legal right to attend school in the UK.
- The applicant's present school reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the parents and applicant.
- 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 the School.
- In the case of Sixth Form 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. (Please see the School's Guardianship and Emergency Contacts Policy).

All admissions will be in accordance with the School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

13+ entry

The academic criteria for selection at 13+ are:

- A strong score in the Independent Schools Examination Board assessments in English, Maths, Verbal Reasoning and Non-verbal Reasoning.
- A positive recommendation from the Head of the applicant's present school.
- A satisfactory interview. A candidate who performs strongly in the ISEB tests and who has received a satisfactory report from their present school will be invited to Westminster for interview and further tests in English and Mathematics. The style of the interview is intended to be informal and natural. The interviews are conducted by experienced, senior members of staff. They do not include questions that imply racial or religious bias and they are conducted in an objective manner.

16+ entry

The academic criteria for selection at 16+ are:

- High marks in the competitive entrance examinations
- A positive recommendation from the Head of the applicant's present school.
- Satisfactory interviews.

Preference factors

The preference factors subject to selection factors outlined above:

- Relative performance of the applicant in examination, interviews and/or recommendation from their present school.

- That the applicant has special aptitudes or gifts. The School is looking for well-rounded and balanced pupils and those with exceptional abilities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The School recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), which establishes the right for applicants and pupils not to be discriminated against in education.

WAITING LIST

Applicants who are not offered an immediate place at 13+ or 16+ may be placed on a Waiting List.

THE OFFER OF A PLACE

Offers of places at the 13+ stage are made in writing and separate letters are sent at the same time to the applicant's present school.

Offers of conditional places at 16+ are made in writing in December the calendar year before the applicant's proposed entry to the School. The School is not obliged to state its reasons for rejection of an applicant.

OCCASIONAL PLACES

The School is occasionally contacted by parents whose child is no longer able to attend their current school, usually due to a significant relocation. Where spaces are available, we would consider assessing the child for a place using academic assessments and interviews appropriate to the child's stage in education. Any such out of cycle admissions are at the Head Master's discretion.

OVERSEAS APPLICANTS AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

The School welcomes applications from pupils who live overseas. The School is not, however, a suitable boarding school for pupils under 16 years of age (those in Years 9, 10 and 11) whose parents live outside the United Kingdom. Sixth Form pupils (those in Years 12 and 13) with parents living overseas may board at the School, but the School must be satisfied in advance that guardianship arrangements are satisfactory.

The UK left the EU on 31 December 2020. Freedom of movement for citizens of countries in the EEA (other than the Republic of Ireland) and Switzerland ended on that date.

Westminster School is licensed by the Home Office to sponsor pupils who require Child Student 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 they have been offered and have accepted a place to study at Westminster School. A fee of £1,200 (including VAT) per CAS is payable. The School only offers sponsorship support for pupils in the Sixth Form (i.e.: those in Years 12 and 13).

A pupil requiring a visa to study at the Great School should apply for a Child Student Visa.

It is the responsibility of the pupil requiring a visa and of their parents to apply to UKVI for a visa at the appropriate time and with the correct documentation and to inform the School that an application is being made.

The School will at all times comply with the rules and procedures of the Home Office.

All enquiries about visa applications should be made to the Sixth Form 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.