



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Policy Holder	Deputy Head, Admissions and Marketing Manager
Date Approved	May 2024
Approval	SLT
Date for next review	May 2025

*This policy applies to all pupils at Holmewood House School, including those in Boarding and the EYFS.
This school policy is written with reference to the Equality Act (2010)*

AIMS AND ETHOS

At Holmewood House School, education is centred around instilling a life-long love of learning in each child by developing their skills and nurturing their growth as individuals.

We encourage children to become independent, creative and critical learners who aim for standards of excellence in all that they do. We encourage them to become their best selves in the fullest sense.

We believe that emotional and social well-being, self-esteem and confidence are inextricably linked with academic progress, and we aim to teach children resilience and an appreciation of our local community, global opportunities and developments in an ever-changing world.

We believe that respect for all children, faith in them and an ability to see the world through their eyes should inform our teaching and our care.

We aim for the children at Holmewood to have a generosity of spirit, empathy of heart and an understanding of the importance of our core values of self-belief, aspiration and kindness.

In all that we do, our aim is to work closely with staff, governors, parents, guardians and the children themselves.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Holmewood House is a co-educational, non-selective school for boys and girls aged 2-13 years, situated in 30 acres of glorious grounds in Tunbridge Wells. The usual points of entry to the school are at Pre-Nursery age (children join in the term in which they turn three) and Reception (approximately 4 years old). Admission at other ages is dependent on the availability of places. Children are admitted in each year group, generally up to a maximum of 60.

Entry into the school at Nursery is by registration and a parental meeting with the Head of the Early Years and Foundation Stage. Your child will be invited to do a taster session to see how they feel in the environment.

Entry to the school at the 4+ stage is by registration and parental interview. There is no formal assessment of children at this stage other than to ensure that a child is ready for a school environment. Therefore, the majority of the school's intake is non-selective.

At other points of entry, the intake is selective only in so far as we seek to ensure that a child will cope with the demands of our academic curriculum and, as such, seek to answer the question 'will this child be happy here?' Overall, then, the pupil population is of mixed ability, though by the time the children leave, the average attainment on standardised tests is above the national average. In order for us to make this judgement, all children for 4+ entry are invited to a taster day.

Where parents are divorced, separated or parenting separately from each other they need to follow the procedures set out in the School's policy for Parental Engagement.

Having registered your application for a place for your child, you will thereafter be kept fully informed, by the Marketing and Admissions Manager, of the progress of the admissions process. We do our best to avoid creating large waiting lists and to give you the earliest possible indication of whether a place will be available. We understand that in a matter as important as the education of one's child, the admissions process can be an anxious one and we endeavour to reduce this anxiety wherever possible.

The school considers itself a community in which each individual's needs should be recognised and each of its members' talents and aptitudes should be fostered. It is as a living and caring community that the school is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for children, parents and staff. The school will not discriminate against anyone on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, culture, health conditions, circumstances relating to home life, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or, where practicable, disabilities.

ENQUIRIES

All enquiries are directed to a member of our Marketing and Admissions team, who logs them onto our database. Prospective parents are invited to visit the School for a meeting with the Head of Early Years, the Head of Pre-Prep or the Head. A tour of the School with a member of the Marketing and Admissions team is also arranged, which will enable you to get a feel for daily life at the school and talk to staff and children. Each term, we offer Early Years (Nursery and Reception) group tours and a whole-school Open Morning, when you have a chance to meet current parents and senior pupils.

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST:

Interested applicants are asked to complete an online Registration Form. Alongside this you are asked to submit the required documents and a non-returnable registration fee (as set at the time of application) as soon as possible. Once received, applicants will be recorded as a registered pre-admission pupil with an allocated year and term of entry.

Places will be offered in order of registration assuming the applicant meets the admissions criteria. In the event of a year group being full, a child's name will be entered on a waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained in chronological order by date of registration. From time to time, the Head reserves the right to offer places to siblings of current Holmewood House pupils, who may not be at the top of the waiting list.

ENTRY INTO THE PRE-NURSERY, NURSERY AND PRE-PREP:

Entry into the school at Nursery is by registration and a parental meeting with the Head of the Early Years and Foundation Stage. Your child will be invited to do a taster session with a parent, to see how they feel in the environment.

Most of the children who join the Pre-Prep (Reception, Year 1, and Year 2) are from our own Nursery and entry is automatic, provided the Pre-Prep is an environment in which your child can learn and be fully supported and happy.

Entry to the Pre-Prep at the 4+ stage is by registration and parental interview. There is no formal assessment of children at this stage other than to ensure that a child is ready for a school environment. Therefore, the majority of the school's intake is non-selective. Children wishing to join Holmewood from other schools at this age will be invited for a taster day. Their level of literacy and numeracy is assessed informally within the lessons to ensure they can fully access the curriculum.

Before the taster day, parents are required to complete a taster day registration and consent form, providing pastoral information to further support the application and to provide any additional information about the child's current learning.

We need to ensure that the child will be able to cope with the curriculum within our busy school day, and that the child will benefit from the opportunities that Holmewood provides and will contribute fully to the wider life of the school. We request a copy of the most recent school report and the pupil's current school is asked to provide a confidential written reference.

Alternative arrangements can be made for overseas applicants who are unable to travel to Holmewood House in person for a taster day (see '**Overseas Applicants**').

ENTRY TO THE PREP SCHOOL

Children joining the Prep School (Years 3-8) are invited for a taster day. Before the taster day, parents are required to complete a taster day registration and consent form, providing pastoral information, to further support the application and to provide any additional information about the child's current learning.

During the taster day, children spend time in class with their peer groups so we can see how they perform in class and how they interact with their peers and the teaching staff. They are assessed informally in reading, spelling and mathematics during lessons to inform us of their ability level, and to outline any additional potential support they may require.

We need to ensure that the child will be able to cope with the curriculum within our busy school day, and that the child will benefit from the opportunities that Holmewood provides and will contribute fully to the wider life of the school. We request a copy of a recent school report and the pupil's current school is asked to provide a confidential written reference.

After a successful taster day, children entering Years 4-8 return to Holmewood to sit a computer based cognitive ability test to give us a better understanding of their current learning levels, and to outline any additional potential support that they may require. They also meet a member of the Senior Leadership Team for a short discussion about their interests, hobbies and about school and learning in general.

Should the School decide to make an offer, a formal Offer Letter will be sent to the applicant. An Acceptance Form along with the Acceptance Deposit must be submitted within the designated timescales which will be written in the offer letter.

If we do not hear back from applicants, who have been sent an Offer Letter, within the set timescales, we assume that they are no longer interested, and the place may be offered to another child.

It is assumed that a pupil will automatically progress through the school, subject to meeting the required standards of behaviour and progress.

OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

Alternative arrangements can be made for overseas applicants who are unable to travel to Holmewood House in person for a taster day.

Children entering Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are asked to meet the Head of Early Years and Foundation Stage, or the Head of Pre-Prep on a video call with their parents.

Parents of children from overseas entering Years 2 + are put in touch with our partner organisation, Connexcel, who conduct assessments on our behalf. Assessments are invigilated remotely, at parents' expense. Children are required to submit a short, written piece in English under invigilated conditions, and to meet a member of the Connexcel placement team for a short interview.

For children entering Years 4-8, we use CAT4 as a method for assessing potential and learning preferences. Children with English as an Additional Language are required to complete a Cambridge English assessment.

Children entering Year 2 are invited to meet the Head of Pre-Prep for a 'getting to know you' video call, where they will have a friendly talk about school and their interests. Those entering Years 3-8 will meet the Deputy Head.

More details on tuition in English and Child Student Visa Sponsorship are provided in the school's **Policy for International Pupils**.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We hope to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our school community and is vital in preparing our pupils for the world today. Holmewood House School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, social background, nationality or disability. Please see the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**. We reserve the right to restrict the offer of places to children whom we feel can benefit from the broad and varied curriculum offered and make a positive contribution to the School community.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We are a non-selective school. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Strategies Department can offer them the support that they require. The school has staffing to support a range of educational needs. Children will be withdrawn from some lessons and will be given extra support during this time. Alternatively, support may be offered in the form of a classroom assistant within individual lessons.

We welcome pupils with physical disabilities, however, recognise that because of the nature of our site there will be some children whose needs we will not be able to accommodate. We advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Marketing and Admissions Manager before he or she comes for a visit so that we can make adequate provision for him or her. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or medical report, if available, at this time.

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

Details of any disability, special educational needs or learning difficulty must be declared. We also require parents to undertake a continuing contractual obligation to disclose any learning difficulties, SEN or disability and any relevant reports. A failure to disclose may, in some circumstances, amount to a breach of contract by the parents allowing the school to terminate the agreement with immediate effect.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Holmewood House School is a non-denominational school. There are assemblies throughout the week, which often have a religious or spiritual theme that are Christian in their leaning. All pupils are expected to attend, and it is expected that while pupils may not wish to participate in any religious aspects of these assemblies, they should show respect during any hymns/ prayers that may take place.

FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

In order to access the curriculum provided at Holmewood House School and to cope with the social demands, it is helpful if pupils are fluent English speakers. However, we have, and will continue to, accept children with less than fluent English, provided they are able to participate in the full curriculum.

More details on tuition in English and Child Student Visa Sponsorship are provided in the school's **Policy for International Pupils**.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

Holmewood House hosts an initiative to promote excellence and participation across a variety of disciplines. This programme is referred to as the Holmewood House 'Scholarship Readiness Award'. It is available to children entering Year 7 (11+) having been assessed in the Spring Term of Year 6. To support families who need it, where appropriate, this initiative is tied to access to our bursarial support. The school welcomes enquiries from families about the Scholarship Readiness Programme and subsequent bursary opportunities available to them.

For more information about our scholarships and bursaries, please refer to the Awards and Bursary policy and contact the Admissions team.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The law requires that all schools have to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

Holmewood House school must inform the local authority if any of our pupils is going to be removed from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school nurse as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

All schools, including Holmewood House School, must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

Please see our Safeguarding Policy, available on the school website, for further information regarding children missing education.

If a child's whereabouts is unknown by school and/or parents, then police should be contacted via 101- even if this is only for a short period of time as it helps to build a pattern and the history can be useful for future missing episodes.

HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL'S CONTRACTUAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Copies of the school's contractual terms and conditions will be made available during the admissions process.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The School is required to provide you with the following information:

- the school's address and telephone number and the name of the Head
- where there is a governing body, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair; and
- a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims.

The above information is contained on the school website. www.holmewoodhouse.co.uk

The School is required to make available the following policies and documentation:

- school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
- educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and pupils for whom English is an additional language;

- curriculum policy;
- policy to promote good behaviour and set out sanctions;
- anti-bullying strategy, health and safety policy, first aid policy;
- academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations;
- complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year;
- a copy of the report of any inspections of the school or boarding provision; and
- the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

All of the above items are available to download from the School's website www.holmewoodhouse.co.uk.

If you would like a paper copy, please contact admissions@holmewoodhouse.co.uk

COMPLAINTS

We hope that you and your child do not have cause to complain about our admissions process, however, copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request or found on the school website under policies.

CONTACT WITH PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

All initial enquiries are logged onto our database from the first point of contact. This allows us to:

- Track their progress through the admissions process
- Analyse sources of enquiry for marketing purposes
- Allow for effective on-going communication
- Monitor and assess the uptake of places and design promotional activities accordingly

Our Marketing and Admissions Manager will keep regular contact with all prospective parents until this is no longer appropriate.

Our parents are made aware of our data protection registration and that their data will be stored in connection with their application for a school place only and will not be passed to third parties.

For further information, please contact: the Admissions team

Telephone: +44 (0)1892 860006 or Email: admissions@holmewoodhouse.co.uk