TAUNTON
SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Policy Leads – Headmaster/Director of Admissions

Committee – Marketing and Admissions Panel

Adopted by Governors – Autumn 2024

Last Review – September 2026

Review Schedule - Annually or following a change in legislation

Contents

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1. Authority and Circulation

This policy has been authorised by the Governing Body of Taunton School. Its status is advisory only. It is addressed to prospective parents and pupils and to all members of the teaching and administrative staff.

2. Policy Aims

The aims of the policy are

1. To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes. Taunton School is an independent school for girls and boys from 0 - 19 with boarding facilities for pupils aged seven and over.

2. To identify and admit those who will benefit from the academic education and who will contribute to, and benefit from, the ethos and activities of our school community.

3. Key principles

Equal Treatment

We welcome children from many different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected but must be balanced with the lawful needs and rules of our school community and the rights and freedom of others. All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' race, gender, language or religion.

However, as part of our commitment to maintaining a truly global community and meeting the school's broader educational and business objectives, we do consider the overall balance of nationalities and language backgrounds within each year group and course as part of our Admissions criteria. This helps ensure a rich, multicultural experience for all students and supports effective classroom dynamics and language learning outcomes.

Public Benefit & Provision of Financial Support

The Governors of Taunton School are committed to broadening access to the school. The School offers Scholarship entrance at 11+, 13+ and 16+ for ability and potential in academics, sport, music, drama, art and DT. In addition to the recognition associated with a scholarship offer, an award in the form of a fee remission may be offered. Our scholarship process follows HMC guidelines. Details and deadlines are available on the school website or from the admissions office. More information can be found in our **Fees Policy**.

In addition to Scholarships, which are based on the merit of the candidate, the School may offer eligible parents means-tested financial support to help with the payment of school fees. These assisted places are usually offered in conjunction with Scholarship awards but occasionally independently. Awards may be made for the full term of the pupil's time in the School or for a defined period due to short-term financial difficulties on the part of the parent. The School requires those parents who request means-tested support to fill in a Statement of Financial Circumstances. This information is treated sensitively. It allows the School to make a judgement on what would be a fair award to parents and also creates a properly accountable system to ensure transparency both to the public and to the Trustees. Means-tested awards are subject to annual review. Please refer to the **Fees Policy** for full details and how to apply.

Special Needs

The school does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided that our Educational Progress Staff can offer them an appropriate

level of support and cater for any additional needs to allow them to thrive in our educational environment, and that our sites can accommodate them. Additional information is available in our **Accessibility Plan and SEND Policy**.

We require parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with us prior to registration. We will make reasonable adjustments to support children during the entry process. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report if they have one. We will discuss thoroughly with parents the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child so that the school can ensure, for example, that they will be able to access the education offered and that we are able to ensure their health and safety, and the health and safety of others. On occasion it may be felt that the school cannot fully meet the needs of the child to enable them to thrive and it is therefore not in the interests of the child to offer a place.

4. Procedures

Entry Points

The usual ages for entry are:

- 0+, 1+, 2+, 3+ Nursery
- 4+ Pre-Preparatory School
- 7+, 11+ Preparatory School
- 13+, 14+ Senior School
- 16+ Sixth Form

It is possible to enter the school in other year groups if places are available. Entry to Year 11 is very common for our one-year GCSE programme.

Entry Requirements

Nursery

Early registration is recommended. Places can be reserved until after birth, by formally registering. As soon as a family communicates the birth of their child, a formal offer is then sent and at this point the deposit of £1000 requested to secure the Taunton School Exceptional offer.

A minimum attendance of two whole days is required. This is to ensure children adjust well to the setting.

Taunton Pre-Preparatory School (TPPS)

New families are invited for a visit or Teams call with the Head and, where possible, a taster will be offered with the child's cohort. If relevant, previous school reports are requested and the current school may be contacted.

Children moving from Taunton School Nursery will take precedence over new enquiries, although automatic entry to the Pre Prep is not guaranteed as, in a small number of cases, we may have concerns that a child might struggle to meet the academic requirements of the school. In this instance, TPPS may not be considered the right setting for the child. This would be communicated as soon as possible.

Taunton Preparatory School (TPS)

The admissions policy for all Preparatory school candidates entering all year groups starts with the parent/guardian providing the most recent school report from the candidate's current school, candidate's birth certificate and/or passport and a completed registration form. Parents/guardians are requested to submit details of any additional learning needs.

In addition, a reference may be sought from a senior member of the teaching staff at the candidate's current school.

Finally, candidates will often spend a minimum of one full day in school before a place is considered. Teaching and boarding staff (if appropriate) feed back to the TPS Head on the pupil's academic performance as well as attitude throughout the day, which helps inform whether an offer is to be made.

All non-native English speakers from Year 3 onwards are required to sit a language test to assess the most suitable academic pathway for the child. This may lead to the need for additional EAL lessons, and the charges for this will be explained at entry to the School.

Children moving from Taunton Pre-Prep will take precedence over new enquiries, although automatic entry to the Prep School is not guaranteed as, in a small number of cases, TPS may not be considered the right setting for the child. This would be communicated as soon as possible.

Taunton Senior School (TS)

Places for pupils from Taunton Preparatory School are guaranteed in the vast majority of cases. Parents will be advised at the earliest opportunity if the educational provision at the Senior School is not deemed appropriate for their child's individual needs.

Candidates joining from other schools at 13+ (Year 9) or 14+ (Year 10) are considered individually in the light of the reference from their current Head, their most recent school reports and an interview with the Head or another senior member of staff. Online interviews are acceptable. There are no formal entrance examinations but there is a requirement to complete our online assessments in English, Mathematics, Verbal-Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning to provide us with further information about the candidate's academic profile.

Admission to the Sixth Form is normally conditional upon the candidate obtaining a minimum of 5 GCSE passes at grades 5 to 9, usually including English and Mathematics, with higher grades in the subjects the candidate wishes to take at A level or International Baccalaureate. A reference from the candidate's current Head, most recent school reports, including predicted grades, and an informal interview with the Head or another senior member of staff, are also important parts of the admissions process. For a student who is not sitting GCSE exams, there is a requirement to complete our online assessments in English, Mathematics, Verbal-Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning in order to provide us with further information about the candidate's academic profile.

International Students

Taunton School warmly welcomes applications from international students and those for whom English is not their first language. All international students aged Year 8 or below, regardless of their current level of English,

will join either Taunton Preparatory School, Taunton Pre-Preparatory School, or the Nursery, depending on their age.

For senior-aged students (age 13+), there are multiple academic pathways available based on the student's English proficiency. To gain direct entry into Taunton Senior School, candidates must demonstrate a sufficient command of English to enable them to thrive both academically and socially. Typically, students will need a minimum English level of B1 for Year 9, B1+ for Years 10 & 11, and C1 for Years 12 & 13. International students must also be capable of managing the academic demands of the subjects they intend to study.

International students in Years 9 and 10 (13 – 14 years old) with a lower level of English (A1 – B1) may be offered a place on one of our bespoke GCSE Access Pathways. These GCSE Access Pathways provide intensive English language instruction alongside an introduction to the British curriculum, preparing students for successful progression into the mainstream school.

For International (and UK) students applying to join the school in Year 11 (15-16 years old), we offer a one-year GCSE/Pre-IB programme, with students requiring a minimum level of English of B1.

For Sixth Form entry (16 – 18 years old), international applicants must demonstrate a high fluency in English; typically a minimum level of C1 for AL, IB & BTEC and B2 for the Foundation Programme.

In accordance with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations, the school is required, by law, to ensure that each international applicant qualifies as a 'genuine student'. To this end, all international applicants are required to submit their most recent school report (translated into English), a copy of their passport, and a completed registration form. A reference from the Head of the candidate's current school may be requested, although this is not mandatory. Candidates must also complete our online entrance assessments in English, Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning, and will attend an online interview with the Head or another senior member of staff.

Note that testing for entry into Senior School can be undertaken in the candidate's present school or in an educational agent's office provided it is conducted under examination conditions.

Safeguarding
The School is obliged to contact a pupil's previous school in relation to any safeguarding concerns. Further information can be found in our **Child Protection & Safeguarding policy**.

Outstanding School Fees
The School reserves the right to establish from any previous school that all outstanding fees have been paid. The Governors of Taunton School owe a duty to the school to ensure they are not taking on a risk of bad debts unnecessarily and wish to avoid the disruption to the education and welfare of a child who has to be excluded for non-payment of fees very soon after arriving at a new school.

Candidate's Age
We may offer places to pupils one year behind their standard year group if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement based on academic criteria and maturity, that this would be in the best interests of the pupil and the School. Very occasionally we may offer places to pupils one year ahead on the same basis.

Disclosures

Parents must, as soon as possible, disclose any known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's social, emotional and mental health, development, behaviour, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties. Any child protection issues or reports should also be fully disclosed. Should an undisclosed condition or issue subsequently become apparent, and the school cannot fully meet the needs of the pupil, or current pupils may be at risk as a result, parents may be required to withdraw the child from school.

Over-Subscription

Some year groups in the school may be oversubscribed. If we have to decide between two or more candidates of equal academic ability who meet our admission requirements after all appropriate allowances and special consideration have been given, the school will take the following criteria into consideration:

- Are there already siblings in the school?
- Does the child have a particular skill, talent or aptitude?
- Does the child wish to board?
- Do the parents or legal guardian have the ability to pay a higher proportion of the school fees?
- Are the parents or legal guardian able to commit to a long-term enrolment of their child at the school?
- Will a suitable balance of nationalities within classes/year groups be maintained?
- Are the parents or legal guardian members of a free church?

5. Charitable Objects

The Objects of the Charity are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by the provision of a school or such other means as the Governors shall from time to time determine provided always that:

- in admitting pupils to the School, the Governors must exercise (all other things being equal) a preference in favour of sons and daughters of members of the Churches; and
- in carrying out its objects, the Charity shall uphold the founding principles of the School which are rooted in the Christian faith and recognise the particular emphasis of its Free Church foundation on the importance of personal responsibility in the quest for faith, and respect for all religious traditions.

Free Churches Preference

Notwithstanding the need for equal treatment, it is a requirement of our Charitable Objects, stated above, that admissions preference shall be given to the Free Churches (this was a requirement of the Charity Commission who, when the School's constitution was updated in 2000, insisted that this preference was retained in order to balance other educational foundations such as those giving a preference to the Catholic faith).

Christian Ethos

The Christian principles of the School are also contained within the Charitable Objects. The School is registered as being a school of special religious character and all pupils are expected to attend our church services and school assemblies, which are of a Christian nature and fundamental to our Christian ethos.