

ANNEX 27

ADMISSIONS POLICY

References:

- A. Education Act 2002
- B. School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- C. SI 2003/1910 (as amended).
- D. ISI Regulatory Requirements (0910)
- E. <http://www.isi.net/documentation/docindex.htm>
- F. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/docs/RevisedSchoolAdmissionsCode041208.pdf>
- G. Code of Practice for Local Authorities on Delivery of Free Early Years Provision for 3 & 4 year olds (September 2010).

General

Vinehall School is a co-educational day and boarding independent school for pupils from ages 2 to 13. The school has approximately 300 pupils and children may board from Year 3 onwards.

We welcome applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds so long as they are in sympathy with the general ethos of the school as set out in the Parents' Handbook, a copy of which is available on the school's website.

We admit pupils at all stages from Nursery through to Year 8.

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 Vinehall. We hold a number of Open Days each year, which 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, our Registrar, Mrs Fiona Parry on 01580 883090 or email fionaparry@vinehallschool.com to arrange a visit.

The Entry Procedure

Following a visit, parents wishing to register their children to start at Vinehall should contact our Registrar for further details.

Entry to the Pre-Prep, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and KS1

Parents fill in a registration form which they return with a registration fee (not required for Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE) only children). They will receive acknowledgement on receipt of both the registration form and the fee.

Once the registration fee is paid, parents receive additional information. Parents of EYFS and KS1 children receive a Welcome Pack. The pack includes a covering letter from the Head of Pre-Prep and a Welcome Handbook for Parents; uniform lists and a medical form; an All About Me Booklet for EYFS children and an invitation for children to attend a taster session; a days letter for parents of children in Nursery and Kindergarten to select sessions and further information about clubs and activities such as After School Club,

A Welcome evening takes place in May for parents of children joining the EYFS the following September. The evening is part social and part sharing of information. Parents are encouraged to attend in order to have another opportunity to meet the staff, find out more about a typical day and ask questions. The taster days usually follow the week after and initial observations of the child are made.

Children applying for a Nursery or Kindergarten place may attend on a part-time basis. Nursery children must attend two morning sessions as a minimum and Kindergarten three morning sessions. Parents can elect for their child to select some full days. As the year progresses it is expected that all children increase their sessions; parents and staff discuss what is felt to be best for each child. We

have a January entry point for children whose second birthday falls during the autumn term. These children either join the Nursery or make up a separate Pre-Nursery group as appropriate.

Entry to the Prep School

Vinehall Prep School is partly selective academically. 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. Academic standards are generally high and this should be borne in mind at the selection stage.

Once prospective pupils for the Prep School are registered, parents receive a pack containing our standard Terms and Conditions, insurance scheme information, a copy of the school rules for pupils, various items of medical information, library thumbprint information and the following forms which all require completion and signature from both parents: medical, photography consent and social register. Overseas boarders will receive the following additional forms: UK guardian details, EAL agreement and bed linen choices.

Applicants for admission should ideally register in the year preceding the desired year of admission. However, we appreciate that events such as moving house and other personal circumstances may necessitate an application at a much later stage.

Equal Treatment

Our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Generous bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school.

Vinehall School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background. Our provision for bursaries is described below.

Special Needs

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our small Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can cope with them. We ask parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the School well in advance so that we can make adequate provision for him/her. In this case, parents must declare if the child has a statement of special educational need and we request a copy of any report by an outside agency.

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. We also request any relevant medical information.

The Assessment Process

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

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

Pre-Prep, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and KS1

EYFS and KS1 children attend a taster morning or day preceding their entry into school. This enables the children to become familiar with the staff and learning environment. Time is put aside for parents

to talk to staff about the children's individual needs and stages of development. Staff observations of the children and the All About Me Booklet for EYFS children are good starting points for discussion. If necessary the SENCO for EYFS and KS1 children will be involved in discussion with parents in order to ensure that preparations can be made to offer the appropriate provision for the child. All information is collated by the class teachers or key persons and forms the basis of the EYFS Learning Journeys, EY Profiles or Pupil folders and Individual Learning Profiles (ILPs) in KS1. In addition records and/or reports are requested from any previous settings.

Prep School

Children are awarded places based on their reports from previous schools and discussion with the Head, Deputy Head and/or Director of Studies when visiting the school. When they come for a taster day, children in Year 4 and above are given a shortened CAT3 test to indicate potential and only in cases where we believe that Vinehall would not be suitable for a child would the parents be advised that the child has not qualified for entry.

We interview all candidates as part of our assessment process for each age group.

Sibling Policy

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

Scholarships and Bursaries

The Governors of Vinehall School are committed to broadening access to the school by offering financial assistance with the payment of schools fees to eligible parents/guardians in the form of bursaries and scholarships.

Such assistance, which may amount to a discount of up to 100% on tuition fees payable, depending on the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants, is subject to repeat testing of parental means each year and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances.

The level of assistance is made on the basis of the Vinehall School Scale of Assistance, which sets out award levels in relation to a family's financial circumstances. The Scale of Assistance is reviewed and revised annually by the Bursar and Head to reflect any changes in fee costs, and approved by the Governors. Though awards are generally tied to this scale, they may be varied upwards or downwards depending on individual parents/guardians' circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors), compassionate or other pertinent considerations.

Scholarships

Scholarships are only available to families who are not already part of the Vinehall community and are for award to children who would not otherwise be able to benefit from a Vinehall education. The intention is to attract gifted and talented children who will enhance our community and provide them with a broad range of educational opportunities and training in preparation for 13+ transfer to Cranbrook or a Public School, the latter probably through a scholarship.

The earliest that candidates may apply for a Scholarship is during Year 3 for the following September (i.e. for Year 4). Scholarships are advertised in the local press in December/January and parents/guardians apply through forms available from the Registrar. Scholarships are competitive and entry tests take place in February.

Applicants are interviewed by the Head and tested in English, Maths and on CAT3. Children with special talent in a specific area (e.g. music, drama, sports) are seen by the Head of the relevant department and supporting references and reports are taken into account.

The level of financial assistance provided, which may be up to 100% remission on fees, is determined by the same assessment of financial need used in an application for a bursary (see The Application Process below). Application forms should be submitted by the end of January so that they may be assessed in advance of the children's testing in February.

The Head, Deputy Head and Director of Studies will grade applicants in order of their academic and other talents, together with an assessment of their ability and potential to benefit from the educational opportunities available, while the Bursar will assess the level of financial assistance necessary in each case. Recommendations will then be put to the Scholarships Committee.

Bursaries

Requests for bursary assistance usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the school, where a place has been offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees in full.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education.

The full policy on Bursaries and Scholarships may be obtained from the Registrar.

Overseas Applicants

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Vinehall as a boarder provided he/she has a relative or legal guardian living in the UK with whom he/she can stay for some weekends. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we prefer not to run a short-term study programme, and prefer overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study, usually an academic year. In certain circumstances we will accept pupils for shorter periods and this should be discussed with the Registrar.

Fluency in English

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the School, pupils should be relatively fluent English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

Religious Beliefs

Although Vinehall is a Christian school, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we offer the opportunity for Jews, Hindus, Muslims and other faiths to practice their own beliefs. However, parents should be aware that there is compulsory Saturday morning school for Years 7 and 8. All pupils are expected to attend assemblies, which will adhere to the school's Christian ethos, and events such as the school Carol Service and the Remembrance Day Service.

School's Contractual Terms and Conditions

A copy of the School's Terms and Conditions will be provided to parents by the Registrar as part of the admissions process, which parents are required to sign and return.

Provision of Information

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website or on request from the school office.

Notice Requirements

In all cases, with the exception of children funded solely by EYEE, if parents wish to withdraw their child from the School (other than at the normal leaving date), they are required to give the School a term's notice to that effect or pay a term's fees in lieu of notice,.

Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process but the School's complaints procedure is available on the website or on request from the school office.

Related Documents:

1. Policy on Bursaries and Scholarships.