

## Dragon School Admissions Policy

Applies to Prep, Pre-Prep and EYFS

Reviewed and approved:	Head of Admissions May 2025
Next review due:	May 2026



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[www.dragonschool.org](http://www.dragonschool.org)

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Dragon School Safeguarding Policy
- Dragon School Guardianship Policy
- Dragon School Complaints Policy
- Dragon School Behaviour Policy
- Dragon Equal Opportunities Policy

For more information regarding the School's transformational bursary programmes, please refer to the Means Tested Bursary Policy.

Throughout this Admissions Policy the term "parents" includes legal guardians and all others who have parental responsibility for children entering the School.

Dragon School is a co-educational boarding and day school for children from ages 4 to 13. It comprises the Pre-Prep and the Preparatory School (Prep) and children can start boarding from Year 4. We offer a range of boarding options from full and weekly boarding to flexi boarding (1-3 nights) for our Day pupils. Our Prep pupils have the choice to take part in our unique Saturday morning enrichment programme, Dragon Quest.

Our Admissions Pathway follows 5 stages

<u><a href="#">1.Enquiry</a></u>	<u><a href="#">2. Visit</a></u>	<u><a href="#">3.Register</a></u>	<u><a href="#">4.Experience</a></u>	<u><a href="#">5.Become</a></u>
Contact the Admissions Team by phone, email or use the website form	Individual tours Open Days	On our website	Stay and Play in Reception Experience mornings in Pre-Prep or days at the Prep Overnight stays for boarders	Offer letter Deposit and Contract Onboarding pathway

### 1. ENQUIRY

We are looking for children with an enthusiasm for learning, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. Dragons are encouraged to be free thinkers and to 'reach for the sun'. The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art, and sport. Our children move onto a wide range of senior schools and many achieve scholarships to leading independent schools. There are also many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing well-balanced, confident Dragons. These are delivered through

activities during the normal curriculum programme, after school clubs and our Saturday morning enrichment programme, *Dragon Quest*. All pupils are encouraged to engage in *Dragon Quest* and all those who are boarding on a Friday night will be expected to attend. All pupils who are selected to represent the School on a Saturday, for example in a match or as tour guides at an Open Morning are expected to come to School to attend the events.

The main points of entry are at Reception (4+), Year 3 (7+), Year 4 (8+) and Year 7 (11+), but we are a dynamic community and may have day and boarding spaces in all year groups.

Enquiries can be made directly to our Admissions Team by phone or by completing the enquiry form on the website.

## **2. VISITING THE SCHOOL**

You will find further information about the School on our website, [www.dragonschool.org](http://www.dragonschool.org), but since deciding on the right school for your child is very important, we believe that a personal visit is invaluable and we very much hope that you and your child will come and see us. We hold a number of Open Mornings across the academic year which give a general introduction to the School. Details are published on our website and parents can book online. We can also arrange an individual tour at other times too. We want to make sure that you understand the admissions pathway and that decision making follows the best timeline for all concerned.

To visit our Pre-Prep on Richards Lane or Prep on Bardwell Road, please visit our website, email us [admissions@dragonschool.org](mailto:admissions@dragonschool.org) or ring one of the Admissions Team to book a tour (Tel: +44 (0)1865 315405).

A tour by the Admissions Team or senior staff will enable you to get a feel for daily life at School. We hope that during this time we can discuss our respective educational aims and answer any queries you may have. This can be an opportunity for parents to discuss, in confidence, details of any special educational needs their child may have. It is important that all parties are content that a child will cope with a diverse and rich curriculum, feel safe and happy in our learning environment and make a positive contribution to the school. We would also like parents to develop an understanding of the School's ethos, policies and procedures so that the working partnership between future Dragon families and the School can begin.

We recognise the importance of information sharing so that we can care for and safeguard all children in line with our statutory duty of care.

## **3. REGISTER**

To progress the application further, families complete the registration form on our website and an administrative £150 fee is payable. The Admissions Team will then be in contact as appropriate – for example for September 2026 entry, we will make contact in the Summer/Autumn of 2025. Obviously, some families will be moving more suddenly for mid-year entry points and then we will work with families accordingly.

#### **4. EXPERIENCE**

Children at the Dragon are recognised as individuals: each discovers how to learn, as well as what to learn, through an ethos of mutual respect and celebration of achievement. Therefore our assessment pathway aims to identify a child's potential – not simply their current attainment – and to assess whether they will benefit from the education provided, so no preparation is needed. We meet all prospective children as part of the admissions pathway for each age group. We also advise parents of children with special educational needs to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the pathway starts in order that the School can support the child on their experience day. Our assessments aim to identify those prospective pupils who will be able to access our curriculum at each key stage to advance through the School. Once a pupil at the School, we would discuss with you in good time if we felt such a move through the year groups was not appropriate.

For entry into Reception (4+), we do not conduct interviews or tests. During the academic year prior to entry we invite the children to spend some time with us at School to assure ourselves and you that the curriculum and the Pre-Prep environment is suitable for your child and that we can meet all their needs.

We invite all children over the age of 5 for assessment as part of a morning or day in school. The children will experience a taste of our expected standards in Maths and English. It is not academically competitive and is designed to check that the children will thrive within our community. We talk to the children about their interests and they have the opportunity to engage in normal lessons and/or activities.

There may be circumstances where a visit and assessment in person is not possible; we will always seek to discuss alternative options for prospective pupils who cannot visit the school in person. This is likely to be an online meet with the child and depending on their age they may show us some of their work or have a conversation with one of our staff. We may also ask them to undertake some online assessment supervised by their current school.

We ask for a latest school report and a further confidential reference is always requested from the child's current school to help us understand their educational background, ideally before the experience day, but essentially in order to move to offer. We also note when a learning need has arisen or has been reported prior to the assessment day. The average ability of the children in any one year group is above the national average and we design our curriculum so that children will feel comfortable meeting the needs of most senior school entry requirements. It is our responsibility as professionals to ensure that any decision we come to about entry into the School will be the best for that individual child. We need to ensure that they will be able to access our curriculum (at each key stage) and advance happily through the School. We are happy to discuss decisions with you.

Where a child has a learning need, it will be important to assess whether we can provide adequate support for them to meet their needs in our community.

Learning Support lessons are additionally charged, the details of which are set out on the School's website.

Where possible, we always seek to arrange an overnight stay in a boarding house for any child seeking a boarding place. Children stay in a junior or a senior house with their peer group.

## **5. BECOME**

We aim to give you a decision speedily after the experience day. Parents of those children who we judge will not benefit from a Dragon education will be informed and given advice.

The formal offer of any place is made by the Head of Admissions in writing and is considered complete on return of the contract and the deposit within 28 days. The contract must be signed by all parties with parental responsibility unless some other arrangement has been made with the School.

Joining literature is sent out and requested prior to the term of admission; we will need this information to ensure appropriate care for your child and we ask you to complete this in full prior to the child's start date. We expect that the parents of all full/weekly boarders will appoint an educational guardian. (For further details, please refer to our Guardianship Policy on our School website.)

The final pathway to 'Becoming a Dragon' usually begins the term before joining. We aim to ensure that families are supported in their transition with events such as Future Friday, Information Meetings, Meet the teacher and settling in sessions.

Further notes on the admissions pathway are set out in Appendix 1.

## **SIBLING POLICY**

Most siblings join us, although admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where we recommend that a sibling is likely to thrive in a different environment to ours.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Equality is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Dragon School. And is committed to operating within both the limits and the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 and its own Equal Opportunities Policy.

The School aims 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. To that end, the Governors are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible and prospective parents, means-tested financial support to assist with the payment of school fees. A summary of the School's Transformational Bursary Programme is included below.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

For the purposes of this document, in line with the SEN code of practice, young people in our School have special educational needs where their learning profile or disability requires

provision which is different from or additional to that normally available to young people of the same age.

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. Children with specific diagnosed, or assessed learning needs, in or out of the classroom, can be supported in a variety of ways. Dragon School welcomes all young people who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer, are able to access the curriculum and can flourish in the caring environment of the School. We welcome young people with special educational needs and are committed to working with parents and carers to ensure that every young person has the best possible start to their time with us. Treating everyone as an individual and celebrating uniqueness is important to us

We will consider each prospective pupil's admission individually.

Parents of a child who has any known special educational needs or learning difficulty, must provide the School with full written details at registration or during the admissions pathway and prior to an experience day. The School needs to be made aware of any known disability, special educational needs or learning difficulties that may affect the child's ability to participate in the admissions process and take full advantage of the education provided at the School. With this information, the School will, in the case of any child, assess those needs and consult with parents over any reasonable adjustments that can be made to make sure the information and application procedure is accessible to the child and that the School can cater adequately for the child if they become a pupil. The School acknowledges its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015. Similarly, if a learning difficulty, medical condition or disability becomes apparent after admission, the School will consult with the parents about reasonable adjustments that can be made and which may allow the child to continue at the School. If it is felt that the School can no longer provide for the educational needs of the child, then parents will be given every support and advice in seeking an alternative educational establishment for their child (see Standards and Monitoring of Progress Policy).

We expect that parents of all children - prospective or current - with special educational needs, will provide full disclosure of any medical, educational psychologist or other reports regarding their child's disability, medical condition or educational needs. This information may be used to support any request, for example, for examination extra time provision or other special arrangements. In assessing any child, the School may take such advice and require parents to seek assessments it regards as appropriate. We will, of course, talk each stage through with parents on a case by case basis. Failure by parents to make the necessary disclosure of information may prevent the School from providing adequate support and may jeopardise the entry or advancement of the child through the School.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

The School does not offer scholarships but a large number of our students will follow a scholarship pathway onto their Senior School.

## **OVERSEAS APPLICANTS AND THOSE WHO REQUIRE PERMISSION TO BE IN THE UK AND STUDY AT THE SCHOOL**

We welcome overseas children provided that they have suitable Guardianship arrangements in the UK. In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the School, children must have a good level of English. Normally children should have been educated in English for at least one year before coming to the School or have attended an international school for 2 years. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can normally be arranged at an additional charge.

Please note that some pupils may be required to have a Child Student Route (formerly known as Tier 4) visa, or otherwise qualify under the UK's immigration system to study in the UK. The parents must inform the Admissions Office when returning a completed registration form or at any other time if their child requires sponsorship from the School in order to obtain a visa to study at the School. Whilst the School and its partner Sable, will issue a CAS number to parents, it is the responsibility of parents to apply for any necessary visa. United Kingdom Visas and Immigration issues our licence as an educational sponsor. They regularly monitor all boarding schools to make sure the correct procedures for Child Student visas, Immigration and Guardianship are being followed in order to ensure that overseas children are properly supported. Part of our sponsorship obligations include ensuring that all children studying with us have the requisite right to study under UK immigration law. As such, we may ask you for proof of nationality and visa status. Our aim is to make sure we carry out these duties attentively to safeguard children in our care at all times and protect our status as a sponsor of educational student visas.

Sable is our trusted partner for all child student and UK Immigration applications. The company has been providing immigration services for over 30 years and is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. We have retained Sable's services to ensure all UK immigration applications are prepared in compliance with UKVI requirements. <https://www.sableinternational.com/uk-education-corporate-services>

If your child has or will have a time restricted or temporary visa in any other immigration category (for example as a dependent) please provide a copy of this when returning the registration form or Acceptance Form, or as soon as this is available.

It is the parents' responsibility at all times to ensure that their child has the appropriate immigration permission to live in the United Kingdom and to study at this School.

Please note that we reserve the right to:

- (1) request further information and sight of documentation in support of your declarations regarding immigration and
- (2) to share information with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and the Home Office for the purposes of compliance with our responsibilities as a licensed sponsor.

## **SCHOOL'S CONTRACTUAL TERMS & CONDITIONS**

A copy of the School's contractual terms and conditions will be made available to parents on the offer of a place. The standard charges (including deposits, rates for individual music, and learning support lessons) are set out in the 'Fees and Deposits' section under 'Admissions', on the School's website. Please note that all fees and extras are subject to annual review.

## **HOW WE WILL USE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO US DURING THE ADMISSIONS PATHWAY**

The information will be used by the School during the admissions pathway to manage and assess your application and your child's suitability for a place at the School. If your child is not offered a place, we will only retain this information for as long as we need to. For more information about how the School will use your information please see our Pupil Privacy Notice and our Parent Privacy Notice.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

This policy is available on the School website and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

## **SAFEGUARDING IN THE ADMISSIONS PATHWAY**

The Admissions Team is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of every child at the School in line with the School's Safeguarding Children Policy with which every member of the department must be familiar.

We aim to ensure that at each stage of the admissions pathway we are aware of the learning and pastoral needs of the children with whom we come into contact. In order to do this we gather, record and share appropriately, information about a child who may join the School as a pupil. In the event of a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified.

It is vitally important that families share information with us through the admissions pathway to ensure a child's Dragon experience starts as positively as possible with their wellbeing prioritised.

Please note that when children leave or join the School at 'non-standard' points (where a school compulsory-aged child leaves before Year 8 or joins after the start of the Autumn Term of the Reception year) we are obliged to provide information of the transition to Oxfordshire County Council.

## **PROMOTION OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR**

To foster a school culture rooted in Kindness, Courage, and Respect, we encourage all members of our community to actively support pupils in meeting our shared expectations. We understand that children may make mistakes, and we are committed to guiding them through reflective practices that help them learn from their decisions and avoid repeating

negative behaviours. However, if a pupil's behaviour becomes a recurring concern or if a specific incident significantly breaches our expectations—as outlined in the upper tiers of our sanctions framework—their place at the school may be reviewed. For further details, please refer to the Pre-Prep and Prep Behaviour Policies and the Exclusion Policy available on the school website.

## **COMPLAINTS**

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions pathway; but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request and is available on the School's website.



## **APPENDIX 1 - ADMISSIONS PATHWAY**

### **REGISTRATION**

A child may be registered at any time after birth. Please note that:

- The school year runs from September to August. Children born on or after the 1st September are put into the following year, so they go through as the oldest in their year, rather than the youngest.
- The registration form can be completed online along with payment of the registration fee to the Bursary. (The registration fee is to cover the cost of administering the registration procedure, including administration each year's pathway. This payment is not returnable.)
- The School will then respond by informing parents that the child has been placed on the pathway for the year in question. The School will be in touch about School events and entry procedures a year before the proposed date of entry.

At registration, we will ask for details of the prospective pupil including full name, date of birth, gender, address of normal residence and, where appropriate, current school. We will also require details of all those who have parental responsibility (i.e. legal responsibility) for the prospective pupil including addresses, telephone numbers and email contact details. This person may be a legal guardian, or step parent and their consent to the child attending school will be required if an offer of a place is made.

### **YEAR GROUP ENTRY POINTS**

The main points of entry are at Reception (4+), Year 3 (7+), Year 4 (8+) and Year 7. However we will usually have day and boarding places available throughout the School.

Those children entering the School in Year 3 are expected to transfer to the Prep School in Year 4.

Please note that:

- We ask you to tell us your chosen year group and status (day or boarding). Should you decide not to move forward with the admissions pathway for your chosen year of entry, you may ask to be deferred to a later entry point. Please note that there is no automatic moving of children to future entry points if they do not take up a place in the Year(s) for which they were first registered.
- At any given time we are only actively working on the next academic year. For all subsequent years the enquiries and registrations are static.
- We write to everyone about a year before the time of entry. It is vital that we have been informed of any changes of contact details since registration, or you may miss a deadline and lose the opportunity of a place. Often we find that circumstances may have changed and some families may withdraw at this point.

- It is common for vacancies to occur throughout the year, due either to the plans of prospective parents changing, or because children within the School are leaving. Please feel free to ring the Admissions Team with any enquiries.
- We are always happy to answer questions or discuss your plans either over the telephone or in person.
- For further information regarding the points of entry, please see the sections below.

## **DEPOSITS AND CONTRACTS**

On successful completion of the assessment pathway, parents will be invited to secure offered place(s) by returning a signed contract and paying a deposit by a stated date.

The deposit will be returned by a credit on the account at the end of the child's final term at the School, unless the parents express a wish to donate the deposit to the School Transformational Bursary Fund.

More details on our Terms and Conditions are available on request.

## **BOARDING**

Children enrol as either boarding (minimum 4 nights) or day places.

A number of day children change over to boarding during their time in the School. The School meets as many requests of this nature as it can, but parents are recommended to give as much notice as possible. Day pupils who choose a flexible day boarding option may stay for between one and three nights per week; this can be booked on a half term or termly basis. Where space allows, we also welcome occasional boarders; this can be booked week by week.

Parents of all full or weekly boarding children must arrange for their child to have a guardian in this country who will be able to accommodate children if parents cannot be in the UK and to deal with any emergencies that may arise when parents are outside the UK. There are professional organisations which are prepared to offer these services and the School can pass on details although we cannot recommend.

Parents of day pupils who take up flexible boarding (1-3 nights) must ensure that they have provided the School with details of a UK-based emergency contact.

## **CHILDREN OUT OF YEAR**

We believe that, in general, children should be educated in their normal age group with an appropriately differentiated curriculum. We shall consider individually, the most appropriate year group for any applications where there is a concern.

We will be happy to advise on this matter and may ask parents to provide information in support of any application for the deferral of the admission of their child into the School. In each case, decisions will be made based on the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child.

## **GENERAL**

Although every effort will be made to notify parents, please note that the School reserves the right to change the Admissions pathway without notice at any time.

Prospective parents should be aware that the School reserves the right to vary the entry procedures and assessment at any time after registration has taken place, and to vary or waive them in any respect in individual cases.

The final decision on offering places sits with staff's professional judgement and may be at the Head's discretion.

Parents are also advised that they should keep any current school informed of any intended move to Dragon School and must observe their regulations regarding the giving of due notice. We cannot accept anyone from another independent school who has failed to meet their commitments to the previous school in full prior to joining us.

The information on the School's website is not part of any agreement between parents and the School. Although correct at the time of writing, certain statements may go out of date from time to time. Parents wishing to place specific reliance upon any statement in the web pages referred to in this guidance should seek written confirmation before accepting an offer of a place.