



Pitsford School

School Policy Document

Name of Policy: Admissions Policy

Audience: Public

Date for Next Review: September 2024

Governors (Personnel & Education Committee) Responsible for Reviewing and Updating the Policy: The School Bursar

Introduction

Pitsford School aims to be an inclusive co-educational independent school for students from ages 3 to 18, where every student feels valued by all with whom they come into contact ~~with~~ during their time at the school. Pitsford School's aim is to encourage applications from students pupils with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our students for today's world. Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet Pitsford School's admission criteria to attend Pitsford School. Pitsford School's provision for bursaries is described below.

Pitsford School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a student's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background. This policy explains how students may join the School at various points across the age range from 3 to 18.

Pitsford School is an academically selective school. Our selection process is designed to identify students who are able to benefit from the school's particular environment and ethos and who will make a positive contribution towards life both inside and outside of the school.

We are interested in their natural intelligence and curiosity, their appetite for learning and readiness to throw themselves into the School's wider life. Where students joining Pitsford School have been present at a previous school, a report will be requested from the previous school at the time of the assessment/interview, together with a reference from the Head Teacher, in order to discharge our legal and education duties. No student will start without receiving a satisfactory reference.



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Parents' Responsibility to their Children and to the School

Pitsford School requests that parents make the School aware of any relevant information regarding a prospective student's specific educational needs, mental health or physical disability or any reason why the performance at any assessment may be below normal performance levels at the time of application. In assessing any student, we may take such advice and require such assessments as we regard to be appropriate. Subject to this, we will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

Special Educational Needs

Pitsford School does not lawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. Pitsford School welcomes students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that our students, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Our policy is to apply our admission criteria to all potential students. We require parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's needs with Pitsford School before they sit the entrance examination so that we can make adequate provision for them. In addition to the Registration Form, we request that an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report is also provided. This is so that Pitsford School can assess their child's needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that Pitsford School can ensure, 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.

Pitsford School will discuss thoroughly with the parents (and their child's medical advisors, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a student at Pitsford School, to ensure that the prospective student is not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a student who is not disadvantaged because of a disability.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which Pitsford School are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments, Pitsford School feels that a prospective student is not going to be able to access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other students and staff may be put at risk, Pitsford School reserves the right to decline a place at Pitsford School.

Assessment Process

The aim of the assessment process is to identify potential. Pitsford School is looking for well-rounded students—with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. Pitsford School has strong traditions in music, art, debating, community activities and sport. There



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are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

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

References will be sought from the Head of a student's current school(s) as part of the assessment process.

Children Whose Application is to Other Than Their Chronological Year Group

Pitsford School does not usually admit students to a year group other than their chronological year group. It is better for students to work in their chronological year group so that their peer group comprises of students who are at their level developmentally, physically and socially. Exceptions to the policy may be made if there are good and sufficient reasons to suggest that the exception will benefit the students and not disadvantage others in the target year group.

In the School, students may be admitted to a year group other than their chronological age group in order to accommodate their developmental level. At this age we believe that the stage that the child has reached is more important than their age.

Siblings

Most siblings join us at Pitsford School. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where Pitsford School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. Application will be based upon the normal admissions criteria and processes.

Scholarships

Pitsford School offers a number of scholarships each year in the Senior School. There are limited scholarships for outstanding pupils who show a particular flair for Music, Art, Drama or Sport. Typically, we would expect Sports Candidates to be County level or above. Art students will be asked to provide a portfolio and Music students will be invited to attend an audition based on their application. (Wording from website)

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered a reduction in tuition fees.

We encourage parents of scholars who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the tuition fees to apply (at the same time as registration of their child) for one of Pitsford School's means-tested bursaries.

Scholarships will only be awarded to students who have passed Pitsford School's entrance examination in the Senior School.



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A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with Pitsford School's Terms and Conditions.

Bursaries

Pitsford School's bursary programme is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet Pitsford School's entry criteria to take up a place here. Pitsford School offers a number of means-tested awards annually to entrants at the usual points of entry, where the parents have indicated on the Registration Form that they require financial support. Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria published within the application information. Both parents/guardians are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need; but can extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need.

Bursaries are always offered for twelve months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends Pitsford School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or wealth.

A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with Pitsford School's Terms and Conditions.

Application Process

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 Pitsford School. We hold a number of Open Days throughout the year, which give a general introduction to Pitsford School. Details are published on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. Please contact Pitsford School's Registrar on 01604 880306 or email Registrar@pitsfordschool.com to arrange a visit. If it is not possible to hold open events or arrange a visit because of circumstances beyond Pitsford School's control, then Pitsford School will publish on its website the alternative arrangements in place.

The Registrar will then contact the prospective parents/guardians to discuss individual requirements and arrange for the parents/guardians and child to visit Pitsford School for a tour and to meet the Headmaster. The prospective student will also be invited to attend a taster day.

The prospective pupil will be offered an assessment and the parents/guardians will be asked to pay a £75.00 registration fee per family.

The parents/guardians will be asked for permission to apply to the child's current school for a reference ahead of any offer of a place. Once permission is gained, the Registrar will contact the child's current school.

Following the assessment and reference, the Headmaster will advise the Registrar of the outcome. If appropriate, a verbal offer will be made; if an offer is not made, the Registrar will explain why Pitsford School is unable to accommodate the student.



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The Registrar will send out a formal offer or decline of a place.

Offers of a Place

An offer of a place to a student at Pitsford School is valid for fourteen (14) days (after which time, the place may be offered to another child on the waiting list). If the acceptance of the offer of a Senior School place is dependent on financial assistance, then an application for a bursary must be made within the fourteen (14) day offer period. Limited bursarial awards are available. Applications will be considered by the Bursary Awards Committee.

Once a satisfactory reference has been received, the parents/guardians will be asked to complete an Acceptance Form and be asked to pay a £600 Acceptance Deposit. The Acceptance Deposit is reimbursed to parents/guardians when the student leaves Pitsford School, but is forfeited should the student not take up the place offered.

Over Subscription

Senior School

If more students fulfil the entrance criteria than there are places available in any year group, priority will be given to:

- Students who attend our Junior School;
- Students who have siblings already enrolled in the School;
- Performance in the Entrance Examination;
- Students whose mother or father were former students;
- Students with a particular skill, talent or aptitude;
- Students who have been registered for a considerable period of time and have paid their Acceptance Deposit.

Junior School

If more students fulfil the entrance criteria than there are places available in any year group, priority will be given to:

- Students whose siblings are already attending Pitsford School;
- Students whose parents/guardians will pay full fees;
- Students whose mother or father were former student's pupils;
- Students with a particular skill, talent or aptitude;
- Students who have been registered for a considerable period of time and have paid their Acceptance Deposit.



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International Applications

Each year we offer places to a small number of international students. Prospective students from overseas are assessed and deemed suitable for entry to Pitsford School if the following criteria are met:

- Their level of competence in English is sufficient to access the curriculum;
- Their academic level is sufficient for the intended point of entry;
- If the student requires a Tier 4 Child Student or Student visa, Pitsford School must have seen sufficient evidence to be confident that his/her visa application is unlikely to be refused.

Children Whose First Language is not English

Pitsford School may admit students whose first language is not English. The admission of such students will be based on our judgement that their level of competence in English is sufficient to access the curriculum. It is recognized that this competence is likely to increase quickly when they are being taught in English and mixing with English-speaking pupils. Students of Junior School age (entering Kits – J6) would be admitted to Pitsford School regardless of the level of competence in English.

Religious Beliefs

Pitsford School welcomes applications from prospective students of all faiths and of no faith. However, parents should be aware that all students are expected to attend certain events, which may have Christian content, for example, Founders' Day, Christmas and Easter.

Terms and Conditions

Pitsford School's terms and conditions are available upon request and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Complaints

Pitsford School's complaints procedure is available on Pitsford School's website and can also be sent to prospective parents on request.

Records and Review

Applicant's details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and Pitsford School's Privacy Notice.

Pitsford School will not hold personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no longer than twelve months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain for longer might include an expression of interest by the parents to reapply for a place, for any reason, at a later date, or the potential of a sibling, or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.



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Admissions and Transitions

Acorns and Kits (Nursery)

Pitsford School supports the offer of the entitlement of both 15 or 30 hours' early years' education for children aged 3 and 4 years old. This universal entitlement is available to every child from the term following their third birthday upwards, until they reach compulsory school age, the term after their fifth birthday. The universal entitlement is for every child, irrespective of family background or family circumstances.

The following dates set out when children become eligible for their fifteen hours' universal entitlement:

A child born in the period:	Will become eligible:
1 April to 31 August	1 September (following the child's third birthday). Autumn school term.
1 September to 31 December	1 January (following the child's third birthday). Spring school term.
1 January to 31 March	1 April (following the child's third birthday). Summer school term.

Children attending Acorns and Kits, the minimum attendance is three full days per week. This is necessary to ensure that the child can access the full range of activities provided and enables young children to have continuity of attendance. The majority of our children are full time by the end of the Spring term before they start in Squirrels (Reception).

At the beginning of each school term, Pitsford School requires parents to complete the 'Parent Contract' supplied by West Northamptonshire Council, so that the school can receive its funding. This is repeated at the beginning of each funding block.

Places in Acorns and Kits are allocated in order of registration. Before a place is confirmed, a child will visit for a session so that we can make sure that they are ready to enjoy all the opportunities we offer. We also make an informal assessment of their readiness to play and



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learn harmoniously with others. Once a place has been confirmed, children can attend our pre-entry sessions. These sessions help new children to become familiar with the setting and confident to be left when the term begins.

Waiting List

Children who are not successful in being offered a place will be placed on a waiting list, unless the parents inform Pitsford School that they no longer wish to be considered. When future places are being allocated the criteria will still apply.

The waiting list will be managed by the Registrar and priority will be given to:

- Children whose siblings currently attend Pitsford School;
- Children whose families require full time places;
- Children whose parents have registered them for entry to Pitsford School beyond Early Years and have paid the Acceptance Deposit;
- Children whose father or mother were former pupils.

When a place becomes available, the School will contact the parent/guardian whose child is suitable for the place and is highest up on the waiting list. They will be asked to confirm whether they require a place within fourteen days. If the place is not required or confirmed within this time, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

If the parent/guardian wishes to take up the place, they will be asked to complete and return the Acorns/Kits Registration Form and pay the Acceptance Deposit to secure the place under the normal admissions procedure above.

Squirrels (Reception)

Any child who is four years old before 1 September is eligible to join Squirrels. Places are allocated in order of registration. Before a place is confirmed, a child will visit for a session so that we can make sure they are ready to enjoy all the opportunities we offer. We also make an informal assessment of their readiness to play and learn harmoniously with others. Once a place has been confirmed, children can attend our pre-entry sessions. These sessions help new children become familiar with the setting and confident to be left when the term begins.

J1 and J2

Prospective students are invited to spend a whole day with the class they wish to join. During their visit they will complete a reading test and an appropriate literacy and numeracy activity. They will also have the opportunity to work and socialise with their peers and focus on their personal, social and emotional development.

J3, J4, J5 and J6

Prospective students are invited to spend a day in the Junior School. During their visit they will complete assessment tests in Mathematics, English and Reading and will have the opportunity to work and socialise with their peers. The Class Teacher will observe their interaction with other pupils, behaviour and general attitude towards work.



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All prospective students must bring their most recent school report, evidence of their National Curriculum attainment levels in Mathematics and English if possible, a current reading book and some examples of recent school work.

Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10

Students are admitted to the Senior School subject to their performance in the entrance examination and a satisfactory report from the Head of their previous school(s). If a school reference is not available, then we may consider the student's last two school reports as an alternative. Judgement is also based on the availability of a place in the class/set commensurate with their academic attainment and potential. This has two implications:

- a. The minimum academic standard of students entering any particular year will depend on the academic standards of the students already accepted into that year, and
- b. At other than normal entry points, a place may not be available in the class appropriate to the academic standard of a new student, even though they meet the entrance criteria.

Year 11

Students are not normally admitted to Year 11 (or part-way through Year 10) because they will already be some way through their GCSE courses. A change of school in this instance is not generally helpful to the student's academic progress. However, under some circumstances, students will be accepted into the School. In these cases, it must be borne in mind that the GCSE options they may have been following at their previous school may be unavailable at Pitsford School.

Sixth Form

Students are admitted to the Sixth Form subject to satisfactory academic attainment and potential, as well as a satisfactory report from the Head of their previous school(s). Our normal minimum requirements for entry into the Sixth Form are at least five GCSEs at Grade 6 and above, with Grade 7 in those subjects wished to be studied at A Level. An interview with a member of the Senior Leadership Team would normally form part of the selection process.