

Gad's Hill School

Admission Procedures Policy (including EYFS)

effective August 2026

Introduction

The admissions procedures aim to ensure that:

- Criteria are clear, fair and objective
- The admission arrangements contribute to raising standards
- Parents have easy access to helpful information
- Admissions procedures take account of learning difficulties and/or disabilities (Equality Act 2010).

Statements of Purpose

At Gad's Hill we aim to enable our students to enjoy school and to achieve good academic qualifications in line with their potential. We also endeavour to develop those personal attributes and qualities which will help guide them on their journey through life. It is our intention that our students leave Gad's Hill as pleasant, articulate, mature, confident and self-reliant young people. These attributes are often as important as academic qualifications in equipping young people with the skills and enthusiasm to make their way in the world and to achieve success.

As such, our curriculum is designed to foster academic success but also to enable a child's personal development and to make their time at school a pleasant and enjoyable one. As well as academic lessons our children will take part in competitive team games, drama productions, music concerts, trips and visits, serve others and (in the Upper School) as CCF cadets take part in a range of military and adventurous training.

It is our expectation that parents and children joining our school subscribe to our aims, objectives and common purpose (as described above) and in becoming members of the Gad's Hill community will support and take part in all that the school has to offer.

Selection Criteria

At Gad's Hill we place as much importance on social development as we do on academic success. We want our pupils to be well qualified and we will work hard with them and their parents to make sure that our children achieve good academic results. However, we recognise that success in life is not solely due to any academic qualifications gained but also often a reflection of personal qualities. Employers value confidence, maturity, self-reliance, teamwork, the ability to get on with people and communicate effectively.

We select children of a wide range of academic abilities who can, with targeted support if required, access an age appropriate or enhanced curriculum. We select children who we believe will work hard, contribute to the life of the school, achieve academic results in excess of their natural ability and become good ambassadors for the school and all that we stand for. We expect that parents support the school's aims, objectives and purpose.

Class sizes

Class sizes are restricted to a maximum of 20 pupils. In exceptional circumstances, the Headmaster, after due consultation with staff and the approval of the Chair of Governors, may increase an individual class capacity to 21 in response to the circumstances at the time.

General

There are two ways in which parents may apply for a place at Gad's Hill.

Most applicants join the school via the main entry points at KN/Nursery (pre-school), J3 (Year 3), or Upper Shell (Year 7). Entry at these ages usually involves a large group of applicants with those children selected commencing school at the start of the Autumn Term.

The second means of entry is that of a casual admission to any year group to fill a vacancy. This may occur at any time during the academic year.

Application Procedure

1. The school holds several open days each year to give interested parents the opportunity to see the school. Prospective pupils and their parents are welcome to visit the school at any time by prior appointment.
2. Parents wishing to consider the school for their child should contact the Admissions team or visit our website and complete a contact form.
3. Parents interested in applying for a place should complete the online registration. In order to complete the registration a £60 payment must be made online when submitting the form. The registration fee is a non-returnable charge to cover the administration costs in processing the application. Parents should complete the form in full and answer all questions to the best of their knowledge. When registering your child it is important to indicate clearly the year group and year of entry that you are registering for as this will determine which class and year of entry your child's application is assigned to. Should you wish to amend this at any time you must first inform the Admissions Manager. Your registration date will then be updated to this new revised date and time and placed on the new list accordingly.
4. The pupil and their parents will be offered the opportunity to visit the school and meet with the Headmaster for a tour and informal interview if they have not previously done so.
5. The Admissions team will seek to obtain a pupil reference from the child's current or previous school or nursery and a copy of their most recent school report. If the child has an EHCP, physical need, a learning cognition need or social, emotional or mental health need that requires additional support, this should be communicated to the school at the time of registration and any diagnosis or specialist reports should be shared with the school.
6. Assessment of the pupil's ability, potential and suitability will take place by interview, academic assessment and taster day. A taster/assessment day enables the child to attend school for the day and gives him/her the opportunity to judge for him/herself whether the school is suitable and for the school to assess their academic ability and general aptitude of the child. During their day children attending in the Juniors or above will complete standardised tests in maths and English so that the school can determine if they will be able to access the curriculum. For potential KN and KR pupils a member of the Nursery department will contact the child's current Nursery and/or conduct a home visit. If the Nursery department feel that the child would make progress and we can meet their needs at Gad's Hill School, they will be invited in for a taster session.
7. Providing both the school and the applicant wish to proceed, then an offer of a place will be made in writing. The parents will then be required to read the accompanying terms and conditions of entry before signing the acceptance form (which is a legally binding contract) and to return this to the school by the stated deadline together with a deposit before a place is guaranteed. If the family would like the school to consider a scholarship application beyond the Charles Dickens Scholarship Award Exam (for entry into Upper Shell/Year 7) then they would be welcome at this time to request an application form.
8. A deposit is held against a child not taking up their place or defaulting school fees in which case it will be forfeited. Otherwise it is returned to parents when the child leaves the school. Full details regarding deposits and liability with respect of fees in lieu of notice, are explained in the school's standard terms and conditions, which are available upon request and provided to parents when an offer of a place is made.

Admission Criteria

Children will be offered a place providing they meet the school's standards with regard to the following admission criteria:

Ability: An assessment of the child's academic ability or attainment in comparison with his/her age cohort. This is measured by teacher assessment and/or by examination depending on the age of the child to ensure that they can access an age-appropriate curriculum. For Nursery a child's meeting of cognitive, personal, and social developmental milestones will be observed and considered. Parents should disclose any relevant information, (such as an EHCP or diagnosis of need) which would enable Gad's Hill School to judge if we are able to meet the specific needs of a pupil. Whilst we can provide quality first teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted intervention to support pupils who may have gaps in their learning, or a specific needs area, including those with EHCPs, we do not have specialist provision or significantly differentiated pathways to support pupils who are unable to access an age-appropriate curriculum. Failure to disclose a need may result in the withdrawal of offer of a place in the school.

Potential: A measure of the child's ability to make academic progress at an age-appropriate rate. This is measured by interview, pupil reference & school/current setting report, observation, teacher assessment and standardised tests in Maths and English.

Suitability: A measure of the child's enthusiasm, behaviour, work ethic, willingness to learn and general conduct. This is done through interview, or by teacher assessment. We will also obtain a copy of the child's most recent school report and request a pupil reference from current school. Suitability includes a child's ability to access our learning environment. Gad's Hill School consists of various buildings across the historic site of Charles Dickens' home and as such the buildings are of varying levels of accessibility due to their historic nature. There are not personal care facilities, so the school must have reasonable confidence that a child is independent in self-care at the time of admission. A child must be able to access the learning environment within the reasonable adjustments that can be implemented.

Parental Support: The parents' willingness to support the aims, objectives and ethos of the school is measured through interview with the Headmaster.

Date of Registration/ Waiting Lists /Priority Candidates /Returning Pupils:

All applications for places at the school, whether at a key entry point or as a casual admission, will be processed in order of date and time of registration. Online registrations are received immediately once the payment has been completed.

Applicants with a sibling already at the school or children of staff will be given priority for assessment followed by date of registration for all other applicants. If the applicant has a sibling who has accepted a place at Gad's Hill but not yet started, they will be given priority for assessment after those with existing siblings.

Should a year group be full then all applicants will remain on the database until a vacancy arises. If a place becomes available, then a child with a sibling at the school or a member of staff with a registered child will be called first followed by date of registration. Should there be several siblings/children of staff on the list, then the child registered first will be called.

For the purpose of this policy, children will be deemed to be siblings if they have at least one common parent, either biological or legally adopted.

An applicant who is applying and stating they have a sibling connection must either have a sibling already at the school or a sibling who has accepted a place at the school and who has guaranteed their place by paying the deposit. Children applying at the same time as their siblings do not receive priority.

Any former pupils wishing to return to the school will need to re-apply by registering in the normal way.

1. CASUAL ADMISSIONS

Parents may apply for their child's admission to the school at any time and for any age group. If there are vacancies then their application will proceed. If there are no vacancies then they will be placed on the database and contacted if a place becomes available.

The applicant will be invited in to attend a taster/assessment day and a pupil reference and a copy of their most recent school report will be obtained from the current school by our Admissions Manager. Providing they meet the school's admission criteria they will be offered a place. If they do not meet the criteria then the next candidate on the list will be invited forward and so on.

2. GROUP ADMISSION PROCEDURES

There are three key entry stages at the school. These are KN (Nursery), J3 (Year 3) and Upper Shell (Year 7). These age groups attract a large number of applications and therefore the admission arrangements are more formalised.

KN NURSERY (PRE-SCHOOL) APPLICATIONS

Children may commence KN (Nursery) after their 3rd birthday as outlined below.

In order to assess if a young child meets the school's admissions criteria, in the early years of their development, the school will seek permission to contact their previous setting for a reference or will arrange a meeting with parents for children who remain at home full time before arranging a taster session.

At Gad's Hill we ensure that every child can experience being healthy, safe, and secure, with their individual needs being met through a high-quality, welcoming, and safe setting where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We recognise that every child's development is unique. Whilst [NHS guidance](#) explains that most children are ready to begin toilet training from around 18 months to 2 years, we understand that some children can be toilet trained earlier and faster than others. Where children do not start at Gad's Hill until after their third birthday, we do not have nappy changing facilities in our nursery. We will, however, work in partnership with parents to support children in learning at their own pace to achieve the *Managing Self* Early Learning Goal:

Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

We support child development toward independence through:

- **Routines and Consistency** with timing prompts to help children anticipate and respond to their bodily signals.
- **Positive Language and Reinforcement** to encourage and build confidence in children's eating, drinking, and toilet use.
- **Promoting Independence and Hygiene** with visual and verbal prompts. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible in eating, changing, and toilet use, with appropriate support and encouragement.

Adapting to Individual Needs, including Equality Act reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs. We work in partnership with parents to align home and nursery practices to support child development. External expertise may also be sought, such as through advice <https://eric.org.uk/>, or signposting parents to seeking medical guidance if there are concerns around areas of development.

Sensitivity and Respect: accidents are part of the process, so if they occur, staff will calmly assist the child in returning to the toilet and encourage them to try again. Staff will support a standing child through providing intimate care to ensure a child is clean and changed. Intimate care would be provided by a member of the EYFS team, with another member of staff close by. Where it is not possible to ensure that a child is fully clean, parents will be contacted to collect, as their health and wellbeing is paramount.

Taster Sessions: we recognise that a child may be earlier in their development when invited in for a taster day that is ahead of their intended start date. Should a child come in for a taster day wearing a nappy/pull up parents are asked to remain on site so they can change their child using the changing facilities located at the main reception.

1. Admissions procedure for children who turn 3 years old on or before 31st August

Parents may apply for a place to commence in the Autumn Term of that academic year and can register anytime up until the start of the Summer Term before (30th April).

Applications will be processed in order of registration during the spring term before entry with siblings and staff children being given priority as set out above. Families who are subsequently offered a place and who have a child who already attends the school will automatically have a place reserved in KR (reception) for the following Autumn. Other families who do not have a sibling connection to the school and who are subsequently offered a place will be asked to indicate if they would like to reserve a place in KR (reception) for the following Autumn, by making an additional deposit payment to secure the place. There will be up to 21 places in KR. Priority for these places will first be given to children with older siblings at the school and/or staff then to children who make the additional deposit payment, this will be on a first come first served basis. All other children will leave the nursery at Gad's Hill School at the end of the academic year.

Following a successful application parents will need to select a minimum of 3, consecutive, full days per week to ensure sufficient curriculum material is covered. The first 15 hours will be funded by Early Years Funding. All other hours including lunches and wraparound (pre and post school) care are outside of the scope of the Early Years Funding scheme and are subject to fees being charged.

Casual applications will be considered throughout the academic year if spaces are available.

2. Admissions procedure for children who are still 2 years old on 31st August

Parents of children who turn 3 after 31st August will be contacted just before their 3rd birthday to discuss availability at that time. If a space is available and a place is offered, children will be able to start in the autumn or spring half-term immediately after their 3rd birthday (i.e. intakes in October, January or February). Exact start dates will depend on the term dates for that academic year.

Any child turning 3 after the spring half-term (usually mid February) will be registered for an Autumn Term start in the following academic year.

Parents who apply for a mid-term start must accept that they are not eligible to claim the Early Years Funding until the start of the new term and therefore tuition fees will be charged at the standard rate.

Following a successful application, parents will be encouraged to select a minimum of 3 consecutive sessions to provide continuity for their child.

It is expected that there will be up to 12 places in this year group, availability will depend on the number of children already attending the nursery in the upper cohort. Priority for places are given to children in UKN (children who turn 3 before 31st August) and so children who turn 3 after 31st August may have to wait until the following academic year for possible entry if there is no availability. It is anticipated that these children will remain in KN the following academic year and if they pay the additional deposit, they will transition into KR a year later.

EARLY YEARS FUNDING

The school makes available places that are funded or part funded by the local authority for up to 15 hrs per week which at Gad's Hill School is either 5 sessions or 15 hours towards a minimum of 3 full days, depending on the cohort the child is applying for. One session = one morning or one afternoon for children who turn 3 after 31st August. For children who turn 3 before 31st August, as outlined above, they will need to attend a minimum of 3 full days = 15 hours of funding plus 5 hours chargeable. The KN session times are 8.30am – 11.30am in the morning or 12.10pm – 3.10pm in the afternoon for the younger cohort or 8.30am – 3.10pm for the older cohort. Any additional sessions or hours over the funding, lunches, pre and after school care are outside of the scope of the early years funding scheme and are subject to fees being charged.

UPPER SHELL (YEAR 7 ENTRY) APPLICATIONS

There is a maximum of three forms in Upper Shell of up to approximately 20 pupils in each form. Parents should apply for admission by 31st October for their child to be considered for a place although casual applications will be considered throughout the academic year or until all places are full.

Criteria for entry are;

1. Current Pupils in Lower Shell (Year 6)
2. Applicants who successfully secure a Charles Dickens Scholarship
3. Remaining applicants who either secure a Non-Academic Scholarship, who apply via direct registration or who are unsuccessful in securing a Charles Dickens Scholarship and who attend a successful taster/assessment day. All of these remaining applications will be processed in order of registration

Existing Gad's Hill Lower Shell (Year 6) pupils are automatically offered a place in the Upper School and so do not need to formally apply. Should Lower Shell parents not wish to take a place they must inform the school in line with our standard terms & conditions.

There are three main channels of application for external candidates wishing to apply for a place in Upper Shell (Year 7);

Charles Dickens Academic Scholarship

During the summer term before Year 6 commences, local Year 5 children will be invited to register for the Charles Dickens academic scholarship assessment. Parents who want their child to sit the exam should complete the online Charles Dickens Scholarship Registration form and pay the £60 fee.

Each year we will offer a number of scholarships, worth up to 100% fee assistance towards tuition fees. These scholarships are open to any pupil from any school. Candidates who register to take the scholarship examination will be required to attend Gad's Hill School to sit an academic test which will comprise of English and Maths. Students who show a high academic ability may subsequently be offered a place in Upper Shell (Year 7) here at Gad's Hill with an accompanying scholarship which will see fees be reduced by up to 100% for the duration of that child's secondary education here (subject to the usual conditions attached to any scholarship award). Scholarship offers will usually be posted to families within 2 weeks of the date of the examination. Those wishing to accept their place and subsequent Scholarship should do so before the deadline as stated in the offer letter. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the Scholarship offer being withdrawn and the child will be required to attend a taster/assessment day in order to secure a full fee paying place. Scholarship applicants who do not receive an award may be offered a place at Gad's Hill School, dependent on a successful taster/assessment day.

Non-Academic Scholarships

In addition to the academic scholarships, we are happy to welcome candidates wishing to pursue a non-academic scholarship. Parents should first register their child by completing the online registration form which should be accompanied by an administration fee of £60. Applicants wishing to be considered for a scholarship in sport, performing arts or creative arts should notify admissions so that they can be given a non-academic scholarship application form to complete. Completed application forms will be passed to the Headmaster for consideration and potential scholars will be invited in for audition, which will also involve completing standardised tests in maths and English. This will take place late in the autumn term, providing there is projected availability in the year group. Applicants must accept that priority for places is given to successful CDSA scholars.

Direct Registration

Parents interested in applying for a place in the Upper School for their child can register at any time prior to the academic year of entry.

Parents of external candidates are advised to register their child by completing the online registration form which should be accompanied by an administration fee of £60. This places the child on the admissions list for the year of entry. At the end of the Summer term of Year 5 we will invite those candidates who are already registered to attend the Charles Dickens academic scholarship, although it is not compulsory. Those not wishing to sit the academic scholarship exam will be invited in for a taster/assessment day late in the autumn term providing there is projected availability in the year group and they must accept that priority for places is given to successful scholars. Assessment will involve standardised tests and will also take into account informal assessments of a child's non-academic ability, attitude and potential as observed during the course of the day.

All successful Upper Shell (Year 7) applicants, whether via Direct Registration, Academic Scholarship or Non-Academic Scholarship, will receive an offer in writing. At the conclusion of the assessment processes, those candidates who have met the school's assessment criteria as outlined above will receive an offer of a place in Upper Shell. Their parents will be asked to confirm their acceptance by a published cut-off date. Places will not be guaranteed after that date unless parents have signed and returned our acceptance form and paid a deposit. Those pupils who are not selected for entry will be informed and advised to apply to other schools.

Pupils who apply for admission after the above assessment processes will have their application processed in the same way as described in the Casual Admission process.

STAFF RESPONSIBLE: TM/PS

REVIEWED: AUGUST 2026

REVIEW DATE: AS APPROPRIATE

GOVERNOR RESPONSIBLE: CHAIR OF EDUCATION