

Admissions and Transition Policy

September 2026 – August 2027

Policy owner	Headmaster
Applies to	Reception to Year 13
Admissions lead	Headmaster / Admissions Team
Approved by	School Management Committee / Proprietor
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review cycle	Annual and following significant statutory change
Next full review	August 2027

St. Dominic's Grammar School is an independent, academically selective school for girls and boys aged 4–18.

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the principles and procedures governing admission to St. Dominic's Grammar School and the arrangements used to support pupils joining the School and moving between key stages. It applies to applicants for Reception through Year 13. Nursery provision is separate from the School and parents register separately with Little Big Nursery.

The School seeks to operate a fair, transparent and consistent admissions process which reflects its selective academic character, Christian ethos and commitment to inspiring growth in mind, body and spirit. Decisions are made in the best interests of pupils and with due regard to equality, safeguarding and the School's ability to provide an appropriate education with reasonable adjustments where required.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the safeguarding and pupil-registration requirements.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, in force from 1 September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools, updated September 2025.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, current statutory guidance.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where applicable.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, insofar as it applies to Reception-age children.

This policy should be read with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance and Punctuality Policy, SEND/Neurodiversity Policy, Accessibility Plan, Equality policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Data Protection/Privacy information, Complaints Policy and Standard Terms and Conditions.

3. Admissions principles

- Admission is subject to a place being available and the applicant meeting the relevant entry criteria.
- The School is academically selective, particularly at entry to the Senior School and Sixth Form, and assesses whether an applicant is likely to access and benefit from the curriculum offered.
- The School does not unlawfully discriminate against an applicant because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- The School welcomes applications from pupils with SEND and/or disabilities. Such applicants will not be treated less favourably because of disability, and reasonable adjustments will be considered for the admissions process and, where a place is offered, for school life.
- Safeguarding information, previous-school information and any known welfare concerns will be considered as part of transition and admission planning.
- The School may seek information reasonably required to assess educational suitability, safeguarding, SEND, disability, medical needs and the adjustments or provision that may be required.

4. Equality, SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments

Parents are asked to disclose, at the earliest opportunity, any SEND, disability, medical condition, learning support, educational psychologist or specialist report, current or previous support plan, EHC plan, access arrangement or other matter that may affect the applicant's participation in the admissions process or education at the School. This enables the School to understand the applicant's needs and consider appropriate reasonable adjustments.

- Where appropriate, the SENCO will review relevant information and may meet the applicant and parents and liaise, with appropriate consent, with the current school or relevant professionals.

- Reasonable adjustments may be made to entrance assessments, visits, interviews or other admissions arrangements where required to avoid substantial disadvantage. The purpose of an adjustment is to make the process accessible, not to remove the essential academic criteria being assessed.
- Where further professional information is reasonably necessary to understand an applicant's needs, the School may ask parents to provide an existing report or seek an appropriate assessment. Any request will be proportionate to the decision being made.
- Where a pupil's needs become apparent after admission, the School will consult parents and the pupil, where appropriate, and consider reasonable adjustments and support in accordance with its SEND and Accessibility policies.
- A decision not to offer a place will not be based simply on a diagnosis, disability or SEND. Where needs are relevant to the decision, the School will consider the individual circumstances, reasonable adjustments, available evidence, the nature of the curriculum and whether the School can reasonably provide the education and support required without unlawful discrimination.

5. Information required before admission

- A completed registration/application form and registration fee.
- Proof of the child's identity and date of birth, and details of those with parental responsibility.
- Current address and emergency contact information.
- Recent school reports and a reference or other information from the previous school, where applicable.
- Relevant SEND, disability, medical, safeguarding or welfare information needed to plan safe and appropriate provision.
- Any court order or legal restriction relevant to parental responsibility, contact, collection or the child's education.
- For applicants educated outside the UK, appropriate evidence of prior attainment and sufficient English proficiency to access the proposed programme, where relevant.

The School may contact the Headteacher or appropriate senior member of the applicant's current school before making a final offer. Information will be handled in accordance with data-protection law and safeguarding requirements.

6. Admissions process by phase

6.1 Reception

- Children from Little Big Nursery who wish to enter Reception must apply to St. Dominic's; progression is not automatic.
- Nursery children may attend transition sessions during the year in which they become four. External applicants will also be offered appropriate transition opportunities.
- A formal offer and acceptance contract is issued for a Reception place. A £400 deposit is payable on acceptance.
- Full-time schooling commences in Reception in September of the school year in which the child becomes five.

6.2 Years 1–2

- External applicants are normally invited for a tour with the Headmaster and for two trial/assessment days.
- Age-appropriate entrance assessment and a previous-school reference will normally form part of the process.
- A formal offer and acceptance paperwork are issued where a place is offered; a £400 deposit secures the place.

6.3 Preparatory School – Years 3–6

- Applicants and parents are normally interviewed and shown around the School by the Headmaster and/or Preparatory staff.
- Two trial days are normally offered, during which observation and age-appropriate entry assessments may take place.
- Entry may be available in each year group subject to capacity and successful completion of the admissions process.
- A formal offer and acceptance paperwork are issued where a place is offered; a £400 deposit secures the place.

6.4 Senior School – Year 7

- All internal and external applicants for Year 7 undertake the School's Entrance Assessment.
- The assessment includes Mathematics, English and Verbal Reasoning. Candidates must demonstrate sufficient proficiency overall to indicate that they can access and benefit from the School's curriculum.
- Academic scholarships may be awarded on the basis of Entrance Assessment performance in accordance with the School's scholarship arrangements.
- Internal Year 6 pupils do not normally complete a new parent contract when progressing to the Senior School; contractual notice provisions continue to apply.

6.5 Senior School – Years 8–11

- Applicants for Years 8–10 normally complete entrance assessments in English, Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning and are invited to spend two trial days in the Senior School.
- Year 11 applications are considered individually because of examination-board, specification and syllabus compatibility and the amount of GCSE content already completed.
- Entry is subject to available places, satisfactory assessment and the School being able to provide a suitable programme.

6.6 Sixth Form – Years 12–13

- Normal entry requires at least eight GCSEs at grades 4–9 and a minimum grade 6 in each subject chosen for A level, or an appropriate equivalent where the subject was not taken at GCSE. Individual subject requirements may be higher and are published separately.
- External applicants are normally invited for interview, tour and trial/taster opportunities.
- Internal Year 11 pupils do not normally complete a new parent contract when progressing to Sixth Form; contractual notice provisions continue to apply.
- Late entry to Year 13 is exceptional and will depend on curriculum compatibility, prior attainment and the feasibility of successful continuation of the proposed courses.

7. Scholarships, awards and bursaries

Scholarship and award arrangements are reviewed periodically and published separately. Academic awards may be linked to entrance assessment performance. Awards may also be available in areas such as Art, Drama, Music, Performing Arts and Sport, subject to the School's current criteria, audition, assessment or portfolio requirements. Unless expressly stated otherwise in the offer, an award is honorary and does not itself carry a fee remission.

Means-tested bursary support may be available in accordance with the School's bursary arrangements. Applications are considered separately from the academic decision on suitability for admission.

8. Offers, acceptance and waiting lists

- An offer is made in writing and may be subject to stated conditions, including satisfactory references, examination results or provision of relevant information.
- A £50 registration fee is payable on registration. A £400 deposit is payable on acceptance of a place, subject to the School's current Terms and Conditions.
- Acceptance is complete when the required acceptance documentation has been signed and the deposit paid by the stated deadline.
- Where a year group is full, the School may maintain a waiting list. Position on a waiting list does not guarantee a place and may be reviewed as circumstances change.
- The School may withdraw an offer before entry where a material condition of the offer is not met, material information relevant to admission has been withheld or misrepresented, or circumstances arise which mean the place cannot lawfully or reasonably proceed. Any such decision will be considered carefully and in accordance with equality and contractual obligations.

9. Overseas applicants and right to study

The School may consider applications from families overseas. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child has immigration permission which allows them to live and study in the UK. St. Dominic's does not currently hold a Student Sponsor licence and cannot issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for the Child Student route. A child who requires sponsorship under that route therefore cannot be admitted on the basis of St. Dominic's sponsorship. This does not prevent admission where the child has another lawful immigration status which permits study at an independent school.

The School will not provide immigration advice and may direct families to current UK Government guidance or an appropriately qualified adviser.

10. Safeguarding in admissions and transition

- Safeguarding is considered from the first contact with a prospective family and throughout transition.
- The School will seek relevant safeguarding and welfare information from the previous setting where appropriate and ensure that information needed to keep the child safe is transferred securely and promptly.
- Where an applicant has an open social-care case, multi-agency plan, significant safeguarding history or other known vulnerability, the DSL will be involved in transition planning as appropriate.
- A failure to attend on the agreed first day will be followed up promptly. Reasonable enquiries will be made to establish the child's whereabouts and welfare, with referral/escalation in accordance with safeguarding and children-missing-education procedures where necessary.
- Admission and transition arrangements will take account of additional safeguarding barriers that may affect children with SEND or disabilities.

11. Transition arrangements

The School regards transition as part of admission, not simply an administrative event. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis so that staff can support the pupil from the outset.

- Reception: transition sessions for children moving from nursery and for external entrants, with information shared with parents before the start date.
- New pupils in Years 1–11: tours, trial/taster days where appropriate, previous-school information and pastoral/SEND handover before or shortly after entry.
- Year 6 to Year 7: induction and transition activity for both internal and external pupils, with relevant academic, pastoral, SEND, medical and safeguarding information transferred to Senior School staff.
- Year 9 to Year 10: options guidance and individual advice so that pupils select an appropriate GCSE programme.
- Year 11 to Year 12: Sixth Form information, subject guidance, interviews and taster opportunities; final programmes are confirmed in light of GCSE results and subject entry requirements.
- Pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical or significant pastoral needs may receive an enhanced transition plan, including additional visits, staff liaison, reasonable adjustments, risk assessment or a PEEP where required.

12. Admission and attendance registers; children missing education

The School maintains its admission and attendance registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current statutory attendance guidance. The older 2006 pupil-registration regulations are no longer relied upon in this policy.

- A pupil's name is entered on the admission register from the beginning of the first session on the agreed or notified first day, in accordance with the 2024 Regulations.
- The School makes required new-pupil and deletion returns to the local authority within the statutory timescales and provides the required register information.
- A pupil's name is removed from the admission register only where a statutory ground for deletion is met. The School will not off-roll a pupil in the interests of the School rather than the pupil.
- Where the relevant statutory ground requires joint reasonable enquiries with the local authority, the pupil will not be removed until those requirements have been satisfied.

- Children missing education are treated as a safeguarding matter. The School works with Staffordshire County Council and other relevant authorities to establish destinations and protect pupils at risk of disappearing from education.
- Parents must provide forwarding address and destination-school information when a pupil leaves and should keep the School informed of changes to contact and address details.

13. Parental responsibility and family circumstances

The School asks applicants to identify all persons with parental responsibility and to provide accurate contact details. Unless a court order or other legal restriction provides otherwise, the School recognises the rights of those with parental responsibility to receive appropriate information about their child's education. Parents should notify the School promptly of separation, changes to living arrangements, court orders, contact restrictions or collection arrangements relevant to the child.

Where parents are separated or in dispute, the School's overriding consideration is the child's welfare. The School will remain neutral in parental disputes, comply with court orders of which it has been made aware, and share information on a lawful and appropriate basis.

14. Data protection and confidentiality

Admissions information is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the School's privacy information. Information may be shared where necessary for education, safeguarding, legal compliance or the protection of a child. Data-protection law does not prevent proportionate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

15. Decisions not to offer a place

A place may be declined where, after a fair and individual assessment, the applicant does not meet the published academic or other entry criteria; a suitable place or programme is not available; references or other evidence raise material concerns relevant to admission; or the School reasonably concludes that the applicant would not be able to access and benefit from the education offered even after reasonable adjustments have been considered.

The School will not refuse admission simply because an applicant has SEND or a disability. Where SEND/disability is relevant, the decision-making record should identify the information considered, the reasonable adjustments explored and the educational or other material reasons for the conclusion.

16. Withdrawal after admission

Withdrawal by parents is governed by the School's Standard Terms and Conditions. Unless those terms provide otherwise, a full term's written notice is required or fees in lieu may be payable. Removal by the School after admission is governed by the relevant behaviour, exclusion/removal and contractual procedures and is not an admissions decision.

17. Concerns and complaints

Questions about the admissions process should first be raised with the Admissions Team or Headmaster. A concern about the way the School has applied this policy may be raised under the School's Parental Complaints Policy where that procedure applies. The School's complaints process does not create a statutory admissions appeal of the kind applicable to maintained schools and academies.

18. Publication, monitoring and review

This policy will be available to parents and prospective parents on the School website or on request. An accessible version will be provided where reasonably required. The Headmaster will review admissions practice during the year and the policy will be reviewed formally at least annually, or sooner following a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, inspection requirements or School practice.

Appendix 1 – Admissions and transition checklist

Stage	Minimum check
Application	Registration form, fee and basic identity/contact information received.
Previous setting	Reports/reference requested and relevant safeguarding transfer identified.
SEND/disability	Needs disclosed/reviewed; SENCO involved where appropriate; admissions adjustments recorded.
Assessment	Age/phase-appropriate assessment, interview and/or trial day completed.
Decision	Entry criteria, capacity, references and individual circumstances considered.
Offer	Written offer/conditions issued; acceptance paperwork and deposit received.
Pre-entry	Start date agreed; medical, SEND, pastoral, safeguarding and collection information checked.
Transition	Induction/taster/transition plan completed; relevant staff briefed on need-to-know basis.
First day	Admission register entry made at start of first session; absence followed up immediately if pupil does not attend.
LA return	Required new-pupil return made within statutory timeframe where applicable.
Review	Early settling-in review arranged where enhanced transition/support is needed.

Appendix 2 – Version control

Version	Date	Summary	Approved by
1.0	September 2026	Full rewrite following comparison with QE Admissions and Transition Policy and update for current 2026 independent-school, safeguarding, equality and pupil-registration requirements.	School Management Committee / Proprietor

Headmaster: P McNabb Date: 18-8-2026

For School Management Committee / Proprietor: Sir M Griffiths Date: 1-9-2026