

STAHS Policies

P10: ADMISSIONS

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POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to St Albans High School for Girls ("the School" or "STAHS") which includes the Prep School. This policy is reviewed and updated triennially and is available on the School website.

STAHS is a selective, independent day school for girls from ages 4 – 18. This policy gives a clear account of the STAHS entry procedures and selection process.

The selection process and entry procedures apply to all applicants.

THE ENTRY PROCEDURE

Selection for admission to STAHS is based on academic merit which is assessed through examinations, interviews and/or assessment tasks, depending on the entry point. References from the candidate's previous school are also considered, as appropriate.

Our selection process is designed to identify pupils able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education, thrive in our academic environment, and make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

The usual points of entry are at Reception (age 4), Year 7 (age 11), and Year 12 (age 16). However, assessment for admission at all other age groups may be arranged if places become vacant. The number of places available for admissions in each year group may vary from year to year and is determined by the Executive Leadership Team and Governors.

Applicants for admission should register using the School's Application Form (available on the School website). A non-refundable application fee is required at the time of application. The deadline for application is normally in the autumn of the year preceding the desired year of admission. The dates of the deadline for application, assessments, notification of offers and other important events in the admissions process are available on the School website, along with details of the application fees.

In accordance with normal practice in the sector and the HMC Code of Practice for schools, references for registered applicants will be sought from the pupil's current/former school and all parents should make their child's current school aware in advance that they are making an application to STAHS.

EQUAL TREATMENT

STAHS is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or social background. Subject to the rules within this Policy, all applicants reaching the required entry standards have equal opportunities.

STAHS's aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. Generous bursaries are offered in order to allow as many young people as possible who meet the School's admission criteria, to attend the School. The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

STAHS does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can provide the required support and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them, by making reasonable adjustments if necessary.

We strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the School before they sit the entrance exam so that we can make reasonable adjustments to the assessment process if necessary. Parents should provide with the Application Form a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report if they have one.

The School will discuss thoroughly with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the School.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The aims of the selection process are:

- To identify applicants whose academic performance matches the standards of the School.
- To identify applicants who show the potential to contribute to the School community and benefit from the opportunities offered.

STAHS is looking for well-rounded pupils who are excited about education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art, debating, volunteering and sports. There are many co-curricular and super-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for entrance assessments is needed. All candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and co-curricular skills.

Detailed feedback, exam scripts and rankings from the assessment process are not made available to parents or pupils, regardless of the outcome of the application for admission.

Details of our assessment process for each entry stage are published on our website and in our prospectus (available on our website or from the Admissions team).

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the assessment process may be adjusted. At all times, the health and wellbeing of our candidates, current pupils and staff will be our priority.

The admissions timeline with dates for the current admissions cycle is available on the School website, and varies depending on the point of entry.

Bursaries and Scholarships are considered separately to the selection for entry. More information on the process of awarding Bursaries and Scholarships can be found on the school website and provided by the Admissions team, or in the Admissions Policy related document Bursaries and Scholarships, which is available by request and on the School's website.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Every year, many more applications are made than there are spaces available. Selection for entry is based on a combination of performance in entrance exams (as applicable), performance during assessment tasks, performance at interview (as applicable) and review of references from previous schools (as applicable).

External candidates joining at Year 12 must obtain our required GCSE results for their chosen A Level subjects, as well as a minimum of grade 6 in Maths and in English GCSE. Please refer to the School website for details of required grades for each subject.

Following the collection of all assessment data, the School convenes a Selection Committee chaired by the Head of Senior (for Senior School admissions) or the Head of Prep (for Prep School admissions). The Selection Committee will also include key members of the Admissions team and other members of the Senior School or Prep School Leadership teams with responsibility for academic progress and pastoral care. For candidates with SEND, the relevant School SEND coordinator will also be part of the selection process.

The Selection Committee considers each application individually and decides to make an offer of a place, to decline to offer a place, or to place the candidate on the waiting list.

The Governors delegate the admissions process and policy to the Principal of St Albans Education Group. The offer of a place is at the Principal's professional discretion and her decision on admissions is final. There is no right to appeal an admissions decision.

SIBLING POLICY

Many siblings join us at STAHS. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. Where there are more equally suitable candidates than places available, preference will be given to those candidates who have siblings in the School already.

For families with three or more children currently enrolled at STAHS, a discount of 25% will be applied to the school fees for the third child, and each child thereafter.

THE THROUGH-SCHOOL

STAHS is a through-school offering education from the ages of 4 to 18. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 at STAHS Prep School are granted automatic admission into Year 7 at STAHS Senior School without the need for admission assessment. In the few instances where STAHS Senior School would not be a good fit, the Head of Prep and his team will alert parents by Year 5 and work very closely with them to find alternative schools.

Once in Senior School, it is expected that pupils remain through Year 13. Pupils progressing to Sixth Form must obtain a minimum of grade 6 in both Maths and English GCSE as well as our required GCSE results for their chosen A Level subjects. Please refer to the School website for details of required grades for each subject.

Further information on transition from Prep to Senior and from Senior to Sixth Form can be found in the Teaching Learning and Assessment policy related document Academic Transition Through the School which is available by request and on the School's website.

SCHOLARSHIPS (Senior School Only)

STAHS Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the Scholar is typically offered a 10% reduction in tuition fees throughout their time at STAHS, provided they continue to meet the criteria for maintaining the award. In addition, Scholars are provided with many opportunities to stretch and challenge themselves in their target area.

STAHS offers Scholarships for excellence in:

- Academics – awarded in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12
- Art – awarded in Year 10 and Year 12
- Debating – awarded in Year 12
- Design and Technology – awarded in Year 10 and Year 12
- Drama – awarded in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12
- Music (Du Cane Choral) – awarded in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12
- Music (Du Cane Instrumental) – awarded in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12
- Sports – awarded in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12.

External applicants joining the School outside the normal main entry points may apply for assessment for scholarship awards from Year 10 or Year 12.

Pupils applying for a Scholarship may also be offered an Exhibition, where available and appropriate. These provide benefits tailored for each discipline, but do not include a fee reduction.

Scholarships and Exhibitions are awarded at the discretion of the Principal. There is no appeals process for scholarship or exhibition decisions. A Scholarship or Exhibition may be withdrawn at the discretion of the School in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

Further information on the individual scholarships, including an overview of each Scholars' programme, selection criteria and requirements for maintaining each award can be found on the School's website and provided by the Admissions team, or in the Admissions Policy related document Bursaries and Scholarships, which is available by request and on the School's website.

BURSARIES (Senior School Only)

The School offers a number of means-tested awards annually to entrants to the Senior School. Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria published in the Admissions Policy related document Bursaries and Scholarships. Both parents 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 plus the cost of critical extras such as coach service, uniform, and school lunches (100%+ awards) in cases of proven need. Before the offer of a bursary is confirmed, an external assessor appointed by the School will normally visit the family at their home.

Bursaries are offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide current information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income.

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

Further information on the awarding and maintenance of bursaries can be found on the School website and provided by the Admissions team, or in the Admissions Policy related document Bursaries and Scholarships, which is available by request and on the School's website.

OVERSEAS APPLICANTS AND NON-UK CITIZENS

We welcome able overseas and non-UK pupils, who can study at STAHS provided that they have the right to live and study in the UK and have a relative or responsible adult living locally to the School with whom they can live. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expect pupils to finish a complete course of study such as Years 9-11 or Years 12-13.

More information on applying from abroad can be obtained from the Admissions team, whose contact details are available on the School's website.

FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of STAHS, pupils must be fluent English speakers for entry to the Senior School. Occasionally less fluent speakers of English may be admitted to the Prep Reception class, or at other points of entry at the discretion of the Principal. Support is available for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

STAHS welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith.

Although STAHS has Anglican roots, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and it offers the opportunity for pupils to practise their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that there is compulsory attendance at assemblies, which often include the singing of a hymn, prayers and a blessing by the Chaplain. In addition, the annual Prep Carol Service at St Helen's Church, Wheathampstead, the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols and the annual Founders' Day service, both held at St Albans Abbey, are compulsory events.

THE SCHOOL'S TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The School's Terms and Conditions are made available to parents during the admissions process and, together with the Acceptance Form and payment of deposit, form a legally binding contract between parents and the School (the 'Parent Contract').

Acceptance of an offer is an agreement of the School's Terms and Conditions and therefore should parents subsequently change their mind and decide to withdraw their child, the provisions about withdrawal, notice and fees in lieu of notice will apply. For overseas pupils and non-UK citizens, any offer of a place is dependent on the candidate satisfying the appropriate UK government visa requirements in place at the time (where relevant).

COMPLAINTS

The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website. However, the Complaints Procedure only applies to current pupils and their parents and accordingly is not available for use by prospective parents in respect of a pupil who is not enrolled at the School. There is no right to an appeal of an admissions decision.

DATA PROTECTION

The School will process personal data about prospective pupils and parents in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 (as each is amended or superseded) and other related legislation.

We will process such personal data as set out in the School's Privacy Notice which is available on the School's website at www.stahs.org.uk/privacy-notice and may be amended from time to time; to perform our obligations to you and where otherwise reasonably necessary for the School's purpose.

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy and related documents	
Document title	Availability
P10: Admissions Policy	Website
Bursaries and Scholarships (Related document)	Website
Child Student Visa Sponsorship (Related document)	On request
Register of Admissions (Related live document)	No

Policies and related documents as indicated are available request from info@stahs.org.uk.
St Albans High School for Girls, 3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans AL1 3SJ. Tel: 01727 853 800

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.