



Duncombe  
School

An Independent Preparatory  
School and Nursery

# Admissions Policy

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
October 2013	Lucy Evans	Review	Autumn 2014
September 2014	Lucy Evans	Review–Minor Changes	Autumn 2015
November 2015	Lucy Evans	Review–Taster Sessions & Minor Changes	Autumn 2016
June 2016	Ian Thomas	New Branding Added	Autumn 2016
November 2016	Lucy Evans	Review	Autumn 2017
February 2017	Lucy Evans	Review – Cognita Guidance	Autumn 2017

This policy sets out to support all the aims of the School by ensuring that all pupils are properly cared for in a warm and caring environment and in a position to access the education that the School aims to provide.

## Mission Statement

‘Duncombe School will educate the whole child, fostering the individual's highest academic, creative, social and recreational standards within a happy, caring and stimulating environment.’

## Mission Statement – Treetops

‘Our primary purpose is to support children and parents through the early years of education. Treetops offers a carefully managed induction programme to school life and subsequently a broad and challenging education within a caring and secure family environment.’

## School Aims and Philosophy

- To educate the whole person (academic, spiritual, moral), promoting respect for Christian values but recognising and respecting beliefs, needs and achievements of others in our multi-cultural society.
- To provide a structured and happy environment where each member of the community is valued and secure and where there is a commitment to encouraging individual development.
- To promote high standards in all areas of life.
- To encourage self discipline, self motivation and self respect through promoting competition against self and objective standards rather than each other.
- To provide each child with a broad and balanced curriculum that encourages children to realise their full capabilities.
- To foster a lively and varied learning environment adopting teaching styles relevant to each child's learning.
- To work in partnership with parents encouraging dialogue in the best interests of their child.

## **Policy Statement**

We welcome applications for admission from pupils of all backgrounds. This Policy applies to all pupils, including those in our Early Years Foundation Stage. We admit pupils with an additional educational need and/or disability, provided both parents and school conclude that we can provide appropriately for the child's specific needs.

## **Enquiries**

All admissions enquiries and applications should be made to the Registrar, who will ensure that you have all the information you need.

## **Visits**

Prospective parents are encouraged to visit Duncombe during a normal school day to see the school in action and to meet the Head. Each term there is also an Open Morning which is an opportunity to tour the school on an informal basis. Please contact the Registrar to make an appointment for a personal visit or for more information.

## **Registration**

Following a visit, parents wishing to register their child should complete the Registration Form (located in the prospectus pack or downloadable from the Admissions page of the school website) and return it with payment for the registration fee. The registration fee covers the cost of administering the registration procedure, including the waiting lists and is not returnable. Registration is an indication of interest and is not a guarantee of a place.

The school will respond by confirming that the child's name has been placed on the admission list for the relevant term and year. If the year group is fully subscribed, they will be placed on a waiting list. The school reserves the right to give preference to siblings. The school cannot guarantee when a place may become available. A place is confirmed once a formal offer has been made by the school and the deposit has been received in return.

## **Allocation of Places**

In the event that the number of children registered for any year group exceeds the places available, the following procedure will be applied:

- Siblings in the school who have already registered
- Registration and admission to Early Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Nursery will take priority over any registrations for the Reception year for children in the same cohort. For example, if a child wishes to register and be admitted to our Nursery year, they will take priority over a child who is only registered to enter for Reception. However, we will give registered families the option to move their child's admission forward wherever possible before moving their application on to any waiting list.

## **Admission to Treetops**

Children may join Duncombe from the age of two years and attendance may be part-time or full-time until the Reception stage (the school year in which they turn five). They embark on a planned programme of education starting in Treetops (the Early Years department) and which continues through to the end of Year 6 when they leave Duncombe and move on to senior school. The transfer from Treetops to the Main School is usually seamless; staff are in constant contact with parents and any concerns about progressing to the Main School will be addressed well in advance.

Two terms before the specified admission date or following a satisfactory taster session, the formal offer of a place will be made. When there is a particularly high demand for places, the formal offer of a place will be made earlier.

## **Taster Session/Assessment (Pre-Reception)**

For the parents of children starting in Early Kindergarten, an Admission Meeting takes place early in the term prior to entry and parents or carers are welcome to bring children between the ages of 1 and 3 to our Monday morning

Toddler Group sessions which are held during term time. A taster session may be arranged before the offer of a place is made in advance of the transition sessions.

For entry to the Kindergarten and Nursery classes, the child is invited to spend a taster session/morning with the relevant class. The class teacher will observe and informally assess him or her to ensure that he or she will integrate happily before the offer of a place is made.

Occasionally the child may be asked to return for a further taster session/assessment before the decision whether to offer a place is taken. The admissions policy aims to ensure that Duncombe will provide the most appropriate education for the new child and that the existing pupils will not be affected adversely. Parents will be asked about their child's general development and any identified special educational needs prior to a place being offered. Places are not automatic, in some rare cases a place will not be offered if we judge that a child's development is below expectation or that they will not flourish in the environment we offer.

During the Summer term children joining Nursery and Reception are invited for a further taster session as part of the School's admission programme.

### **Admission to Reception and other year groups in Main School**

For admission to our Reception class and upwards, the child is invited to spend a full day with the year group. (Children joining the Reception class in September will be invited to spend a morning within Treetops). During the day he or she will be assessed informally by the class teacher (and if relevant, subject teachers) and Duncombe will request a reference from the child's current school and copies of the two most recent school reports. Following discussion between the Head and the staff, the offer (or not) of a place will be made. Occasionally the child may be asked to return for a formal assessment before the decision whether to offer a place is taken. The admissions policy aims to ensure that Duncombe will provide the most appropriate education for the new child and that the existing pupils will not be affected adversely. Parents will be asked about their child's general development and any identified special educational needs prior to a place being offered. Places are not automatic, in some rare cases a place will not be offered if we judge that a child's development is below expectation or that they will not flourish in the environment we offer.

### **Offer – all year groups**

The parents of each applicant will be informed within 5 working days of their child's taster day whether a place is available. Should an offer of a place not be possible within this timescale, parents will be advised as soon as possible. The school will not be obliged to state its reasons for declining a request for admission.

Parents will be required to complete and return an Acceptance Letter and a Home-School Agreement and to pay a deposit by a specified date to secure the place. The deposit is refundable, less any outstanding items, at the end of the child's final term at Duncombe. If a child is withdrawn after the deposit has been paid, the first term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice. Reference should be made to the School's Terms and Conditions which are available to download from the Admissions section of the website or are available upon request from the Registrar.

### **Transition through year groups**

It is anticipated that all pupils will transition through the school and reap the rewards of the education on offer. Should this prove not to be the case, parents will be informed of any concerns at the earliest opportunity and at the latest before the end of the Spring Term if there appears to be any reason why the pupil may be refused a place in the subsequent year groups. In rare cases it may be that a pupils' progress or behaviour means that transfer to the next stage of the school is not deemed appropriate.

### **Appeal**

There is no appeal process for admission to the school. The decision of the Head is final.

### **False information**

Where the school has made an offer of a place on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, which has effectively denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

### **Waiting list**

If no place is available, parents may place their child's name on the waiting list for the school. The school cannot guarantee when a place may become available.

### **Overseas pupils/pupils with English as an additional language**

We welcome pupils from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, including overseas pupils and those with English as an additional language (EAL). Children entering the school must have an appropriate working knowledge of English and parents must be committed to supporting further English study at their cost, if necessary.

Overseas students are required to have a parent or guardian who is resident in the UK and who can act on behalf of the parents, if required.

### **Special educational needs and disabilities**

Subject to our entry requirements being met, we welcome pupils with special educational needs or physical disabilities. We advise parents of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the school before registering for a place. This will enable the school to determine whether the school can make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the child can flourish as a learner. Where necessary, parents will be asked to provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report and/or other medical reports and the school may need to discuss provision with external agencies and current/former schools/nurseries. The cost of such reports are the responsibility of the parent. Where specific provision is required, parents may be asked to pay an additional charge to meet these needs (staffing and/or resources).

### **Admissions Register**

Duncombe maintains an Admissions Register in line with regulatory requirements.

### **Other Associated Policies & Procedures**

- Accessibility Plan
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy
- Very Able Pupil Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

### **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

*Duncombe School is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and a culture of vigilance' to safeguard and protect all in its care, and to all aspects of its 'Safeguarding Policy'.*