ADMISSIONS POLICY

Committee Responsible:	**School Life Committee (MGu)**
Reviewed by:	**Head**
Adopted by Committee:	**May 2009**
Last reviewed:	**October 2022**
Date of next review:	**October 2025**

Admissions Policy - Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes. Sibford School is a mainstream school for pupils aged 3 – 18. All applications to the School are treated equally.
- to promote and support an ethos which is based upon the Quaker values of simplicity, truth, peace, equality and social justice. Our ethos acts as a foundation upon which the whole community and learning environment is built.
- to support a school in which every child can, with any reasonable adjustments, access a mainstream curriculum, and can thrive academically, socially and behaviourally within a mainstream setting. Assessment days and taster days allow the school to make a broad assessment of the needs of the child and whether they can be met at Sibford School.
- to ensure compliance with the School's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
- to identify and admit children who will contribute to and benefit from the ethos and activities of our school community as well as those who will benefit from and support our strong pastoral care and holistic academic education.
- decisions are always made in the best interest of the child.

We welcome children from different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected, but are balanced by the lawful needs and rules of our school community and the rights and freedoms of others. All prospective pupils for admission will be treated fairly according to the school's Community Equality Policy and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

It is important that pupils are respectful of our Quaker ethos which includes a belief that there is 'that of god' in all, alongside a healthy respect for social justice and equality. This is the foundation for our learning and social environment which allows us to make a commitment to the nurturing and education of the whole child.

We expect that all our pupils attend the School's Meetings for Worship, which are fundamental to our ethos. Pupils of all faiths and none are warmly and equally welcome within our community. Further information can be found under reasonable adjustments in the SEND Policy. Where a child has a special educational need or disability that prevents attendance to Meeting for Worship, such as a social anxiety disorder or autism spectrum, alternative arrangements will be made.

Students are required to understand and speak sufficient English to access the school curriculum at their age-related stage. However, of the total intake, a number of places may be awarded to pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). For those with EAL needs, we expect them to have elementary to pre intermediate levels of English language skills.

The admissions criteria includes:

- Receipt and review of reports and all associated paperwork
- Receipt and review of positive references
- Successful completion of an Assessment Day(s) which include:

- Cognitive ability assessments
- An interview with the Head or another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Observations to include: social / emotional communication skills, behaviours for learning and alignment with the schools' values and ethos

1. Special Educational Needs and Disability

Parents or guardians must inform the school on registration of any known disability, special educational needs or other needs of their child which may affect his/ her ability to participate in the admissions procedure and/or take full advantage of the education provided at the School.

The School will make any reasonable additional or alternative arrangements to ensure that the School's admission procedures are accessible to disabled children.

The School shall determine the reasonable adjustments that may be required for the applicant based on the information provided, in accordance with the School's obligations under equality legislation. In these circumstances the School will consult with parents/ guardians and such other persons or organisations as necessary in order to ascertain a child's particular needs and the nature of any additional or alternative arrangements which would be required to meet them if the offer of a place is made. An offer of a place may not be made if the School determines that they are unable to meet and provide for a child's needs. The School will always consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Admission to Early Years Foundation Stage

Children may commence their education at Sibford from the September after they turn three. There are two year groups in Foundation: Nursery; the academic year in which a child will reach the age of four and Reception; the academic year in which a child will reach the age of five. The entry process is designed according to the age and needs of each individual child. This will usually include settling in sessions where an adult accompanies the child and taster days (half or full) where the child may join their peers independently. The duration and number of these days may differ from child to child. Upon entry Nursery children can attend full or part time although we advise that a staggered start, with initially reduced sessions, is ideal. Sessions are agreed in consultation with the class teacher and tailored to the individual child's needs. All children attend full time after the term in which they reach the age of five. There are no entry requirements save that all applicants are considered on the basis that we can meet their needs.

Admission from Early Years into Junior School is ordinarily automatic where the School deems it can continue to meet the child's needs.

3. Admission to the Junior School

Once an application form is received, Sibford School asks the parents for copies of previous school reports, any specialist reports (such as an Educational Psychologist's report) and will request a confidential school reference from the child's current school. The child is normally only invited to attend the Junior School for two taster days when these have been received.

Prospective pupils are assessed by means of observation by the class teacher and a range of more formal, age appropriate tests to establish the ability level of each child. Decisions on those who need a support programme are made by the Support for Learning Department and Learning Support specialist teachers.

4. Admission to the Senior School for Years 7-10

To maintain equal access to the entry process, every child invited for assessment undertakes assessments to determine academic ability. Pupils also complete a short piece of writing. The assessment usually takes place during an "entry day". As part of the process the child experiences part of the day shadowing a current pupil, and, if joining Year 7, spends time with the current Year 6 pupils and teachers.

Admission into Year 7 of the Senior School by pupils who are already in Sibford Junior School is ordinarily automatic. If there was any reason why a place would not be automatically offered this would be raised in good time with the parents / guardian of the pupil.

The Head interviews every child, including those transferring from the Junior School. Decisions on those who need a support programme are made by the SENCo.

Sibford School seeks a confidential reference from the child's current school, and asks for copies of previous school reports and specialist reports. These must be received before a place can be offered.

5. Admission to the Sixth Form

All students (both internal and external applicants) who wish to join the Sixth Form have the opportunity for an interview with the Head(s) of Sixth Form.

The entry requirement for a Level 3 programme (Advanced level) is a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above, or the equivalent level of qualification for students applying with international qualifications. It is normally expected that good grades (normally at grade 6 or higher) at GCSE are attained in those subjects (or similar) to be followed at Advanced level. The school also offers a range of BTEC courses in the Sixth Form. A course guide, published annually, gives guidance on the specific entry requirements for individual courses.

If applicable, on entry to the Sixth Form, parents will be expected to provide Sibford School with the Form 8 from their child's previous setting. This will allow for the child to experience the same exam access arrangements as they had in their KS4 placement.

6. Admission to EAL Courses

After initial enquiry, applicants are asked to complete an English language test to help us determine the appropriate level of English support. Applicants will also have an interview, either in person or online. The Director of the Learning Development Centre reserves the right to re-direct pupils to alternative courses on arrival in cases where these might be more appropriate to their level of ability in English.

7. Boarding

We are a mainstream school and welcome a diverse group of students with a variety of needs into boarding. We are aware, however, that our young people who thrive as boarders have often displayed, during the admissions process, a desire to contribute broadly across the whole curriculum during their time at Sibford, so that they will develop themselves fully as an individual.

We also expect that successful candidates will have evidenced, during the admissions process, the right strengths for life in a busy boarding school environment - this includes qualities such as inclusivity, resilience and kindness.

We hope and expect that all members of our boarding community feel a strong sense of belonging to the school community, fostered through a variety of whole school and house events, activities and competitions.

8a. International Students

Sibford School holds a Home Office licence to sponsor students who will require a Child Student visa to study in the UK. Parents must inform the School at the point of registration if they require the School to sponsor their child's visa. For non-British students who do not require sponsorship by the School, proof of the child's alternative immigration status will be required at registration.

The School will provide a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) on receipt of the necessary information and documentation from parents. The responsibility for the visa application and renewal process rests solely with parents.

8b. Education Guardianship

Parents of students at Sibford who are normally resident outside the UK must appoint an Education Guardian for their child in the UK. This is the case for all students, regardless of their nationality.

Parents who are normally resident in the UK but travel overseas on a regular basis during term time will also need to nominate a third party to act in loco parentis in their absence.

The responsibility for appointing an Education Guardian rests with parents. This can be either a family member or close family friend, an AEGIS accredited guardianship organisation (the Association for the Education & Guardianship of International Students); www.aegisuk.net or a BSA Certified Guardian under the Scheme operated by the Boarding Schools' Association; www.ukbsa.com/bsa-certified-guardian-scheme.

Guardianship arrangements must be in place before a student starts at Sibford and must remain in place until the point that a student leaves the School, even if they turn 18 prior to this. The School reserves the right to withdraw a place with immediate effect if a student is found not to have an Education Guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school of the name and contact details of the guardian and to communicate any necessary changes in arrangements / contact details with the school as soon as these arrangements change.

9. Offers

Following interview and assessment, the School communicates the results to parents as soon as possible, and, where appropriate, an offer is made. Ordinarily, we ask that parents confirm their acceptance of a place within two weeks of receipt of a written

offer; in circumstances where this is not possible, we ask parents to keep the school informed of their situation.

The School will set its number of pupils according to:

1) Overall School capacity

2) Capacity to appropriately support all pupils within a particular year group or Key Stage

3) The capacity of boarding (where relevant)

4) The number of suitably qualified candidates

If the School is oversubscribed and decisions have to be made between two or more prospective students who meet our admission requirement after all appropriate allowances and special consideration has been given, we will give preference to children of Members or Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends.

Further preferences with consideration will also be given to:

a) A sibling

b) A child seeking a boarding place (in the Senior School)

c) A child with a particular skill, talent or aptitude

d) A child who has been registered the longest

NB: No order of priority is to be inferred from this list.

All offers are made on the understanding that all relevant information such as safeguarding, behavioural, medical and SEND information has been fully disclosed by the parents or guardian. Failure to disclose relevant information may lead to the withdrawal of an offer.

Pupils may formally commence their education at Sibford once all relevant paperwork and finances are in place. A communication to this effect will come from the School.

The Admissions Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Terms and Conditions of Admissions
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Equality Policy
- Behaviour Policy