

Policy A1: Admissions & Exclusions

Policy and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions

This policy has been written in line with Part 6, paragraph 32(3)(a) of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (ISSR) and Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards of Boarding (2015).

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NMS Standard 16: Equal Opportunities

16.1 Boarders are not discriminated against, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 because of their cultural background, linguistic background, special educational need, or academic or sporting ability. These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs.

1.1. Introduction

Queen Margaret's is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged 11 to 18. The school has 270+ girls, of whom around 75% are full boarders and 25% are day boarders. All day girls are given a bed in the appropriate Boarding House and have equal status with full boarders. Day girls are strongly encouraged to stay at Queen Margaret's on the first two nights of each term and on Friday nights. The cost of these overnight stays is included in the day fee.

Deciding on the right school for your daughter is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We very much hope that you and your daughter will visit Queen Margaret's. We hold regular Open Days which give a general introduction to the school and we are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their daughters at other times. Please contact our Admissions Department on 01904 727630 or email on qm-admissions@queenmargarets.com to arrange a visit.

1.2. Selection Criteria

Queen Margaret's is a selective school. Our selection process is designed to identify girls who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life, success and development of the school.

1.3. The Entry Procedure

The usual points of entry are at age 11+, 12+, 13+ and 16+. We admit approximately 25-30 girls each year at 11+, 5 girls at 12+ and 25-30 girls at 13+. Numbers at 16+ vary depending on

vacancies available. We may also have occasional places at other ages. Please contact the Admissions Department for details.

Applicants for admission should register as soon as possible to indicate definite interest, and certainly by the November before anticipated entry the following September. Applications must be accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee, details of which are provided on the application form.

1.4. The Assessment Process

The aim of the process is to identify potential. We are looking for girls with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The school has strong traditions in art, dance, drama, music and sport. There are many enrichment activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for the entrance tests is needed, all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their potential.

The General Assessment Day for entry at 11+, 12+ and 13+ takes place in the January preceding the September of entry into the School. Candidates will complete the following:

- English Paper
- Mathematics Paper
- Ann Arbor Dyslexia Screening Test
- Individual Interview
- Two different classroom activities working in groups

The offer of places at 16+ is conditional upon candidates achieving a minimum of 2 Grade As and 3 Grade Bs at GCSE/IGCSE, including at least Grade B in the subjects proposed for study at A Level. Candidates must pass GCSE/IGCSE English and Mathematics at Grade C or better or hold a similar qualification. Candidates are also required to attend the school, wherever possible, for Academic and Pastoral interviews. These interviews and visits usually take place in the November preceding the September of entry into the School.

International applications are received throughout the year and each application is assessed using the same selection criteria on its own merits. Candidates will complete the following:

- English Paper
- Grammar Exercise
- Mathematics Paper
- Individual Interview (usually by telephone or Skype)
- UKiset Test

For entry into the School at a time of year other than September, individual arrangements, visits, interviews and assessments may be arranged. Candidates will be assessed by the same standard criteria.

In all cases, a reference is requested from the candidate's current school.

1.5. Scholarships

At Queen Margaret's we encourage girls to aim high and exceed their own expectations. We support all girls in their individual gifts and talents and endeavour to help each one of them to discover her passion and unlock her potential. Our Scholarship programme is designed to identify strengths, nurture commitment and resilience, provide excitement and challenge and celebrate success. We offer the following scholarships:

- Academic
- Art
- Choral
- Dance
- Drama
- Music
- Sport

A Scholarship assessment day is carried out in the January prior to entry in the following September. For more detail on this please contact the admissions department. Scholarships may carry a discretionary fee remission of up to 10%.

1.6. Fee Remissions

Our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our girls for today's world. Bursaries are offered to allow as many girls as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the school. Further information about means-tested Bursaries is available from the Bursar, bursar@queenmargarets.com.

1.7. Sibling Policy

Most sisters of girls already at Queen Margaret's join their sisters at the appropriate time. However, admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where we conclude that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. This will be communicated sensitively to parents and be solely based upon the best interests of the girl concerned.

1.8. Equality

Queen Margaret's is committed to providing equal opportunities for all girls. We aim to provide an environment in which all can achieve their full potential, regardless of gender, pregnancy or maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, cultural background, linguistic background, special educational need, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or academic or sporting ability. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable. The Board of Governors and all staff are committed to meeting the individual needs of each girl and acknowledge and value all linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Queen Margaret's accepts applications from girls of any faith or nationality. Specific religious, dietary, language or cultural needs do not form part of the admissions process and are only discussed once a girl has accepted an offer of a place at the school.

Applicants with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

We welcome girls with learning difficulties, provided that our Learning Support Department can offer the support they require. We welcome girls with physical disabilities provided that our site can cope with them. However, we advise parents of girls with learning difficulties or physical disabilities to discuss their daughter's requirements with us before she sits the assessments so that we can make adequate provision for her. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational

Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their daughter if she becomes a student at the school. Please refer to:

- Policy A2: Individual Plans
- Policy A15: Equality Compliance Plan

International Applicants

We welcome girls from overseas and believe that an international mix is both positive and healthy at Queen Margaret's. There are no quotas on the number of International students and there are no differences in fees for students from overseas. The School employs an International Students' Counsellor who meets regularly with all International Students, providing them with help and advice on life away from home. Through the work of the International Council, the girls are encouraged to share their cultures and bilingualism is celebrated. All students who live overseas are required to have a Guardian based in the UK. Please refer to:

- Policy B24: Guardianship

Fluency in English

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of life and study at Queen Margaret's girls must have a high level of spoken and written English. Written and spoken English are assessed prior to entry through written tests and interviews, which may be conducted in person, via Skype or telephone call. One lesson of tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) is timetabled each week (which is charged as an extra) for girls for whom English is an acquired language and additional tuition may be arranged for an additional charge. Girls will be tested regularly and be prepared for IELTS (or equivalent) qualifications. A candidate may be advised to undertake an intensive course in English in the holiday period prior to admission to the School.

Religious Beliefs

Queen Margaret's is an Anglican foundation and attendance at Chapel is a central part of school life. However, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we offer the opportunity for girls of other beliefs to practise their own faiths. QM welcomes the contributions that members of all denominations and faiths make to the community.

1.9. Discipline

At Queen Margaret's we encourage girls to adopt the highest behavioural and moral standards and to respect the ethos and aims of the school. We aim to develop mutual trust, honesty and common courtesy. We believe that strong relationships, good manners and a secure learning environment play a crucial part in the development of free-thinking girls, who are motivated to become lifelong learners. In addition, we develop qualities of teamwork and leadership through our extensive programme of enrichment and extension activities.

We expect girls to treat staff and each other with respect, consideration and politeness, and to respond positively to the opportunities, demands and challenges of school life. We deliberately do not have a long list of rules and do not offer privileges based upon age or status. We ask that girls:

- take pride in their school and show compassion for one another
- seek to fulfil their own potential, as confident and courageous individuals

Everyone has a right to feel secure and to be treated with respect, particularly the vulnerable. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Queen Margaret's is strongly committed to

promoting equal opportunity for all, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or learning difficulty.

We expect all girls to be ready to learn and to participate fully in the school curriculum and activities. They should arrive punctually, follow instructions and behave with courtesy at all times. They should care for buildings, equipment, furniture and the environment. We expect all girls to behave at all times in a manner that reflects the best interests of the whole community, whether they are in or outside school.

Any girl who discriminates against or harasses any other girl or member of staff, either verbally, by action or otherwise, will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures. Such behaviour could result in the girl being permanently excluded. Policy A4 clearly indicates the seriousness of any form of discriminatory behaviour. Any girl (or her parent / guardian on her behalf) who feels that they have been singled out for unfair treatment or otherwise harassed on unacceptable grounds should raise the matter with a senior member of staff in the school immediately. Please refer to:

- Policy A4: Discipline (girls)

1.10. Exclusion

In certain cases a girl may be required to leave the School permanently. Such a case may be triggered if a girl is involved in one of the following:

- Possession or use of illegal substances
- Premeditated discriminatory behaviour
- Deliberate attempt to harm others
- Major and costly damage to property
- Highly offensive or deliberately discriminatory use of electronic communications
- Bringing the school or school community into serious disrepute
- Persistent or repeated poor behaviour when previous chances to reform have been ignored

Parents or Guardians may be required to collect a girl and take her away from School permanently and immediately under certain circumstances. Where a girl has committed a crime or done something which is illegal, the Police will be informed.

1.11. Complaints

We hope that you and your daughter do not have any complaints about our admissions process. However, if any aspect of our admissions procedure gives you cause for concern, a copy of the school's complaints procedure is set out in Policy B16: Complaints, and is available on the School's website and on request.

Jessica Miles
Head

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