



Admissions Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Bishop's Stortford College including those in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Introduction

Bishop's Stortford College is a co-educational independent day/boarding school for pupils from ages 3 to 18. The College, through the prospectus and other marketing media, will draw prospective parents' attention to the commitment they are entering into and also the admission process. Governors and the College Head recognise that for prospective parents and pupils deciding on the right school is very important. We believe that a personal visit is invaluable, and all prospective parents and their children are encouraged to visit the College. We hold a number of open events in the Autumn Term and Pre-Prep holds a specific Open Morning during the Summer Term, with a 'busy times with nursery rhymes' event in the following Autumn Term, which give a general introduction to the school. Details of these events are published on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times. Details of how to arrange a visit to the different sections of the College are published on the website in the Admissions section.

Equal Treatment

The College aims to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Means-tested financial assistance awards (traditionally known as bursaries) are offered in order to make the College accessible to as many as possible who meet the admissions criteria. The College's provision for financial assistance is described below.

The College is also committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or social background.

The Entry Procedure

Bishop's Stortford College is an academically selective school. The first entry point is in Pre-Prep, where the selection process in Nursery (from September 2025) is based on informal assessments reviewing a range of skills including behaviour and social interaction. From Year One, selection is based upon academic merit which is assessed through entry tests, an interview at the school and references and/or report from the candidate's previous school. Assessment of behaviour of candidates is also part of the selection process. Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school.

The decision of whether to offer a place to a candidate is entirely at the discretion of the Head of each school.

The usual points of entry are at 3+/Nursery, 4+/Reception, 7+/Year 3, 10+/Year 6, 11+/Year 7, 13+/Year 9 and 16+/Year 12. The College may also have occasional places at other ages. Applicants for admission should apply by:

- Pre-Prep: the end of the September prior to entry.
- Prep School: the end of the November prior to entry.
- Senior School: the end of the November prior to entry.
- Sixth Form: the beginning of the November prior to entry.

Applications for full boarding places are also considered outside these points of entry.

Religious Beliefs

Although the College has Christian roots, it does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and it offers the opportunity for all faiths to practise their own religious beliefs; children from families with no religious faith are also welcome. Parents should be aware that all pupils are normally expected to attend services overseen by the College Chaplain, e.g. Remembrance/Carol Services. Full boarders are welcome to come together for a Sunday evening time of reflection.

Special Needs

The College does not discriminate in any way regarding entry. The school welcomes pupils with special educational needs providing they satisfy the academic entry requirements and that the Learning Support Department can offer them the level of support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can accommodate them. However, we strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the College before they sit the entry tests so that the College can make adequate provision for them. Parents should provide 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 medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the school.

The College continues to improve access for pupils with additional needs as per our published SENDA Action Plan.

The Assessment Process

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

No specific preparation for the entry tests is needed. All candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude.

Progression

Within each school, progression from one academic year to the next is contingent on good behaviour and satisfactory academic progress. Should a pupil not be in a position to progress to the next year group, this will have been identified and discussed with parents in a timely manner.

- **Pre-Prep (4-7 years/Reception – Year 2)**

Children applying to join the Pre-Prep will be invited to attend an assessment session in the Autumn Term a year before entry. The children are informally assessed by members of the Nursery/Reception team as well as the Head of Pre-Prep during an activity session based in the Nursery/Reception learning environment, so that their readiness to benefit from the structured day and education that we offer can be gauged. Pupils are invited back for a one-to-one assessment with the Head of EYFS and parents meet with the Head of Pre-Prep to discuss their child's development.

A place in Nursery/Reception will be offered on the basis of a September start in the year in which a child has their fourth/fifth birthday.

However, parents whose children's birthdays fall within the government's definition of summer births may discuss the possibility of a delayed start for their child with the Head of the Pre-Prep. The College is not bound by this legislation and each case will be evaluated individually.

International pupils and their parents will have a digital interview with the Head of the Pre-Prep, to assess readiness for the September start. References from the child's nursery are sought.

- **Prep School (7-13 years/Year 3-Year 8)**

The Pre-Prep works closely with the Prep School to ensure a smooth transition. The children do not sit an entry examination; pupil progress is taken into consideration alongside on-going internal assessments. Each January, the Pre-Prep children join external candidates and spend a Saturday morning in Shell (Years 3 & 4). This is an informal Assessment Morning which provides an opportunity for Shell staff to assess pupils' social skills as well as their academic potential in a classroom situation. The Saturday morning in Shell is a useful early induction morning for those candidates who will be joining Shell in the autumn. If we have any worries about a Pre-Prep pupil's suitability for entrance into the Prep School, these will have been raised with parents by the Heads of Pre-Prep and Prep School during the year.

Usual entry points for external candidates are at 7+, 10+ and 11+ although pupils may be considered for other age groups if places are available. Details of testing are available on the website.

International students must demonstrate an appropriate level of English, which is assessed during a digital interview with a member of the Prep School's admissions team. If successful, applicants then take written tests in Proficiency in English as an Additional Language, and Cognitive Ability Tests which can be taken online.

- **Senior School**

Entry to the Senior School is usually at 13+ or 16+. Pupils may be considered at other stages of their education if places are available.

- **Fourth Form entry (13+/Year 9 entry)**

Current Prep School pupils may sit an end-of-stage assessment of their work in order to help with their setting upon transfer to the Senior School. If there are any concerns about a pupil's suitability for entrance

into the Senior School, these will have been raised with parents by the Heads of the Prep and Senior School during the year.

For external candidates, places are offered on the basis of entry test results in English, Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning and a current school report/reference. Pupil behaviour is taken into account. Entry testing usually takes place in the January of Year 8 immediately prior to entry.

Pre-testing for 13+ also takes place in the January of Year 6 at the same time as 11+ Entry Tests to the Prep School. Pre-testers performance is considered alongside that of Prep School 11+ applicants and offers are made on that basis.

International candidates are offered places based on written entry tests in Mathematics, Proficiency in English as a Second Language, together with school reports/references and a digital interview.

- **Sixth Form entry (16+/Year 12)**

Entry to the Sixth Form will normally be conditional on the achievement of a minimum of seven Grade 6 passes at GCSE (or equivalent) or three GCSEs at Grade 7 and two at Grade 6; at least a Grade 6 in the GCSE subject (or equivalent) for each A level (Grade 7 is required to support study in Maths and Grade 7 in Maths and the science is needed to support study in Physics, Chemistry or Biology) in addition to a good disciplinary and attendance record.

For current Senior School pupils, an offer of an unconditional Sixth Form place will be made to each Upper Fifth pupil on the basis of satisfactory mock exam results in January; those whose mock results are below the required level will be advised of the future requirements to be achieved if a place is to be confirmed. In the rare occasion that a pupil with an unconditional offer fails to meet the minimum entry requirements, progression into U6 will be made conditional upon satisfactory attitude and performance.

For external candidates, conditional places are offered on the basis of entry test results in a written paper (academic subject of choice) and standardised CAT testing a current school report/reference and interviews.

International candidates are offered places based on entry tests in their chosen A Level subjects, standardised CAT testing and Proficiency in English as a Second Language, a current school report/reference and interviews with senior members of staff.

Sibling Policy

Most siblings join the College; however, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the College judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different school. Decisions are entirely at the discretion of the College Head, following a recommendation by the Heads of each school.

International Applicants

Parents of international students at Bishop's Stortford College are required to appoint a responsible adult living in the UK to act as a Guardian.

Parents of international students should appreciate that the College does not run a short-term study programme and expects overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study such as Years 9-11, or Years 12-13. A limited number of places are reserved for short term international boarders, who are usually provided through approved agents.

Fluency in English

To access the broad curriculum, international students need to be able to communicate and read and write in English at an appropriate level for their age. We expect most students applying to have reached IELTS Level 6 (Competent User) for the Senior School; there is more flexibility for the Prep School and cases are evaluated on an individual basis. We offer ESOL language support for international students. The cost of this is included in the Full Boarding Fee. Day pupils needing ESOL tuition are charged on a termly basis.

Means-Tested Financial Assistance (traditionally known as Bursaries)

Governors are keen that children who wish to benefit from an education at Bishop's Stortford College have the opportunity, regardless of social background or financial circumstances. If a young person demonstrates that he or she has the academic potential to meet our entry requirement and benefit from the College's education, but parental income is not sufficient to pay the fees, the College may be able to help, either with a proportion of the fees or, in exceptional cases, with full fees. See Bursary Policy and Process for more information.

Scholarships

Through the Bishop's Stortford College Scholarship Programme, we aim to foster and celebrate excellence. Scholarships are awarded to candidates who show outstanding talent, based on ability and potential.

- **Scholarship Awards**

Stage Year Group	10+/Form Two Year 6	11+/Lower Third Year 7	13+/Fourth Form Year 9	Sixth Form Year 12
Awards available	Academic Music	Academic Music Art Sport	Academic Music Art Sport	Academic Music Art Sport Drama

Awards are made by the College Head after the assessment procedure and on the basis that a candidate has successfully passed the College's entry test. The Awards are competitive and are made entirely at the discretion of the Head. The number of Awards can vary from year to year and may be held in a combination of disciplines.

All awards are reviewed on an annual basis, by the end of the Spring Term, to ensure that the necessary levels of attainment and commitment are being maintained at the level expected of a College Scholar. Prep School Scholars transferring to the Senior School will have their annual review in the same way and, if confirmed, the award will be carried through to the Senior School. Senior School Awards are for 4th Year to U5 study. Academic Scholarships are awarded for Sixth Form Study based on GCSE results.

Scholarship Categories

1. **Scholarships with a modest fee reduction and/or a reduction on extras such as individual music lessons.**
 - These awards will typically be in the range of a 5-10% reduction on the day fee.

- Higher levels may be occasionally awarded for exceptional talent.
- Awards are determined in open competition at a fixed level set by the College and are non-negotiable.

2. Honorary Scholarships with no financial benefits.

- These awards confer the honour of a scholarship for performance at a slightly lower level than a Category I scholarship.

Families keen to apply for a scholarship for their child, but concerned about affording fees, are encouraged to apply for a means-tested Financial Assistance Award. Scholarships and Financial Assistance Awards are considered entirely separately and the need for financial assistance does not influence the outcome of the scholarship application.

- **Basis of fee reduction calculation**

All fee reductions related to scholarship awards are based on the day fee, to provide parity of financial benefit between day pupils and boarders.

School's Contractual Terms & Conditions

Copies will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Complaints

We hope that parents and pupils will not have complaints about the College admissions process. Applicants are encouraged to raise any concerns or queries about the applications process with the College's Admissions Team in the first instance. Where issues remain unresolved, they should be raised with the College Head in writing.