



**BEDFORD
GIRLS'
SCHOOL**

Admissions Policy

Last Reviewed July 2023

Next Review July 2024

Reviewed by the Headmistress

Introduction

Bedford Girls' School is an academically selective independent day school for girls from the age of 7-18. We have a dual stream Sixth Form offering both the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and A Levels.

The purpose of our Admissions Policy is to ensure that we continue to fulfil our aim of attracting students of ability to be part of a school that wants to develop forward thinking women who are confident to choose their own path and aspire to make a difference to the world around them.

Choosing the School

We understand the importance of deciding on the right school for your daughter. We feel that visiting the school personally is often the best way to understand what makes BGS special and to gain a real understanding of our rich educational offer.

We hold a number of open events throughout the year which give a general introduction to the school. Details are published on our website. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their daughters at other times for small group or individual tours. Please do contact our Admissions Dept for details (admissions@bedfordgirlsschool.co.uk).

Criteria for Entry

We seek to admit candidates whom we consider capable of benefiting from the education provided at Bedford Girls' School and who will contribute fully to the life of the School. We wish to support these students to achieve their personal best.

We embed the International Baccalaureate philosophy into all that we do, encouraging candidates to become internationally minded and to recognise their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, and to help them strive to want to create a better and more peaceful world.

Selection for entry to the School is on merit. All candidates are assessed through entrance assessments, references from the candidate's current school, as well as interviews and reports from previous schools depending on the entry level.

Successful candidates will have met our academic entry requirements. They will also have demonstrated ability and/or interest in the co-curricular areas and we feel they would benefit and have the potential to do well in the Bedford Girls' School environment. Our selection process is designed to identify students who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and who will make a positive contribution towards the life of the School. We are seeking students who want to make a difference to the world around them.

Applicants may be considered as candidates for admission to the School once the Registration Form has been completed and submitted with the £125 registration fee, which is non-refundable.

The main points of entry into the school are Year 3, Year 5, Year 7, Year 9 and Lower Sixth with admissions into other year groups being dependent on vacancies. Our main assessment period is in the January of the year of entry. However, we will consider applications made at any time during the school year if places are available in the year group.

Bold

Imaginative

Reflective

Equal Opportunity

Candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or any disability. Candidates will also be treated equally in respect of their parents' age, sex or marital or civil partnership status.

We also welcome applications from students with disabilities or special educational needs and the School will do all that is reasonable to comply with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2014.

The School needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a child's ability to participate in the admissions process and to take full advantage of the education provided at the School. Parents should alert us to any disability, special educational need or medical condition on the registration form and are expected to provide the School with any formal reports attaining to the child's diagnosis or support plan prior to sitting the entrance assessment.

We advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical difficulties to discuss their child's requirements with the School before the assessments so that we can consult about the adjustments which can be reasonably made to ensure that the admissions process is accessible and the School can cater adequately should an offer of a place be made. Please refer to our Learning Support Policy for more detail.

Parents of prospective students where English is an additional language (EAL) and not the first language spoken at home must alert us in the application form. Prospective EAL students, sit the same tests as other students, but in appropriate circumstances, allowances will be made regarding the admissions tests to allow those with EAL to show their full potential. We will contact parents to ensure we address the level of support their daughter may require in the assessments. Please refer to our English as an Additional Language Policy.

Meeting the Child's Needs

During the assessment a member of our Learning Support team will supervise any student with special educational needs or disabilities as required.

Once an offer is made to a child with special educational, emotional or physical needs a meeting will be arranged with all relevant parties so that the team around the child can discuss the specific needs of the individual, prior to the family accepting a place in the school. The School will work with the family to ensure that the school can do, all that is reasonable, to continue to meet the particular needs of the child.

Selection Process

Each year we publish the entrance assessment dates on our website along with details of our Open Days and events. The entrance examinations for Bedford Girls' School Junior School and Senior School are held in the January prior to the Autumn Term admission.

Entry to the Junior School

The entrance assessment for the Junior School (Years 3 – 6) consists of a series of online Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT), a creative writing task and a reading activity.

For entry to the Junior School, candidates will normally spend two half days in the school working alongside students of the same age. A mixture of fun activities and individual work, which includes online standardised tests, allows the staff to assess a candidate's potential. This assessment procedure, together with a report from the candidate's present school, helps us to identify those who will most benefit from the opportunities available at Bedford Girls' School.

If required, during the assessment a member of our Learning Support team will supervise any students with special educational needs or disabilities as identified and agreed to prior to the assessment session.

Internal Transferring from the Junior School to the Senior School

It is the expectation that all students from the Junior School will successfully transfer into the Senior School. From time to time, however, the recommendation is made that a student might not make the transfer. In such a case, parents are always alerted before their daughter reaches the end of Year 5 and it is recommended that they should explore possible alternative secondary schooling, in case a positive recommendation for transfer into the Senior School cannot be made. In the very few cases where transfer is not recommended, based on their performance in the transition examination, we always offer active assistance and support in identifying and contacting a suitable alternative school. All current Year 6 students undertake the same CAT tests as our external candidates as part of their transition programme for the Senior School. Tests are taken online in a classroom setting. Performance in the assessment is used to provide Senior School staff with additional and consistent underlying data on all students entering Year 7 to aid their transition to the Senior School. It may also be used to determine if additional support is needed.

Entry to the Senior School

Senior School entrance assessments consist of a series of online Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) looking at underlying verbal, non-verbal, spatial and quantitative ability and will be used to identify the candidate's potential. Candidates may also be asked to undertake a short creative writing task. All candidates will be interviewed by the Headmistress, Deputy Head or relevant Head of Year as part of the entrance assessment process and a reference will be requested from their current school.

If required, during the assessment a member of our Learning Support team will supervise any students with special educational needs or disabilities as identified and agreed to prior to the assessment session.

We are also able to facilitate remote assessments for overseas candidates, in conjunction with their current school, who will be requested to invigilate the online assessments. Interviews will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

Entry into the Sixth Form

Bedford Girls' School is an International Baccalaureate School. We offer the Diploma Programme in the Sixth Form. Girls have a choice to take either the Diploma Programme or follow a course of three A Levels.

The minimum entry requirement for our Sixth Form is five Grades 9 – 6 at GCSE with a minimum of a 6 in the subjects the candidate wishes to study at A Level or IB. All candidates are expected to have achieved a minimum of a Grade 4 in Maths and English. For some specific subjects a minimum of a 7 is required at GCSE. Entry to the Sixth Form depends upon a satisfactory report from their present Headteacher, the minimum GCSE requirements and suitable CAT scores. All Sixth Form candidates will also be required to undertake a short writing task.

Potential Sixth Form students can request to meet the Director of Sixth Form and relevant Heads of Department. Once registered, the candidate is then asked to sit a series of Cognitive Ability Tests and have an interview with the Headmistress and the Director of Sixth Form. A candidate for Sixth Form entry will receive a conditional offer of a place following receipt of a supportive reference from her current school.

We are happy to consider candidates who look to join us from educational systems where they do not undertake external examinations at age 16. Entry requirements for these candidates will be based upon a satisfactory report from their present Headteacher, and suitable CAT scores in line with the subjects they wish to study at Sixth Form.

Transfer from BGS Year 11 into the Sixth Form

Transfer from Year 11 into the Sixth Form is dependent on the GCSE grades of the student. The minimum entry requirement for our Sixth Form is five Grades 9 - 6 at GCSE with a minimum of a 6 in the subject they wish to study at A Level or IB. All candidates are expected to have achieved a minimum of a Grade 4 in Maths and English. For certain subjects a specific grade at GCSE may be required, candidates should refer to the A Level and IB curriculum booklets.

Interviews are held between the Headmistress and all current BGS Year 11 students in the Autumn Term of Year 11 to discuss plans and aspirations for Sixth Form and post school study/employment. If there is concern that a Year 11 student who wishes to stay on in the Sixth Form may not obtain the minimum requirements for the Sixth Form, discussions are held with the parents of the student. Strategies are put in place to support the student, but if they fail to meet the GCSE requirements of the Sixth Form, they may not be awarded a place. The Headmistress and Director of Sixth Form may request a meeting with parents and current student to discuss post GCSE results.

References/Reports

We liaise closely with the applicant's current school and require the Headteacher of the applicant's school to provide a confidential reference. We ask parents and schools to provide any information that will help us to make our decision including any existing assessment of need for individual support.

Parents considering transferring their daughter from another school must inform the other school of their plans to enter their daughter for our examination and fulfill all financial obligations to that school.

Late applications/applications for mid-year entry

Where vacancies exist we do consider late, or mid-year, entry. We keep, as far as possible, to our normal assessment procedures, taking into account any particular urgency which applies in an individual case. A candidate is never admitted without reference to her present school.

Fee Assistance

A very limited number of academic bursaries are available for girls from Year 7 upwards. Academic bursaries are offered dependent on parental income and academic ability. Demand for fee assistance is usually high and therefore we are only able to assist a small number of applicants each year who perform particularly well in the Senior School assessments. Bursaries are allocated based upon the results of candidates who sit assessments during the **Main Assessment Period in January** and we are unable to consider bursary requests for entry at any other time of the year.

Overseas Application

We can only accept girls who have British citizenship or a visa to be educated in the UK. As a school we do not have a license to help facilitate the visa application. If you are currently living overseas and wish to return to the UK we can facilitate with the assessment tests being taken overseas in your daughter's current school. We always support families as they transfer to the UK and are able to arrange for additional virtual meetings with key staff and tours of the School upon arrival. We are also able to offer advice about moving within the School's catchment areas. Where possible we will try to connect new families with existing families prior to the start of term.

Offers

During the **Main Assessment Period**, parents are informed towards the middle February whether or not the School will offer their daughter a place and those offered places are asked to confirm their acceptance by early March. A deposit of £500 is payable when parents return the acceptance form to the School to accept the place for their daughter. This deposit is refunded (less any outstanding charges) when their daughter leaves the school.

If the amount of offers exceeds the number of places available in a particular year group, candidates will be placed on a waiting list in order of overall suitability and contacted should a place become available.

Acceptance of registration and admission into Bedford Girls' School is determined by the Headmistress and is subject to the Terms and Conditions that apply and amendments will be made to these periodically. Updated Terms and Conditions are held on the school website (www.bedfordgirlsschool.co.uk)

Late Assessments

Late Assessments are only offered in Year Groups where spaces are currently available. Results from a late assessment is normally communicated either by phone or email within a few days of sitting the assessment, once the school have all the required information including a reference from the current school. Parents are given two weeks to accept an offer of a late place, from the date of the offer. A deposit of £500 is payable when parents return the enrolment form to the School to accept the place for their daughter. This deposit is refunded (less any outstanding charges) when their daughter leaves the school.

If a late assessment takes place after new student induction events have happened, we will try to facilitate a call or meeting, in Term time, with the relevant Form Tutor.

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Information on examinations, appeals and complaints

The School will do all that it can to ensure that the process of selection is fair and meticulous. After the assessment, the School is willing to offer guidance as to the strengths and weaknesses of a candidate's performance though it will not reveal exact details of the performance of individual candidates.

The decision of the Bedford Girls' School Governing Body in awarding bursaries is final and is not subject to appeal.

Bedford Girls' School hopes that parents and students do not have any complaints about the School's admissions process, but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to parents on request.