ADMISSIONS POLICY

GENERAL

Woldingham School is a school with history, a legacy of Sacred Heart principles and values. These values refer to educating girls considering: respect for oneself and others, social awareness, a sense of community, and self-realisation, through the Catholic faith. Woldingham currently educates around 540 girls, aged 11 to 18. Approximately 55% are boarders living on campus.

Woldingham offers an environment to enable any girl, who is willing to become an active part of the Woldingham community, to shine.

No matter where your daughter’s strengths lie, we will help her to identify them and nurture these talents throughout her academic life and beyond. We want to create an atmosphere that allows each of our girls to experiment and try new activities, safe in the knowledge that we are not judging their level, but merely encouraging them to grow as learners, as individuals and as women.

Woldingham aims to attract families who will be in sympathy with the ethos of the School, and to admit girls who will benefit from an education at Woldingham.

AIMS

To identify during the admissions process (from first enquiry to entering the School), girls who will benefit from the education that is offered at Woldingham.

To identify families who are at one with the educational principles of the Society of the Sacred Heart, namely:

- Personal growth in an atmosphere of personal freedom.
- Faith that is relevant in a world that is facing rapid change.
- Sharing, friendship and care as reflections of our relationship with God, as we live out our Christian values.
- Deep respect for scholarship and intellectual values.
- Social awareness that prompts commitment to effective action in helping others.
ARRANGEMENTS

The website and prospectus provide an idea of the facilities and educational opportunities available at Woldingham School.

The website with its additional information and interactive content brings the School to life, but we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. This enables parents and their daughter to get a better feel for Woldingham, to talk to pupils and staff, and experience our special ethos and environment.

We recognise that selection is a two-way process that involves much investigation and discussion by families, many of whom are choosing a senior school for the first time. We are here to help and parents can contact our Admissions Registrar with specific questions or to arrange a visit at any time.

We also hold a series of 3 Open Mornings (September, May and June), which provide an ideal opportunity to see the School. Details are published on our website.

THE ENTRY PROCEDURE

No matter which year group you are contemplating applying for, to register for a place at the School, parents need to complete a registration form (available for download from our website or upon request from the Admissions Registrar at registrar@woldinghamschool.co.uk) and pay a non-refundable registration fee to cover costs associated with administration.

Once we have received your registration form, we will list your daughter on our entry file.

We ask that, if possible, families register their daughters at least one year in advance, although we do appreciate that this is not always feasible.

We keep in touch with our prospective families via email and contact them with further details about our assessments at the appropriate time in the admissions calendar.

Woldingham School is an academically selective school. Selection is based upon academic merit, which is assessed through:

- Entry examination(s) / tests (detailed further along by entry point)
- A one-to-one interview with a member of Senior Staff
- Head Teacher’s Report from your daughter’s previous school.
  GSA guidelines state that prior to assessment we shall ask for a reference from your daughter’s current school Head Teacher requesting relevant information to your daughter’s application.

The usual points of entry are at 11+ (approx. 60 places), 13+ (approx. 30 places) and 16+ (approx. 20 places), but we may also have occasional places at 12+ and 14+.

Provided the applicant reaches our entry requirements, a formal offer of a place will be made in the academic year prior to entry.

Once the formal acceptance of a place is received, this completes a legally binding agreement and a Security Deposit is required. Please refer to the Schedule of Fees which will advise the amount you will be asked to pay.
THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The aim of the process is to identify potential. We are looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum.

The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art, community activities and sport. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

Assessment Days are held at Woldingham in the November of the academic year prior to entry.

All applicants are expected to attend, although where circumstances do not permit this, we are happy to help arrange for alternative testing dates and/or locations.

The assessment day features a mixture of formal tests and informal, fun activities. Staff and the Headmistress spend time with each girl so that a rounded picture of each applicant emerges.

The day also gives girls the chance to judge if Woldingham is the right place for them.

The formal testing part consists of:

- The Woldingham School Entrance Test in Mathematics (11+ and 13+)
- The Woldingham School Entrance Test in English Comprehension (11+ and 13+)
- The Woldingham School Entrance Test in Science (13+ only)
- An online cognitive abilities test – to measure the three principle areas of reasoning – verbal, non-verbal and quantitative.

The English and Mathematics papers are broadly in line with the National Curriculum KS2 for 11+ and KS3 for 13+.

All candidates will be interviewed by a senior member of staff.

On our formal 11+ assessment days, we will also incorporate a group activity to assess girls’ interpersonal communication skills.

Sample papers for 11+ and 13+ applicants are available from the school website. Following Assessment Day, a firm place is offered. Some schools may require their pupils to take the Common Entrance Examination, but entry to Woldingham is not conditional upon these results.

ADMISSION TO THE SIXTH FORM

At their Assessment Day in the Autumn Term prior to entry, candidates are examined in two of their chosen AS Level subjects and will also sit a General Paper.

All applicants are expected to attend. Although, where circumstances do not permit this, we are happy to help arrange for alternative testing dates and/or locations.

They are also interviewed by a senior member of staff, and a report from the candidate’s current school is requested.

Following this, a place is offered in the December prior to entry, which is contingent on GCSE
performance.

We have adjusted our entry requirements for Sixth Form in order to prepare for the forthcoming national GCSE and IGCSE curriculum changes. We are moving to a points system and are asking girls to achieve an average points score of 6.0 using the system below:
- A* - 8 points; A - 7 points; B - 6 points; C - 5 points; D - 4 points and E - 3 points. To work out the average score, a girl would add up her number of points and divide by the number of GCSE subjects taken.

Grade A or better is normally required in subjects chosen for AS and A2 Level.

Assessment Day dates are published on our website.

For international pupils at all points of entry, exam papers can be sent to a student’s current school if attendance at Assessment Day is impossible. We require all international students for whom English is not their first language to sit the Ukiset test prior to registration.

We will assess all non-native English speakers. Or, alternatively, we ask that students who possess this should provide one of the following certifications of English language ability:
- IELTS minimum score – 6.5
- Certificate in Advanced English (Cambridge University) minimum grade of B

Additionally, students will not be able to take an A’ level subject without a) being previously tested in this subject or b) providing sufficient evidence to demonstrate a strong ability to pursue the subject in question.

EQUAL TREATMENT

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 pupils for today’s world. Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School’s admission criteria to attend the School. Woldingham School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

SPECIAL NEEDS

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can cater for them. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Enhancement Department, our teaching and residential staff can offer them the support that they require. Woldingham School is, in general, set up to provide what might be defined as ‘light touch’ provision, such as is suitable for students with a range of needs such as dyslexia or slow cognitive processing.

Woldingham follows the SEND Code of Practice. The welfare and educational needs of a pupil will be identified before she enters the School and the adjustments that can reasonably be made to meet them will be agreed with parents and, if appropriate, their medical advisers. A pupil’s needs will be regularly reviewed.

Parents are required to complete the Individual Needs section of the Registration Form and, if their daughter has such requirements, we ask that copies of any relevant report be submitted along with the initial application. Prior to the entrance exam, parents should ensure that any Report submitted is dated no earlier than 26 months from the date of the exam. We will discuss thoroughly with
parents the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their daughter.

We encourage prospective parents and pupils with individual needs to meet with the School’s Learning Enhancement Coordinator before taking our entrance assessment.

SIBLING POLICY

Most siblings join us at Woldingham School. However, admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Applications from those permanently resident outside the United Kingdom are welcomed provided that she has a relative or legal guardian living in the UK within an hour travelling distance to Woldingham with whom she can stay for some weekends. Candidates are required to undergo the same entry tests as UK-based applicants. For international pupils, exam papers can be sent to a student’s current school if attendance at the relevant Assessment Day is impossible but we would strongly recommend that prospective families visit Woldingham at some point prior to entry.

Unless a candidate can evidence their English language ability by way of a certificate in one of the approved tests (see ‘Admission’ section) they will be asked to sit an English assessment as part of the Woldingham entry procedure.

SERVICE FAMILIES

A generous fee discount is available for those members of the Armed Forces and the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office who qualify for the Continuity of Education Allowance.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Woldingham School is a Catholic school and aims to be a caring and supportive Christian community. We welcome girls of all faiths and cultures. This inclusiveness helps to enrich the unique atmosphere of the School. During the admissions process we aim to identify those girls from families who are in sympathy with the ethos of our school. Parents should be aware that girls are expected to participate in assemblies and attend Mass. Furthermore, all girls are expected to take GCSE Religious Education.

OVER-SUBSCRIPTION OF PLACES

In the event of over-subscription of places, the following entrance criteria will apply and in this order:

- Results of admissions tests, interviews, report from current school and ability to integrate into the School community as evidenced on assessment days.
- Preference given to those girls whose sisters are at the School or have been at the school or who are daughters of Old Girls.
- Preference given to those who want a boarding place.
- Preference given to girls whose families are practising Roman Catholics or practising Christians of other denominations.
- Preference will be given on compassionate grounds if the individual or family situation means that the girl would benefit from the outstanding pastoral care at Woldingham.

SCHOOL’S CONTRACTUAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS
Parents are informed on our website that a copy of the School’s contractual terms and conditions is available on request from the Registrar.