

## St Hilda's Admissions Policy

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### *INFORMATION*

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### **Amendment Record**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page/s</b>	<b>Brief outline of Amendments</b>	<b>Initials</b>
<b>20.11.12</b>		<b>Policy Created</b>	<b>LB</b>
<b>25.11.13</b>		<b>Policy reviewed and updated</b>	<b>LB</b>
<b>24.01.14</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Reviewed and change of authorised persons able to make changes. Bluebird Nursery admissions incorporated into the one document.</b>	<b>TH</b>
<b>26.01.15</b>		<b>Policy reviewed and updated</b>	<b>LB</b>
<b>22.01.16</b>		<b>Policy reviewed and updated</b>	<b>LB</b>

<b>22.09.16</b>		<b>Reviewed and change of Deputy Head and registrar</b>	<b>SJS</b>
<b>2.11.16</b>		<b>Reviewed and updated</b>	<b>LS</b>

## **1.Introduction.**

St Hilda's aims to provide an excellent, well-balanced, academic education within a supportive, safe and caring community, where each child can develop into an independent individual, who can achieve their personal best, while showing a deep respect for others; fully prepared to take the next step in their education with enthusiasm and confidence.

Staff at St Hilda's are committed to treating all children with the same level of affection and respect whatever their skills, attainments, disabilities or differences and we welcome children with learning difficulties or disabilities, provided that our Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can facilitate their needs. We welcome pupils with chronic illnesses provided that we can be confident that our medical staff and teaching staff can provide them with appropriate care and that our curriculum is suitable for them.

## **2.Admissions Policy.**

- a. Our aim is to offer places at St Hilda's to children who will benefit from the school's particular environment and its ethos and who will contribute to improvement of its educational standards. We want to feel reasonably sure that we will be able to educate and develop each pupil we admit to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers. Our aim is that at the end of Year 6 she will have achieved her academic potential and subsequently qualify for 11+ entry to their senior school of choice in Year 7. This will ensure that there is every chance for the pupil to have a fulfilling, happy and successful career at St Hilda's and emerge a confident and well-rounded child.
- b. If in our judgement a pupil is not thriving at St Hilda's we may, after a proper level of consultation between the parents and the school, recommend that the child continue her education at another school.
- c. We have written this admissions policy to ensure that we do not discriminate against children because of any disability or difference that they may have. The policy explains how children may join the school. Our policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which we are aware. We will however make reasonable adjustments so that no disabled pupil or potential pupil is put at a substantial disadvantage at the assessment stage or thereafter because of his or her disability or difference.
- d. Our aim is to balance this inclusive admissions procedure with the need to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to unimpaired learning.

## **3. Parents' Responsibility to their Children and to the School.**

The school asks parents to make the school aware of any relevant information regarding a prospective pupil's difference or disability at the time of application. Parents will be specifically required to raise any issues when prospective pupils are invited to attend school for admission procedures and at any time thereafter when new information is to hand. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil we may take such advice and require such assessments as we judge to be necessary. Subject to this, we will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

Where appropriate (i.e. for school-age children at the time of application) it is the parents' responsibility to notify the Head of their child's current school of their intention to apply elsewhere. Information pertaining to the child's academic, social and attendance behaviour and attainment will be sought from the current school at the assessment stage, and the Head's final decision is subject to a satisfactory school report.

#### **4. Admissions.**

##### **4+ Admission**

All offers are subject to a successful assessment.

Bluebird girls will be eligible for entry into St Hilda's Prep School subject to a successful assessment within the Bluebird setting prior to the external assessments in the early part of the Autumn term preceding entry into Reception the following academic year; also on the proviso that parents confirm acceptance of the Reception place before the cut-off date for external applicants to register their interest, as published annually.

The remaining spaces will be filled by external applicants. All girls who have registered will be invited to attend an informal assessment comprising various early years' activities. In the event that we are over-subscribed and have more applicants than spaces, we will select girls on the basis of a 'good fit', both socially and academically, within the existing cohort. All admissions are at the discretion of the Headmistress.

The school employs a staff of qualified and experienced learning support teachers whose responsibility it is to help children who need support. We may decline to make an offer if we judge that children's educational needs are such that specialist help is beyond what is available at St Hilda's or if we judge that they are not ready for the structured environment of the classroom they would be joining.

##### **Admission to Other Year Groups.**

We are happy to admit children to other year groups where places are available, subject to a successful age-appropriate assessment and a positive school report from the child's current/previous school. Children are admitted to other year groups in the school according to criteria similar to those described in the preceding paragraph.

##### **Children whose First Language is not English.**

St Hilda's may admit children whose first language is not English. The admission of such children will be based on our judgement of their linguistic capacity to access the curriculum. It is recognised that linguistic competence is likely to increase swiftly when they are being taught in English and mixing with English-speaking children. Accordingly allowances are made for children whose English is not fluent but whose general ability is clear.

We do not employ specialist teachers of English as a foreign language. We aim to identify as early as possible a child who does not make the expected progress because of inadequate English language skills and will help parents to identify a suitable teacher whom they may employ to provide necessary support for their child.

## Children whose Application is to other than their Chronological Year Group.

St Hilda's normally does not admit children to a year group other than their chronological year group. It is better for children to work in their chronological year group so that their peer-group comprises children who are at their level developmentally, physically and socially. If in a different year group there is a risk that a child will be disadvantaged or that his or her presence will disadvantage others in that group. Exceptions to this policy are occasionally made if there are good and sufficient reasons to suggest that the exception will benefit the child and not disadvantage other children in the target year group and when the child is not more than two months older or younger than the oldest or youngest in the year he or she is to join. Exceptions may also be made in the case of children whose academic achievements are already exceptional for their age.

## 5. Bursaries.

St Hilda's will only offer bursaries in exceptional circumstances. If a current parent encounters financial difficulties, they need to discuss this with the Headmistress in the first instance, followed by the Finance Director. The Finance Director is available to discuss the possibility of means-tested financial support with families who may need it. The support would vary according to parental need and both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets.

## 6. Admissions Procedure

For further procedural guidelines for parents regarding the admission process, see Appendix 1

## 7. Admissions in to Bluebird Nursery

**Prospective parents are welcome to visit the nursery prior to registration, by booking into one of the Open Mornings as published online. Contact the Registrar to arrange a viewing.**

### a) Registration Procedure

1. On receipt of a Registration Form, together with the **non-refundable registration fee of £75**, we will place your child's name on the waiting list for entry into Bluebird Nursery. Registering does not guarantee a place in Bluebird Nursery. This also applies to existing Bluebird and St. Hilda's School siblings. Pupil numbers will be strictly regulated so that the legally permitted maximum numbers are not exceeded.
2. An acknowledgement of receipt of the Registration Form will be sent.
3. Pupil numbers are reviewed and offers primarily made on an annual basis during the spring term, in line with the prep school, the spring before the academic year of entry. However, limited spaces do become available throughout the academic year. It is advisable to register as early as possible.

We firstly allocate provision amongst our existing Bluebird pupils, and ensure current parents' needs are met in anticipation of the following year. This informs which sessions are available to offer to new prospective children. After that, children will be selected from the waiting list. All Admissions are at the discretion of the Headmistress.

Parents will subsequently be advised whether a place is available or not, in the initial first round of offers. Where a place is available, the family will be invited to an 'initial visit.'

The initial visit is a chance for both parties to get to know each other. Parents can meet the Nursery Manager, Bluebird Nursery staff and play with their children in the setting, before committing to paying the deposit. The nursery reserves the right to withdraw or defer the initial offer, should the initial visit prove unsuccessful. However, this would only happen in exceptional cases where the child is not considered ready for the setting, where the child would require significant one-to-one support that we would be unable to provide, or where the parents appear to be unsupportive to the ethos of the nursery.

Where a place is unavailable, the child will remain on a 'continuing interest' waiting list by default, unless the parents choose to withdraw them. Parents should note that there is still a chance that a place may become available due to further movement within the nursery, or because the initial round of first offers may not all reach formal acceptance stage.

4. Following a successful initial visit, confirmation of a place is sent prior to the anticipated starting date, along with an Acceptance contract and the Terms and Conditions.

5. The signed Acceptance contract, which is deemed as formal acceptance of the place, must be received by the deadline date stated in the offer letter, together with a **deposit of £500**. Failure to do so may mean the offer of a place being withdrawn.

6. Formal acceptance signifies the parents' commitment to the place and an agreement to pay the first two month's fees for attendance as agreed, even if subsequently the child for any reason does not attend or there is a reduction in the number of sessions. At the time of acceptance, payment of the deposit will be required. The deposit is not refundable if a child is withdrawn before he/she takes up his/her place. (Please refer to the standard terms & conditions for further details)

7. There is a minimum of three sessions required for Bluebird pupils attending the nursery.

### Leaving Bluebird Nursery

Notice in writing must be given at least two months in advance before the withdrawal of a pupil from Bluebird Nursery. Notice must be addressed to the Headmistress or Nursery Manager. No other notice will suffice. In the absence of such notice two months' fees, less deposit, in lieu of notice must be paid whether or not the place can be filled. (Please refer to the standard terms & conditions)

### Bluebird Nursery Funding (NEG)

We offer all children 3-4 years of age who receive the Nursery Education Grant (NEG) the opportunity, if you request, to receive just 15 hours flexible funding throughout the week between 8.00am and 6.00pm, taken over a minimum of five sessions. The NEG will begin the term after your child turns 3 years old.

We are a provider who offers free place entitlement to 3 and 4 year olds, funded by Hertfordshire County Council. The free entitlement is for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. It is only applicable from the term following the child's third birthday up until they reach compulsory school age. If you want a place for the 15 free hours only, these are offered in the afternoon for the hours 13.00 to 16.00hrs, 5 days per week or 13.00 - 18.00hrs, 3 days per week. This is subject to availability. Please see the Nursery Manager for further information.

## 8.Fees

Please refer to current published tariff.

## 9. Notice requirements

If you wish to withdraw your child from St. Hilda's (other than the normal leaving date), you shall give a term's notice in writing to that effect or you shall pay to the School a term's fee in lieu of notice, at such rate as would have been charged for the final term of provision if a term's notice had been given.

If notice has been given to withdraw your child from St. Hilda's, and at a later date, this is rescinded, this needs to be in writing addressed to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will have discretion as to whether the place can then become available for your child, dependent on any other candidates who are in the admission process for that place.

## Appendix 1

### Guidelines for Parents Regarding the Admission Procedure

1. Visits by prospective parents are welcome and it is recommended that parents visit prior to registering, although it is not necessary to do so. Contact the Registrar to arrange an individual tour by appointment, or come along to one of our Open Mornings, normally in May and October.
2. Complete and return the Registration Form, together with the **non-refundable registration fee of £75**. An acknowledgement will be sent by post.
3. An invitation to assessment will then be issued. The 4+ assessment is informal. Prospective pupils will be invited to join in with age-appropriate activities with other children their own age in a classroom setting. Older children will be invited to spend the morning or the day with us, and will be required to sit a paper in English and maths. Following their formal assessment, they will be invited to spend time with other St Hilda's pupils of their own age and will join in with the rest of the class.
4. Pupils may join any year group, at any point in the school year, providing we have spaces. We particularly welcome applications from forces families, or other families moving into the area. An age-appropriate assessment will be arranged by the Registrar upon receipt of the registration form and fee.
5. Overseas applicants: It is possible for the prospective pupil to be assessed *in absentia*. In this instance, the Registrar will liaise with the child's current school and will request a written report from their Headteacher.
6. In the event of a formal offer of a place, a letter will be sent with confirmation of the start date, along with an acceptance contract, full St Hilda's terms and conditions, and a Pupil Information form. The offer letter will also include a deadline for the return of the contract and deposit and **you will be required to pay the nonrefundable deposit of £750 in full by**

**this date in order to secure your daughter's place.** Failure to return the deposit by this date may mean that your daughter's place is offered to the next prospective pupil on the waiting list.

7. In signing the contract, this signifies that the parents have read and fully understood the St Hilda's Terms and Conditions, and demonstrates commitment to accepting the place and agreeing to pay the first term's fees, even if subsequently the child for any reason does not attend. The deposit will be returned in full once your daughter completes her final year at St Hilda's, or providing a full term's notice is given in writing to the Head if sooner. See the Terms & Conditions for further information.