



ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

Admissions POLICY

September 2024

Reviewed September 2024
Next Review Date: September 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's School seeks to provide an outstanding education firmly founded on the Catholic Faith.

Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life.

Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each child, where each child is valued and high standards are expected. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence to achieve individual potential and spiritual development.

St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community.

St Mary's is inclusive and welcomes girls from all communities and faith backgrounds, or none, and believes that all benefit from the school's values.

St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

Introduction

The governing body applies the procedures in the admissions policy fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend St Mary's School, Hampstead.

General

St Mary's School, Hampstead is an independent school for girls from ages 2 years 9 months to 11 years.

The School has a capacity of 300 pupils. 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 our School. We hold a number of open events in each term 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 children at other times. Please contact the School's Head of Marketing & Admissions on 0207 435 1568/1868 or email admissions@stmh.co.uk to arrange a visit. If it is not possible to hold open events or arrange school visits because of circumstances beyond the School's control, then the School publishes on its website the alternative arrangements in place.

Aims

St Mary's School, Hampstead seeks to be an inclusive school, welcoming girls from all backgrounds and abilities.

The entry procedure

All applications will be treated on merit and in a sensitive manner. 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 usual points of entry at Pre-Nursery (2.5+), Nursery (3+), Reception (4+) and Year 3 (7+) and the usual time of entry is September, although Pre-Nursery also has additional entry points in January and April. The School may also have occasional places at other ages and may also be able to accommodate pupils joining in-year, where appropriate. Please contact the Head of Marketing & Admissions for details. Should children wish to start during the School year, and a place is available, she will be admitted at the start of a school week, usually at the start of a term or half-term.

The only restriction placed on entry to the School is that of number; however, applicants may be required to undertake an academic assessment to inform us of their ability at point of entry, particularly to the Upper School. Should the number of applicants applying for entry exceed places available, the following criteria are applied to determine the offer of a place in order of priority:

- Siblings;
- Catholicity - Roman Catholic children or children from a family where at least one parent is Roman Catholic. The Governors reserve the right to require production of Baptismal certificates;
- Other factors that the Headmistress may reasonably take into consideration.

Applicants for admission should normally register by 15th September of the year preceding the desired year of admission (15th January and 15th April of the year preceding for January and April Pre-Nursery start dates). The School's Registration Form is available to complete online or download on the School's website and from the School's Head of Marketing & Admissions. Registrations received after this date will be considered but, depending on the timing of the application and the intended date of entry/year group, this may not be until after other applicants have been considered.

Equality, diversity and disability

St Mary's School, Hampstead's aim is to encourage applications from prospective pupils with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 during the Admissions Process. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Generous 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. The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

St Mary's School, Hampstead is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's or their parents' race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief), pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, disability or social background. Candidates will also be treated equally in respect of their parents' age, or marital or civil partnership status.

Special educational needs

St Mary's School, Hampstead does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

Our policy is to apply our admission criteria to all potential pupils. We require parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities or allergies (suspected and diagnosed) to discuss their child's needs with the School at the outset of the admissions process so that we can make adequate provision for her.

Parents are required to provide with the Registration Form full details of all relevant information, including any reports (including any educational psychologist reports, medical reports or other relevant expert third party reports), materials or information about their child's needs, and this may include any final or draft EHC Plans. This is so that the School can assess the applicant's needs and consult with parents regarding any adjustments which can reasonably be made and so that the School can ensure, for example, that she will be able to meaningfully access the education offered and that we are able to ensure her health and safety, and the health and safety of others.

Where parents of a prospective pupil feel their child requires adjustments, the School will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments proposed and whether they can reasonably be made for the child if she were to become a pupil at the School.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which we are not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs and/or disability. For example, if, despite reasonable adjustments (in the case of disability), we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully access the education offered, or that her health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, we may not be able to offer a place at the School.

Sometimes, the situation of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs changes between an offer of a place being made and the pupil starting at the School. The School requires parents to be pro-active in updating the School as to any significant changes which mean that the information provided during the application process is out of date or incomplete. In the vast majority of cases, this will not affect a pupil's place at the School. However, the School may, in exceptional circumstances, need to reconsider the offer of a place if a pupil's circumstances change materially. It is in the pupil's interests that any such decision is made as early as possible to avoid any disruption to their education, so parents are urged to be forthcoming in their communications with the School about any material change to their child's circumstances.

Pre-Nursery entry

The usual age for admission into Pre-Nursery is 2 years 9 months, with admission taking place at the start of the following term (i.e., in September, January or April). We are happy to discuss earlier admission, from 2 years 6 months, for girls who are ready. We will work with parents prior to their daughter's admission to agree the best start date for their daughter based on her specific needs and readiness.

Academic assessment

The aim of the process is to identify potential. St Mary's School is 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 sport, music, drama, art, 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 our assessments is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and wider skills.

Assessment for Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception is based on observing informal play in small groups during taster visits, with light-touch focused assessment activities for Reception (4+ entry) taking place on a separate day. Other candidates may also be assessed through observations during a taster session, or they may undertake a more formal assessment day, during which they may be asked to undertake a formal assessment or may be set group tasks during which they will be observed by school staff. Where candidates are seeking to join us from overseas or are otherwise unable to attend a taster or assessment day, we will request a copy of a recent school report and/or reference from their current or previous school.

The dates of our light-touch focused assessment activity day for Reception (4+ entry) and formal assessment day for (Year 3) 7+ entry are available from the Head of Marketing & Admissions. 4+ and 7+ entrance assessments typically take place in the January prior to September entry. The deadline to accept places is typically late February, aligned with schools in the North London Consortium. The exact date is available from the Head of Marketing & Admissions and stated on the offer documentation.

Sibling policy

Most siblings join us at St Mary's School, Hampstead and siblings receive highest priority when allocating places. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. We will discuss this with the parents in advance and, where possible, guide them on possible more suitable environments. Parents are asked to ensure that they have registered their sibling with the School's Head of Marketing & Admissions at the earliest possible opportunity and at the latest, by the relevant registration deadline date.

Bursaries

St Mary's School, Hampstead's bursary programme is generous and is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet St Mary's School, Hampstead's entry criteria to take up a place here. The School offers means-tested awards annually to entrants at the usual points of entry, where the parents have indicated during the admissions process that they require financial support. Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria published on the School's website from time to time. Both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need but can extend to 95% fee remission in cases of proven need. In very exceptional circumstance, additional discounts may be granted.

Bursaries are normally offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or wealth.

The School's practice is to allocate its entire available bursary funding on entry. The School's expectation is that

parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

Our bursary policy can be viewed on our website or can be obtained from the Head of Marketing & Admissions.

A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

Financial information

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary is granted).

Overseas applicants

We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at our School provided that they have the legal right to enter, live and study in the UK. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expect overseas pupils to progress through the School in the same way that our UK students do. A copy of your daughter's visa, residence permit or other official documentation confirming their eligibility to live in the UK and study at the School will be required upon acceptance of a place, and no later than the pupil's first day at the School. The School reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if the appropriate immigration documentation has not been received by this date, or should such documentation be expired or invalid.

Religious beliefs

Although priority is given to Roman Catholic children or children from a family where at least one parent is Roman Catholic, St Mary's School welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith. All children are welcomed and celebrated.

Procedure for applications

St Mary's School, Hampstead is a Roman Catholic Independent Preparatory Girls' School and it determines the admission arrangements in agreement with the governing body and the Trustees.

The School website informs parents how to apply for a place at the School.

Application and registration does not, in itself, guarantee a place at St Mary's School, Hampstead. The School will notify parents of the decision once all applications have been considered. The fees are clearly shown on our website and are reviewed every year.

Parents considering seeking a place at St Mary's School, Hampstead are requested to contact the School to arrange an appointment with the Headmistress, Head of Marketing & Admissions, or another member of the Senior Management Team. Such parents will also be given a tour of the School (with or without their daughter) prior to their daughter being admitted. Prospective pupils will be invited to attend a taster visit and/or formal assessment day. No children are admitted until personal contact has been made.

Parents of children attending schools in the local area are asked, as a matter of courtesy, to discuss with the Headmistress or Head of Marketing & Admissions the reasons for seeking a possible transfer to St Mary's School, Hampstead.

It is expected that all children who are admitted to St Mary's School, Hampstead remain at the School until their daughter reaches the end of Year 6. It is clearly most advantageous for the children and their learning if they remain in a stable and secure learning environment for the whole of their primary education. Children will gain greatly from

the complete “St Mary’s experience” by remaining at the School for the full period of time available to them.

School’s terms & conditions

The terms upon which the School educates each pupil are set out in the School's Terms and Conditions (Parent Contract), which is on the School’s website and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Complaints

The School hopes that parents and pupils do not have any complaints about the School’s admissions process. The School’s Complaints Policy is on our website and can be sent to parents on request. The Complaints Policy is not available for use by prospective parents.

Records and review

Applicants’ details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and the School’s Privacy Notices. Please see the School’s Privacy Notice for further information about how the School collects, uses and processes personal data.

The School will not hold the personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no more than 6 months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain for longer might include: if the parents express an interest in the candidate re-applying for any reason at a later date, or in the potential candidacy of another sibling, or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body and reviewed every three years or as necessary in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our School or within the local area.