DANES HILL SCHOOL

Admissions Policy and Procedure

This policy applies to the Prep-School and Pre-Prep School, including EYFS

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1. Introduction

1.1 Danes Hill is an independent, gently co-educational mainstream day school for pupils aged 2 - 13 . Assessments will be made before the offer of a place, to ensure that applicants are suited to mainstream school, and that if they have any special needs or disabilities, we are able to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can access the learning on offer and enjoy life as a pupil at the school.

1.2 **Applications** for admission to Danes Hill School can be made at any time. However, there are limits upon numbers under the School's policy on class sizes, which aims for class sizes of no more than 18-20 pupils unless in stated exceptional circumstances when class sizes can increase to 22 children. These circumstances exclusively cover the admission of a sibling whose brother and/or sister can be accommodated elsewhere within the School or the child of a teacher employed to begin work at the School. Such exceptional circumstances apply equally to places offered before the start of, and during, a School year.

1.3 In the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** located at Danes Hill Pre-Prep (Bevendean), numbers are limited due to room sizes, staff qualifications, and staff ratios. In the EYFS, classes will be no larger than 16 pupils in a class. In Key Stage 1, we aim for classes of no more than 18 pupils unless in stated exceptional circumstances when class sizes may increase to 20 children. Therefore, in any age group, those who apply and satisfy the admissions criteria will be offered places in order of registration. Siblings of children already attending Danes Hill School (and still in attendance on the date of joining) will be given priority as well as those children intending to progress through from Transition into Reception. In all year groups other than Mini-Transition, pupils are encouraged to start in September, although special circumstances may allow a start date at an alternative point in the academic year.

1.4 **Offers** of admission to Danes Hill are made individually and at the discretion of the Head in liaison with the Registrar who will consider not only the criteria noted, but also other matters that may be relevant in any individual case. Places are offered subject to a report, teacher feedback, sitting papers in Maths and English, an informal interview and a taster day for pupils in year one and above. Offers of admission to the EYFS are made individually and at the discretion of the Head of Pre Prep, in consultation with the Registrar and the Head.

1.5 **Equal Treatment.** Danes Hill welcomes children from all different backgrounds. Human rights and freedoms are respected and must be balanced with the lawful needs and expectations of our School community and the rights and freedoms of others. All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their, or their parents' gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, birth, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other status.

1.6 **Disability.** Danes Hill will do all that is reasonable, to ensure that the School's culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to children with disabilities. When a disability or special educational need is made known to us, we will consult with parents and make reasonable adjustments to our admission procedures and arrangements to enable a child, if they are able, to satisfy our admission requirements. If a pupil is disabled, we have a series of duties in respect to them. We will:

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- Not discriminate against the pupil directly, indirectly or in relation to a consequence arising from the pupil's disability.
- Not victimise or harass the disabled pupil.
- Make reasonable adjustments to prevent the disabled pupil from being put at a substantial

disadvantage.

1.8 **Educational Adjustments** In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2021, we seek to ensure that those with special educational needs are not treated less favourably or put at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission. The School will take all reasonable measures to support a child and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility to the curriculum where required. The School does have a Learning Support Department which works in conjunction with the teaching staff and the parents to support, a range of needs. The Head in liaison with the Head of Learning Support and Registrar has the right to deny admission of a pupil, if in their professional judgement, the School cannot make the reasonable adjustments to provide adequately for a pupil's special educational needs.

2. Procedures

2.1 **Entry points** These procedures apply for points of entry as shown below:

2.1.1 **EYFS (Tiny, Mini Transition and *Transition Places*)** Children will be admitted in order of registration. No formal assessment is made at this point of entry. Siblings of children already attending Danes Hill (and still in attendance on the date of joining) will be given priority as well as those children intending to progress through to Danes Hill School. Children are required to attend a minimum of 5 sessions per week in Mini Transition and 7 sessions a week in Transition (apart from when the child has just turned 2, when the sessions are reduced to minimum of 3 per week, for the first half term). Following confirmation of a place and agreement of a start date, the EYFS staff will contact the parents of the child to arrange settling sessions.

2.1.2 **EYFS (*Reception Places)*** For Reception pupils, children are offered a place based upon the date that they registered. Existing Transition children will be expected to continue through to Danes Hill School unless one term notice is given as per our Terms and Conditions. Siblings of children either already attending or registered at Danes Hill School, will receive priority. The children will be observed on a taster visit and prior confirmation of joining to ensure they will be able to access the curriculum and that they can thrive at the School. A copy of their nursery report and learning journey (if available) will also be taken into consideration.

2.1.3 ***Years 1 & 2.*** For pupils wishing to join years 1 and 2, there will be informal assessments of numeracy and literacy as part of a taster day. A copy of their latest school report is also taken into consideration as well as their behaviour and attitude on their visits to Danes Hill School. Informal interview with Head of Pre- Prep.

2.1.4 ***Entry to Year 3 and above.*** For pupils wishing to join the Prep School in Years 3-8, the following criteria will be applied:

- An assessment of their ability in English and mathematics
- Feedback from staff on taster days.
- References from their current school.
- Interview with the Head
- Educational phycologist reports or other professional reports (if applicable)

2.2 **Awarding of Places –** Places will be awarded following the criteria set out below

2.2.1 All children will need to perform to the expected standard in the

assessments and observations.

2.2.2 Siblings of children already at Danes Hill (and still in attendance on date of joining) will be given priority in the order in which their registration forms and registration fees were received.

2.2.3 Children without siblings will be awarded any remaining places in the order in which their completed registration forms and registration fees were received.

2.2.4 All families will be kept informed of the availability of places. Where a waiting list situation arises, i.e. where the School anticipates all places will be taken up between transitioning children and those already registered, parents will be informed at the time of their initial enquiry. They will be placed on a waiting list and will be informed immediately, both of their position on it and when/if a place becomes available. The waiting list is managed in order of registration date and priority will be given to families with children already attending Danes Hill School.

2.2.5 In the case of key points of entry, assessment days and the offers of places will be made first come first served, therefore early registration is recommended. Once these places have been offered and accepted, they cannot be withdrawn by the School even if the School receives additional applications including those from siblings.

2.2.6 In line with the Consumer Rights Act 2015, parents have 14 days after accepting the place and paying the deposit, to change their mind without any financial liability.

2.3 **Entry Tests –** The School sets its own assessments

2.3.1 **Interviews** There is a general interview (Y1-Y8) to explore the candidate's interests, attitude to school, personal qualities, ability to contribute to the school community, support available at home and any relevant connection with the School.

2.3.2 **Character Reference** The candidate's current school will be asked to provide a written reference as to the candidate's academic ability, attitude and behaviour, involvement in the school community, talents and interest, and any other exceptional circumstances such as special education needs, or a disability.

2.3.3 **Candidate's Age** Very occasionally, the School may offer places to pupils one year behind their standard year group if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement, that this would be in the best interests of the pupil and the School. This is normally in the case of an overseas pupil whose formal education has started at a later age. Normally, the School believes that a child is best served by being amongst its peer group.

2.3.4 **Special Circumstances** The School recognises that a child's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example:

- If they are unwell when taking tests or have had a lengthy absence from their school.
- If there are particular family circumstances such as a recent bereavement.
- If there is a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system.
- If they have a disability or specific learning difficulties.
- If English is not their first language.

2.3.5 In any of these cases, the School may request further information such as a medical certificate or educational psychologist's report and any associated correspondence or details from the pupil's current school (including samples of work) or any family history of dyslexia, as is considered necessary to make a fair assessment.

2.3.6 **Disclosures** Parents must, and at the time of completion of the Registration Form disclose any known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties. A Confidential Information Form is made available as part of the Registration Process. If any such known or suspected circumstances arise subsequently, parents should notify the School in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions.

2.3.7 **Additional Factors** If Danes Hill School is oversubscribed and we have to decide between two or more candidates who meet our admission requirements, after all appropriate allowances and special consideration has been given, we may give preference to:

- A child who already has a sibling at Danes Hill or whose sibling or parent is a former pupil at Danes Hill School.
- A child whose parent is a current member of our staff.
- For Transition entry, Danes Hill reserves the right to give preference to those parents whose child will progress to Reception.
- Further criteria for consideration of entry into Danes Hill School are contained within the Terms and Conditions sent out to parents with the Offer of a Place Letter.

3 Legal Framework and Other Policies

3.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2002
- School Standards Framework Act 1998
- School Admissions Code 2014
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) – England- Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND regulations and guidance

3.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- English and an Additional Language Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Overarching Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notices

Appendix 1- Admissions Procedure (Reception – Year 8)

1. Introduction

1.1 Ensuring that the School adopts and follows efficient admissions procedures is essential to the legal status of a child's presence at school. It underwrites the Terms and Conditions under which any pupil attends Danes Hill, and under which any parent has a proper expectation of the School. As a result, the School has a responsibility to follow procedures with the utmost care to ensure the welfare of the child and to safeguard the interests both of the parents and the School and to employ appropriate and qualified staff for the purpose of overseeing and delivering the Admissions process.

2. Management

2.1 The School's admissions process will be monitored by the Board of Governors and reviewed by the School Leadership Team (SLT) as and when appropriate. Day to day management of the procedure is delegated by the Head to the Registrar, who is the School's Admissions Officer.

3. The Registrar's Role

3.1 The Registrar will have the responsibility for managing the admissions process. In particular the duties of the Registrar will include:

a. Maintaining a Register of prospective parents to allow the School to plan effectively for the future both in financial and logistic terms.

b. Organising and running Open Days for prospective parents with the Events and Marketing Team.

c. Following up all expressions of interest in the School with the aim of converting interest into a confirmed place or places at School.

d. Conducting the administration of prospective parents in preparing them for entry to Danes Hill by processing appropriate documentation. (See paragraph 4).

e. Advising the Board of Governors and SLT of the pupil numbers situation and trends at their meetings as required.

f. Assisting the Head in arranging visits to the School, by individuals or groups of parents.

g. In liaison with the Head and Head of Pre prep making admissions entry for prospective pupils decisions

4. The Procedure

4.1 The following procedure is to be adopted to ensure an efficient admissions process. Only in exceptional circumstances will the process and timings of its delivery be subject to change:

h. **Pre-Registration** Parents who show an interest in a place at the School for their child or children will be given a School prospectus and any additional information as required.

i. **Registration** Once a parent has submitted the Registration Form with the appropriate registration fee, the Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the Form, place it in the appropriate Year Group admissions file and log the entry onto the admissions database in receipt order. If they wish to do so, parents may inspect the School's policies once they are fully registered and

have paid the appropriate fee. Once the registrations database is full , a waiting list in receipt order will be maintained and parents on that list are to be advised accordingly. (Taster Day visits will be organised at to allow the School to assess prospective pupils.)

j. **Offer of a Place** Providing a place remains for a registered child; the Registrar will, by December prior to the September start date, arrange for the Letter of Offer to be sent to the parents. This will include a copy of the Terms and Conditions, an Acceptance Form, and the School's Privacy Notice(s) which the parents will return to the Registrar if they wish to take up the offer, with the required deposit together with any documentation required by the Acceptance Form.

Prior to the pupil starting at the School, a welcome pack including important documents will be sent to the parent for completion. These forms are to be returned, completed, before the start of the term in which the child is due to join the school. Their information is shared with relevant individuals and captured on the School database.

Waiting lists are to be maintained throughout this process. Should an Offer of a Place be rejected, or a family not confirm the place and pay the deposit in a timely manner, the first name on the waiting list is to be offered that place, and so forth.

k. **Acceptance** Once a parent has returned the Acceptance Form, the Registrar is to ensure that it has been signed by the appropriate parties. The Acceptance Form represents each parent's agreement to the School's Terms and Conditions and forms the basis of a legal contract between the parties. It is to be kept in the pupil's file. The deposit (cheque or transfer) will be receipted by the Financial Controller who will make arrangements to start a pupil account and to credit the value of the deposit to that account.

Once the Acceptance Form together with all required documents and the deposit has been received, the parents of future pupils will be bound by the School's Terms and Conditions. In line with the Consumer Rights Act 2015, parents have 14 days after accepting the place and paying the deposit, to change their mind without any financial liability. Any child who is subsequently withdrawn, even before the start of their time at the School, will be subject to the full term's notice. Failure to abide by this notice period could result in the levy of a term's fees in lieu of necessary notice. Once any outstanding fees are paid, the deposit is returned.

The most recent school report together with any information regarding special educational needs is requested from the current school to obtain further information, including confirmation on whether there have been any safeguarding concerns relating to the pupil, to ensure a smooth transition. This information is shared with teachers and other relevant individuals as appropriate. It is then stored in the pupil's confidential file (hard and soft copy).

If there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will continue the discussion directly with the transferring school. The School's procedures relating to safeguarding will be followed.

l. Transfer from Pre-Prep to the Prep School (Year 1 to Year 2) and Junior to Upper School (Year 5 to Year 6) is automatic but is subject to ongoing academic progress and pastoral aspects being satisfactory. In rare cases, it may be that a pupil's progress or behaviour means that transfer to the next stage is not deemed appropriate. If, for any reason, the Head in liaison with Heads of Section feels that it is not in the best interests of the pupil's individual needs to progress to the next stage of education and that another setting might be better for the individual child, parents will be kept aware and fully consulted before the end of the Spring Term. Danes Hill seeks to recruit children who will stay with us until 13+.