



Admissions Policy & Procedure

Wynstones School is a comprehensive Steiner Waldorf school. The school does not set academic selection condition and accepts children with a wide range of abilities, but the admission of any individual applicant is subject to the criteria set out below.

Our admission decisions will be free from any discrimination on the grounds of disability, race, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion or belief (assuming that the prospective pupil and parents agree to support the ethos of the school as described in our prospectus, website and other literature), and our admissions process supports this approach. The school must, nonetheless, feel reasonably sure that we are able to educate and develop any prospective pupil according to his or her potential and in line with general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, in order that there is every chance that our pupils will have happy, fulfilling and successful school careers.

We recognise that all children are individuals and aim to meet their needs as well as possible taking into consideration their age, developmental stage and other relevant circumstances. The school aims so far as possible to create balanced, mixed-ability class groups.

Applications are welcomed on behalf of all children although not all can be admitted to the school. Decisions on admission of a pupil and assignment to a particular class take into account the needs of the individual pupil, the likely impact on other children in the class, the balance of the class group and the resources available to the school.

Although Wynstones School aims to provide a complete education through to Class XII for every child admitted, admission to one part of the school does not guarantee admission to another. A child initially entering the Kindergarten will be subject to a further admissions process before being granted entry into Class I. A further process applies before being granted entry to the Upper School in Class IX.

Admissions Criteria - General

a) The class group

Our educational approach is built around the creation of a "healthy constellation" of children in each class group. There is no prescriptive formula for this, but it does mean that when a new applicant is being considered for an established class, the applicant may be rejected if we judge that the overall dynamic of the class would be affected to the detriment of the children already in the class. In the Kindergarten we do look carefully at the balance of ages (3 – 6). Admission always takes into account the total number of children already in the class.

Our teaching approach places a great deal of importance on the class as a social group and on the class teacher as focal point for the children's learning, especially in the Lower and Middle School

years (ages 6 to 14, Years 2-9). We do have teaching assistants in some of our classrooms to support the class teacher, but in most cases we will not admit a child who is expected to need a dedicated one-to-one assistant in order to join the class as, in the context of our particular approach to teaching, this could have an adverse effect on other children already in the class.

b) With our desire to meet the needs of the individual child, Wynstones will consider applications on behalf of children with physical impairments, those with medical needs and those with special educational needs. The school will consider if it can make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of each applicant child. However, there are some children whose needs cannot, in our view, be met by the educational approach we offer and the resources we have, and such children will not be admitted.

No definitive statement can be made about which children with special educational needs can and cannot be accommodated in the school, as every situation is unique. However, we cater only for children who fall within an academic ability range which enables them to benefit from our rigorous and broad curriculum, which leads GCSE and A level and equivalent in the Upper School.

Children with mild dyslexia, dyspraxia and related conditions may be accepted. Where resources and the curriculum allow, adjustments may be able to be made to accommodate a child with medical or special educational needs. In the case of pupils with medical needs, as part of the admission process, a risk assessment will take place as well as consultation with relevant medical or other specialists to ensure that an informed decision is made. The school reserves the right to refuse entry to a pupil whose special educational needs are considered by the school to be beyond those for which we can reasonably provide through our own Learning Support department or where that department is over-subscribed.

c) The school's resources

All pupils at Wynstones have access to the services of our Learning Support department on the basis of need. However, the resources that we can fund from within normal tuition fees are necessarily limited. Where we assess that an applicant pupil's need for these services will be larger in magnitude or duration than we can reasonably provide from within the school's resources, if we admit the pupil we reserve the right to charge the actual cost of any exceptional provision direct to the parents in addition to normal tuition fees. Applicant families will be informed of any such additional charges before committing to the school.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – specific

Applicants will be considered individually in the light of the issues outlined above. Additional factors that are taken into consideration are:

1. If the applicant is the child of a member of staff;
2. If the applicant has siblings already at the school ;
3. If the applicant comes from another Steiner Waldorf School;
4. In the case of Class I applications, if the applicant comes from a Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten;

5. In the case of Kindergarten applications, if the applicant has been part of the Wynstones Parent & Child group;
6. The date of application, and how many applications have been received for that class at that date.

These additional factors do not alter our need to consider the needs of the individual pupil, the likely impact on other children in the class, the balance of the class group and the resources available to the school.

Admissions Process

Assessment of Applicants

Wynstones School does not set a formal written entrance examination. Nevertheless, all applicants to the school are assessed for suitability by the following methods:

1. Consideration of the existing constellation of pupils in the target class and the likely impact of the new applicant were they to join the class.
2. Review of recent reports from the pupil's current or previous schools. If these lack sufficient detail, we may also request a reference from the pupil's current class/form teacher or other relevant member of staff.
3. Consideration of a selection of the pupil's recent work (for entry into classes above Class I).
4. If we deem it helpful, formal assessments by our Learning Support department. These assessments do not normally apply to applications for the Kindergarten, with the exception of applicants who are looking to move on to Class I within 12 months of entry.
5. Interviews with parent(s) and child by the prospective class teacher (Kindergarten and Lower School) or class guardian (Upper School), and where relevant a teacher from the Learning Support department. The Chair of Lower or Upper School may also attend such interviews.
6. In cases of doubt, the school may require a report from an educational psychologist or other external expert before reaching a decision on a particular application.
7. For Entry into Class XI for the A Level programme, consideration will be given to GCSE grades achieved.

KEY STEPS

a) Before submitting a formal application

Prospective applicants to the school should contact the Admissions Registrar in the first instance. As our approach to education is distinctive, it is important that parents understand our methods and educational philosophy, as a mutual understanding of child development and our curriculum between parents and the school is highly beneficial to pupils. It is therefore important that parents look carefully at the material on our web site or read our prospectus.

We would also strongly recommend attendance at one of our open mornings that take place regularly in term time. A visit to our Advent fair (December) or summer fair (June), or to any of our

many plays and concerts, will also allow prospective families to get to know us. Full details of open mornings and other school events are to be found on our website.

It may be possible to arrange an individual tour of the school and informal interview with a member of the teaching staff before making an application. Please contact the school office if you would like to discuss this.

b) Submitting the application

Once parents are happy that they do wish to apply for a place, they should request the relevant papers and submit them with the necessary supporting documentation and (non-refundable) application fee. Please provide us with as much information about your child as possible so that we can be sure that we can fully understand their needs. This includes information as to which is the child's first language and whether or not she/he is bi-lingual, and, for pupils seeking to join us after Class I, information on any lessons taken in foreign languages. If Learning Support provision has already been made for the child, then this must be made clear in the application. Copies of any relevant information, including Educational Psychologist's reports, 'Individual Education Plans' and 'Statements of Special Education Need', must also be sent to the school. It is of great importance that a parent informs the School on the application form should a prospective pupil be disabled under the definition of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

c) Interviews

When the relevant members of staff have considered the written application, parents are invited with their child to a formal interview. This is very much a two-way meeting, where parents are encouraged to ask any questions they may have, and the school will seek to get to know the prospective pupil, to best assess how they may benefit from a place at Wynstones. The interviews are normally conducted by the relevant class teacher (Lower School) or class guardian (Upper School), with another teaching colleague. Normally one or both of these two is a member of the College of Teachers. In some cases a teacher from the Learning Support department may also attend.

An interview with the school's Finance Manager is also required to discuss all the financial aspects of enrolling a child at Wynstones. This interview may include discussion of our fee assistance scheme, but this needs to be signalled in advance when making the application. Please contact the finance office for any information about the fee assistance scheme. The financial interview is usually held on the same day as the educational interview. We strongly recommend a short trial visit, of 2 to 5 days, before a final decision on accepting the child is made. This applies to all applications other than those for entry into the Kindergarten or September entry into Class I. For a trial visit the child joins his/her prospective class for a few days of school, and participates in all day-to-day activities with the other pupils. This will allow him/her to get a very good feel for the school and how we work, in a way that a half-day visit with parents does not allow. Please note that a trial visit forms part of the formal application process; we do not arrange such visits prior to submission of the relevant documents and fees. Please further note that such visits are not usually arranged in the last two weeks of a term.

Once the trial visit has been completed, the relevant staff will review the application and communicate the decision to the parents. The decision process will also involve the Chair of Lower School or Chair of Upper School, as applicable.

d) Decisions and appeals

Parents will receive the school's decision about their application in writing.

If the decision is to admit the pupil, then the parents must confirm acceptance of the place in writing. Normally we expect this acceptance to be signed by both parents, or all adults holding parental responsibility for the child. A copy of the home-school agreement is also to be signed and returned to the school. The acceptance of the place must be made within three weeks, or the school reserves the right to withdraw the offer.

The decision may have some additional elements attached to it, all of which will have been discussed at the interview. For instance, a pupil who joins in the Middle School having never learned German, might be required to take ab initio lessons with a suitable tutor out of school time, at the parents' expense, to enable them to catch up with their classmates. Where English is not the principal language of the child, parents may need to arrange and finance English lessons for their child.

In some rare cases, issues arise at the interview or during the trial visit that lead to the school requesting additional information or a further meeting before it can make its decision.

If the school decides not to admit the prospective pupil, the parents are entitled to appeal against the decision. Appeals about an admission decision may be made to the Chair of College in writing within 5 working days of the receipt of the admissions decision. A response to an appeal will normally be provided within 10 working school days of receipt unless external specialist advice is required in which case a response will be provided as soon as practicable.

e) Starting at Wynstones

Admission to Lower and Upper School is normally on a trial basis in the first instance. Trials may also be used in particular cases in other parts of the school at the school's discretion. The duration of the trial will be specified and will not normally exceed half a term in the first instance. Trial periods may be extended if the school deems this to be necessary in a particular case. The pupil's place at the school is fully confirmed once the trial period has been completed and all parties agree that the period has been successful for all concerned. Where significant additional information about the pupil comes to light during this period which might potentially have altered the school's initial decision to admit the pupil, the school reserves the right to discuss with the parents whether the pupil's continued attendance at the school is still viable, and, in extremis, to revoke the pupil's admission to the school.

Although admission to the school at the beginning of a term is always preferable, this is not a fixed policy. In some cases it is possible to start partway through a term.

Whilst we do not have a school uniform, pupils and parents should make themselves familiar with our dress code, and note that there are certain required items to be worn for Games and PE, and for festivals.

All other matters to do with the date of starting, arriving on the first day, and other practicalities will usually be arranged through the class teacher (Lower School) or class guardian (Upper School).

All Policies and procedures are available upon request from the School Receptionist.

Date of this revision: April 2015 JV

Next revision due: March 2017