Admissions Policy

Policy area

Parents, Students

Statutory regulation

Equality Act 2010

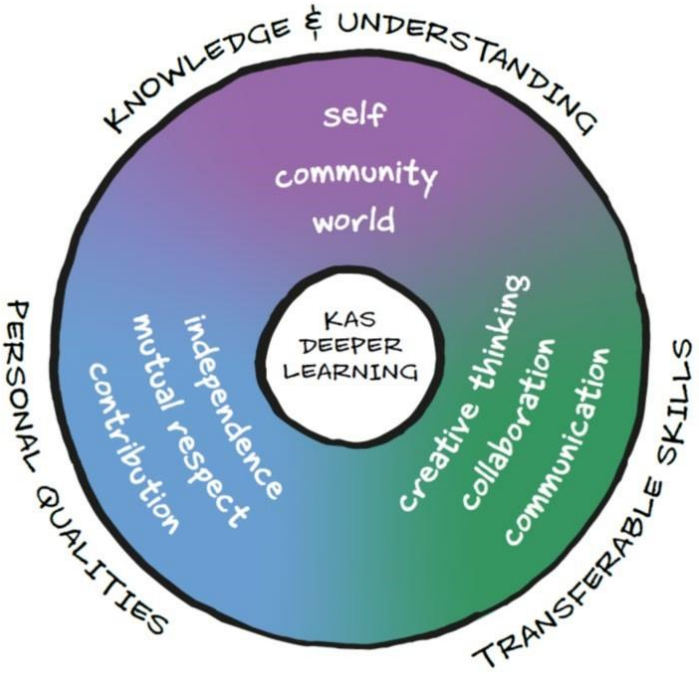
SLT Lead

Head (Stephen Campbell)

Approved
March 2024

Last Updated
March 2024

Next date for Approval
March 2027



The KAS Deeper Learning Wheel

All King Alfred policies relating to students are informed by our vision of a holistic education, which is represented by the graphic above. The Admissions Policy connects to each of the three sections:

In **Knowledge and Understanding**, we aim for all our students to develop a strong understanding of themselves, their local communities and the wider world, appreciating diversity in all its forms.

In **Personal Qualities**, we aim to support students to be proud of who they are. We also aim for them to be respectful in the way they interact with others, and to stand up against injustice and prejudice.

In **Transferable Skills**, we aim to support students to listen to others' opinions and to hear what people have to say before making judgements. We also aim for them to appreciate that working with people from diverse backgrounds with different experiences is crucial in today's world, enriching what can be achieved individually and collectively.

THE KING ALFRED SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The King Alfred School (KAS) Admissions Policy seeks to achieve a successful fit between the School and its students. The procedure should allow the School to gain a realistic picture of the prospective student; and the student and parents to gain one of the School.

To maintain the character of the School and support its ethos there must be a reasonable spread of ability. The School also aims to achieve gender balance in each year group, through its admissions process.

The aims of this policy are to eliminate from the admissions process, as far as possible, any significant disadvantages which may be encountered by applicants with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to set admissions criteria that are fair to all applicants.

This policy can be made available in a more accessible form if required – please contact admissions@kingalfred.org.uk.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Accessibility Plan, Equal Opportunities Policy and Bursary and Financial Support Policy.

2. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

The main point of entry is into Reception Class where we normally admit 40 children per year. The other points of entry are:

- A limited number of places at age 11 into Year 7.
- Post GCSE into the Sixth Form (Year 12).
- Occasional vacancies as they arise in other years. The Registrar maintains waiting lists.

[*See Annexe A for flow charts detailing the various admission processes*]

The first stage of the procedure for all applicants is to complete an online application form and pay a non-refundable registration fee. The child's name will be put on the waiting list but this does not guarantee a place.

Date order of registration is an important consideration in our admissions procedure for Reception Class and occasional vacancies (but not Year 7 and Year 12 entry), so it is recommended to apply as early as possible.

The closing date for Year 7 entry is during September of the previous year, i.e. when the child has recently entered Year 6. This closing date is published by advertisement and on the School website.

The Admissions Procedure normally comprises:

- registration of a prospective student's details with the Admissions Office by completing an online application form and payment of a non-refundable registration fee;
- consideration of that application and any supporting documentation by KAS;
- a report from the previous school, or nursery (as appropriate);
- all relevant educational and health reports (if appropriate);

- a visit by the student to KAS, accompanied by parents in the case of those applying to Reception;
- a meeting between the parents and the Head, Deputy Head or an Assistant Head;
- an assessment of the student;
- an offer of a place, or advice should it not be possible to offer a place;
- completed reference and safeguarding forms from the child's current school.

In the case of those applying to Reception, the School may on occasion decide to visit the child's nursery or school to observe the child in a familiar environment before determining whether or not to offer a place.

3. VISIT AND ASSESSMENT

The visit is central to the process. The procedures for visits are as follows:

- Reception Class admission: there is generally a short visit (approximately 90 minutes);
- Year 1 admission (occasional vacancies): there is generally a one-day visit;
- Other years admission (occasional vacancies): students normally spend one to two days at KAS, attending classes and mixing with their peer group;
- Year 7 and Sixth Form admission: applicants undergo an assessment process (see below).

A visit is arranged when a place is available or likely to become so, and the school report and/or conversations with the parents indicates that KAS may be an appropriate school for the prospective student.

4. THE ASSESSMENT AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

The assessment is an opportunity to determine a child's readiness for the next stage of their education, their academic potential, learning profile and whether the child is able to fully participate in and take advantage of the education offered by KAS. The School will make reasonable access arrangements for those applicants with disabilities during the admissions process. Further information is available in the School's Accessibility Plan, available from the Registrar or online at www.kingalfred.org.uk.

The School does not discriminate directly or indirectly based on age, disability, gender, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, cultural or linguistic background, sex, sexual orientation, or special education needs.

The assessment of applicants for entry at all stages except Reception Class includes Maths and English exercises at an age-appropriate level. For children with special educational needs and/or any disability, parents may request extra time, the use of a laptop, or any other special consideration, if the need is supported by a recommendation from another school or relevant professional body.

- For Reception entry: the first 40 children on the waiting list (in terms of how old the children were when they were registered) are invited in for a visit to the School, in small groups, and their parents are invited for a talk with the Head of Lower School in the Autumn Term of the year before the children are due to start Reception. Reserve group visits take place in the Spring Term before September entry. Places are offered after the visits, until the 40 places have been accepted.

- For Year 7 applicants: Following receipt of application forms, school reports, school reference and any other relevant information, applicants will be invited to an assessment day in the Autumn Term of Year 6. The School's process is not academically selective; however, it is holistically selective because we have a responsibility to ensure KAS is able to effectively support the needs of new students. The initial assessment will normally comprise of a CEM test – verbal and non-verbal reasoning, and mathematics tests – along with a creative task. To ensure a fair and objective process for all involved, applicants are ranked according to performance in the assessments and a shortlist is produced. Successful applicants are invited back for a second assessment day, which consists of small group interviews, team building exercises and a creative writing task. Year 7 applicants with siblings at the School will always be invited to attend the second assessment day so they have every opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their abilities [see Section 9 for information about siblings in the admissions process at KAS]. The last stage of the Year 7 process sees applicants invited back for a short interview, along with their parents. A final list is then produced, and places are offered in January.

- Sixth Form admission: Following review of application forms, students' covering letters, school reports, school reference, actual or predicted examination results and any other relevant information, and taking into consideration the criteria set out below, selected applicants are invited to attend academic and pastoral interviews. The next stage will see successful applicants invited in for interviews with relevant subject teachers. Students will also be asked to bring in samples of recent schoolwork or portfolios. Place offers are typically sent in December/January. We want the decision to join KAS to be an informed one, by both child and parents. Parents are expected to support the School and to trust us. We are honest with parents about KAS; we ask parents to be honest with us and to be open about any issues relating to their children from the outset. We look for children who will thrive at KAS and who will contribute to the School community.

Through the selection process we assess:

- How responsive the child is to teachers and to classmates.
- How well the child will integrate into the School community.
- How the child responds to the demands of schoolwork and how willing they are to work independently.
- If relevant, whether the School is able to adequately cater for and meet any special educational needs and/or disabilities. We may ask for an Educational Psychologist's or other appropriate professional's report, such as relevant medical reports.
- Whether the child is able to thrive in the KAS atmosphere, in which a wide degree of freedom and encouragement to take responsibility for oneself are key elements. In this environment the ability and willingness to cooperate and negotiate are essential.

5. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

In considering applications the School will take into account:

- The date order of registration, and for 4+ entry, the period between birth and registration.
- The maintenance of a mixed ability range.
- How the child integrates with a group and their peers.
- The importance of parents understanding and supporting the aims and ethos of the School.

- Our ability to provide students with what they need to develop, including those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- GCSE results for applicants to the Sixth Form. The minimum entry requirement is 5 grade 6s at GCSE; in practice some departments require higher grades in the subjects the students wish to pursue at A level.
- The need to maintain a balance of entry, welcoming families new to KAS alongside those with an existing connection to the School.

6. SEND

The School will treat every application from a child with special educational needs and/or disabilities in a fair, open-minded way.

Although the School welcomes applicants with disabilities and/or special educational needs, its current facilities (physical and otherwise) are limited. The School will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate the needs of those applicants with disabilities which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can adequately cater for.

Before offering a place, the School must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to adequately cater for, educate and facilitate the development of the prospective student [to the best of their potential]. The School adheres to its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement in all areas of school life, showing due regard to the fact the prospective student must be able to access the mainstream curriculum at an age-appropriate level.

Parents are requested to complete the relevant sections in the online form when registering a place for their child at the School. They are required to include details of any special circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties or other circumstances which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School. The School will consider whether reasonable adjustments need to be made for a child with SEND during the admissions process.

If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School is unable to adequately cater for the needs of those children with SEND, parents will be informed why an offer will not be made. The School has the final decision in all cases of admissions.

In the event of any changes to a child's SEND between the submission of a place application and the child starting at KAS, parents are required to notify the School's Registrar. If the nature of the change is such that the School is no longer able to meet their needs – despite reasonable adjustments – then the School will communicate this to parents at the earliest available opportunity.

If a child's SEND becomes more significant during their time at KAS, the School will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to allow the child to continue at the School. If, after reasonable adjustments have been made, the School is unable to adequately cater for and meet their needs, the Head may request parents withdraw their child. In these circumstances, the School will ensure advance notice is given when informing the parents. Fees in lieu will not be payable in these circumstances and the acceptance deposit will be returned.

7. PASTORAL

In addition to disclosing whether their child has any SEND requirements, parents are required to inform the School of any known or suspected pastoral issues relating to their child's physical or mental health, their wellbeing, social interactions, bullying or wider family circumstances.

As outlined above, the School must feel sufficiently confident it can provide the resources and learning environment necessary for each child to access the education on offer and ultimately thrive in our student community. Therefore, when applying, parents must also disclose whether there are any specialist/external agencies involved in supporting their child, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), private counselling or other therapies.

Again, in the event circumstances change between the submission of a place application and the child starting at KAS, parents are required to notify the School's Registrar.

8. BURSARIES

The School offers a limited number of means tested bursaries for Year 7 and Year 12 entry, as part of our commitment to enabling more pupils to benefit from the kind of education available at KAS. Details are given in the Bursary Policy and Financial Support Policy.

9. SIBLINGS

The School welcomes applications from siblings, appreciating this is an important element within our community.

Siblings are recognised in the admissions process, whether for Reception, Year 7, Sixth Form or an Occasional Place. However, parents should be aware there is no guarantee, nor should there be any expectation, that a sibling will be offered a place.

In line with KAS's commitment to meeting the needs of every student, decisions necessarily consider whether a young person will thrive in the School's learning environment. Furthermore, where assessment is the core component in an application – at Year 7 and Sixth Form (GCSE grades, or equivalent) – place offers are ultimately dependent on student performance, in accordance with a fair and balanced process.

The School understands this can be both a complex and sensitive issue. Therefore, should you need further clarity over this position, please contact the Registrar by emailing admissions@kingalfred.org.uk.

10. ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

In Lower School, we assess all EAL children upon arrival and provide support within our capability to help them socialise with other children and access the curriculum. If EAL support is needed, we contact parents to discuss the appropriate provision.

Applicants to our Upper School who have EAL will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient command of English (both written and spoken) to access a curriculum which is delivered in English.

11. TRANSITION BETWEEN LOWER SCHOOL AND UPPER SCHOOL

The School arranges transition events to support Lower School students and their parents with the move into Upper School.

Year 5 parents are invited to a 'Teaching and Learning in Upper School' information session for parents, held in the Spring Term. This is then followed by a 'How the Upper School Works' meeting for parents in the Summer Term.

Students in Year 5 take part in Upper School taster sessions, learning about the 6-8 programme and taking part in a tour.

Where relevant, Year 5 parents are also invited to individual behaviour meetings to discuss expectations around school life in Upper School.

In Year 6, there is another opportunity for parents to attend a 'How the Upper School Works' information session in the Autumn Term. This is followed in the Summer Term by a 'Becoming an Upper School Parent' meeting, as well as a Parent Social to which both existing and new parents are invited.

Year 6 students have the chance to go on a Camp with their year group in the Summer Term, at which at least one Year 7 staff member will be present to get to know the cohort. Students will also be invited to go on a team building day before the end of their final year in Lower School.

For parents of children with SEND, individual meetings take place across the Spring and Summer terms – beginning in Year 3 and running through until Year 6 – to consider their child's progress and review support measures that are required.

12. RETURNING STUDENTS

If you are applying for a place for a child who has previously attended KAS but subsequently left the School, please be aware that you will need to submit a new application.

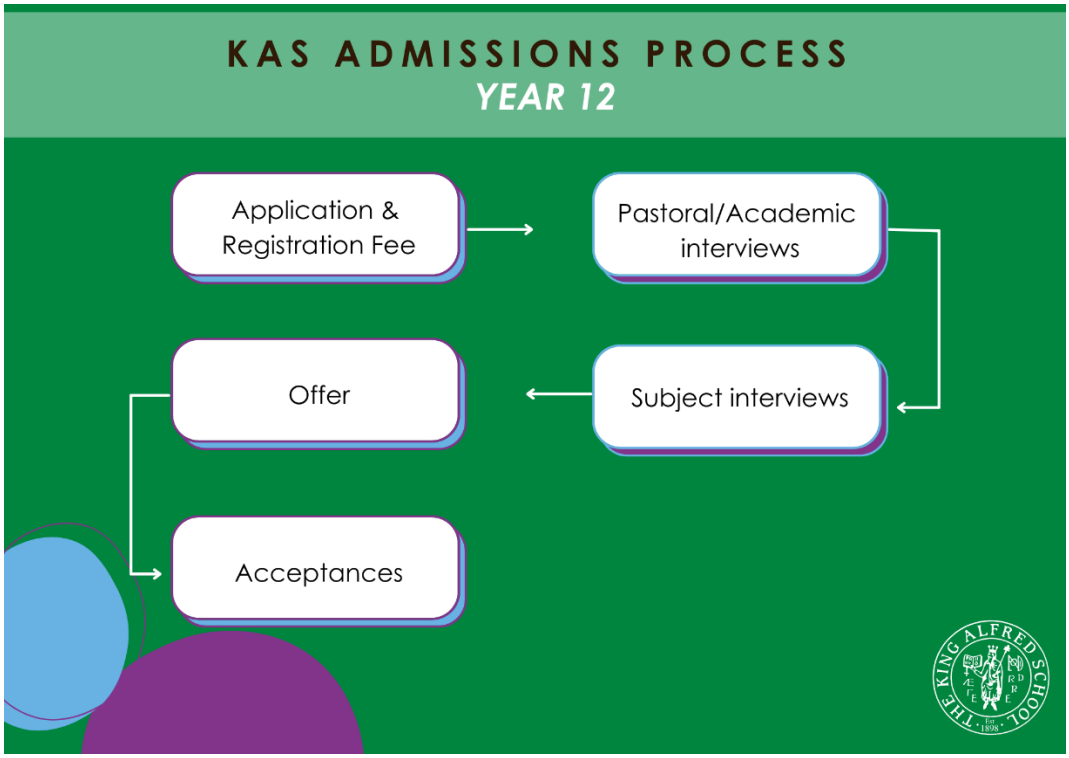
So as not to undermine the fairness of the admissions process, applications for returning students will be treated the same as any other application and will not be prioritised in any assessment process or on waiting lists.

ANNEXE A

Reception admissions process:

Year 7 admissions process:

Year 12 admissions process:



Occasional Places admissions process: