



# **DOWNSEND**

## **SCHOOL**

### **Admissions Policy**

## Admissions Policy

### Aims

- To ensure that all our admissions procedures are clear and unambiguous
- To ensure that all prospective families have equal access to places

### Entry criteria

Downsend School is a mixed ability, non-denominational school that welcomes children from all backgrounds. The school has four sites; the Prep School site in Leatherhead and three Pre-Prep sites in Leatherhead, Ashted and Epsom. Children from age 2–6 attend one of our three Pre-Prep schools, or Pre-Preps, before moving up to the Prep School, based in Leatherhead, at age 6.

#### *Pre-Prep Entry*

Entry to our Pre-Preps is non-selective. Most of the children who join our Lower School at 6+ (Year 2) are from our own Pre-Prep schools and entry is automatic unless there are serious academic or behavioural concerns. Children wishing to join Downsend from other schools at this age may attend one of our three Pre-Preps for a taster day and informal assessment, if their reference gives us cause to do so.

#### *Lower School Entry*

Children who join us from other schools at 7+ (Year 3) will be required to sit an entrance test in Reading, Writing and Mathematics and attend an interview, so we can ensure that they will be able to cope with the curriculum within our busy school day. 7+ entrance tests usually take place in the Autumn or the Spring Term preceding the September of entry and are designed to be child-friendly, bearing in mind the young age of the children involved.

Pupils wishing to join us higher up the school will be invited in for an assessment and taster day. They will sit tests in English and Mathematics and will also be observed during the day.

#### *Upper School Entry*

Applicants for the Upper School (Year 6 - Year 8) may also be invited to an interview with the Headmaster. This allows the school to gain a realistic picture of the prospective pupil, and for parents to assure themselves that they are sympathetic to, and supportive of, the school's objectives and approach to learning.

A reference request will be sent to the current school of any applicant for Year 2 and above.

Alternative arrangements may, in some circumstances, be made for non UK resident applicants.

Occasionally an offer may be withheld, or withdrawn, in the following circumstances:

- Where a pupil's previous school or nursery indicates that their behaviour was such that it inhibited the learning of other pupils.
- Where we feel that the pupil will not be able to cope with the curriculum.
- Where we do not feel that we can adequately provide for a child whose learning difficulties or physical impairments are beyond the support that we are able to offer.

Once the process has been completed, places are usually offered within two weeks. If we are unable to offer a place, we will always explain our reasons to the pupil's parents or to the child's Headteacher. Offers of places are subject to availability and the admission requirements of the School at the time offers are made. Once all the available places have been allocated, a waiting list will be set up based on the current admissions criteria.

## **Entry Procedure**

### ***Enquiries***

All enquiries are directed to the Admissions Registrar, who logs them onto our database and sends out a Prospectus Pack, which includes a covering letter and prospectus

### ***Registration of Interest***

Interested applicants are asked to complete the Registration Form and return it, along with the non-returnable £75.00 registration fee, as soon as possible. Once received, applicants will be recorded as a registered pre-admission student with an allocated year and term of entry.

## **Entry into First Steps and Rising Reception at one of our Pre-Prep Schools**

Entry into First Steps & Rising Reception is subject to availability and the admission requirements of the School at the time offers are made. If a place is available on receipt of a Registration Form, an Offer Letter will be sent to the applicant. We ask that the Acceptance of Place Form is completed and returned, along with a £750 deposit, within two weeks in order to secure the place.

If we do not hear back from applicants within that time, we assume that they are no longer interested. Registered parents who do not return their Acceptance Form within two weeks are at liberty to contact the school and try again at a later date but they are made aware that the place may no longer be available. Where a place is not immediately available, registered applicants may be offered an alternative Pre-Prep. If this is not acceptable, they will be placed on a waiting list.

The deposit will be retained in the general funds of the School until the pupil leaves and will be repaid without interest, provided that the pupil enters Reception and that all other sums due to the School have been settled on leaving.

## **Entry into Reception at one of our Pre-Prep Schools**

Entry for external applicants is subject to availability and the admission requirements of the School at the time offers are made. Once all the available places have been allocated, a waiting list will be set up based on the current admissions criteria.

The number of places available will vary from year to year, depending on the number of children moving up from Rising Reception. At the end of January of the preceding year, registered applicants will be sent an Offer Letter with an enclosed Acceptance of Place Form. We ask that they are returned, along with a £750 deposit, within two weeks. After

such time, the place will be offered to the next candidate on the waiting list. The offer process will continue until all the places have been allocated.

## **Entry into Year 2**

Most of the children who join Downsend Lower School at 6+ (Year 2) are from Downsend's own Pre-Prep schools and entry is automatic unless there are serious academic or behavioural concerns. The number of places available will vary from year to year; depending on the number of children moving up from Year 1 of the Pre-Preps, to whom priority will be given.

Registered applicants wishing to join Downsend from other schools at this age will be invited to attend for a taster day and informal assessment. If their application is successful, they will be sent an Offer Letter with an enclosed Acceptance of Place Form. We ask that they are returned, along with a £750 deposit, within two weeks to secure a place. If we do not hear back from applicants within that time, we assume that they are no longer interested.

Registered parents who do not return their Acceptance Form within two weeks are at liberty to contact the school and try again at a later date but they are made aware that the place may no longer be available. Where a place is not immediately available, registered applicants will be placed on a waiting list in order of application.

## **Entry into Year 3 (7+)**

Registrations will be considered in the order they are received. Once pupils are registered for entry they will automatically be invited to come to an Assessment Day, either in November or in January of the academic year prior to entry. This is a formal assessment, but is designed to be child friendly, bearing in mind the age of the children. Prior to the Assessment Day, applicants and their parents will be invited to a Welcome Event to introduce them to Downsend in a relaxed environment and to meet the staff who will lead the assessment morning. The children sit three tests: Reading, Writing & Mathematics. These tests are suitable for children from both education sectors and are designed to assess the standard of Year 2 children without being off-putting or overly challenging. Downsend is a selective school, not a competitive school, so places are not allocated based on test scores. The applicant simply needs to pass in all three tests. Applicants for 7+ entry will also be invited to an interview with either the Head of Lower School, Deputy Head of Lower School or the Headmaster.

An offer of a place will usually be sent out within two weeks. If we are unable to offer a child a place, we will always explain our reasons to the child's parents and current Headteacher. Offers of places are subject to availability and the admission requirements of the School at the time offers are made. Once all the available places have been allocated, a waiting list will be set up, based on the current admissions criteria.

If a family's application is successful, they will be sent an Offer Letter with an enclosed Acceptance of Place Form. We ask that they are returned, along with a £750 deposit, within two weeks to secure a place.

If we do not hear back from applicants within that time, we assume that they are no longer interested. Registered parents who do not return their Acceptance Form within two weeks are at liberty to contact the school and try again at a later date but they are made aware that the place may no longer be available.

## **Scholarship Programme**

The Downsend 7+ Scholarship Award Programme, for children entering Year 3, is reviewed each year and may be offered for entry in the following September, although this is not guaranteed every year. Through these awards, we have the opportunity to recognise, celebrate and reward excellence from both current pupils and those wishing to join our school. The programme aims to provide opportunities for children of high academic ability, outstanding conduct and good all-round potential to achieve, and as such, we would expect that only children working towards the top end of the Year group will apply. This award is valid from the start of Year 3 through to the end of the Lower School in Year 5. The backdated fee remission will be applied during the Spring Term of Year 5.

### **Entry into other Year groups**

Entry into other Year groups may occur when vacancies become available. If places are available, registered applicants will be invited in for an assessment and taster day. They will sit tests in English and Mathematics and will also be observed during the day. Applicants for the Upper School onwards (Years 6–8) may also be invited to an interview with the Headmaster.

A formal offer will be made on the basis of performance in the tests and observations during the assessment and taster day, usually within one week. We ask that Acceptance of Place Forms are completed and returned, along with a £750 deposit, within two weeks. After such time, if we have not heard from them we will assume that applicants are no longer interested in the place.

Our **Upper School Scholarship** is awarded in Year 5 for entry into Year 6. It is reviewed each year and may be offered for entry in the following September, although this is not guaranteed every year. There are a broader set of possible awards, which last from Years 6-8. Four categories of award are available to Upper School pupils: Academic, All-Rounder, Music & Sport. Assessments take place in January of Year 5 for both internal and external candidates. The outcome of these assessments determines the awards, which come into effect from Year 6 onwards and will last until a pupil reaches the end of Year 8. The backdated fee remission will be applied during the Spring Term of Year 8.

## **Tracking prospective parents**

All initial enquiries are logged on to the PORTAL database from the first point of contact. This allows us to:

- Track their progress through the admissions process
- Analyse sources of enquiry for marketing purposes
- Allow for effective on-going communication
- Monitor and assess the up-take of places and design promotional activities accordingly

## **Staying in contact with Prospective Parents**

Our aim is to stay in contact with prospective parents by:

- Periodically sending copies of our termly school newsletter
- Sending personalised invitations to Open Days or personal tours and to appropriate social events
- Once registered, receiving our weekly Ezine newsletter

All parents are made aware of our data protection registration, and that their data will be stored in connection with their application for a school place only and will not be passed to third parties.

## **Sibling Discount**

Parents with more than one child in Reception or above, across the Downsend School sites will qualify for the following discounts:

1st child:	standard fees apply
2nd child:	5% discount off standard fees
3rd child:	10% discount off standard fees
4th child:	15% discount off standard fees



# DOWNSEND SCHOOL

## ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Visiting an Open Morning at a school is a good first step towards identifying the correct school for your daughter or son. Should you decide that Downsend is of interest to you, we have outlined below the key steps in our admissions process.

- Book a personal tour with the Headmaster to see the school in more detail
- Complete and return your registration form with the registration fee
- For Prep School entry, our Admissions Registrar will confirm exact details of our assessment procedure with you once you have registered and invite your child to visit the school for a Taster Day, which will include the assessment. Entry into our Pre-Preps is non-selective
- We shall make an offer of a place if we feel that Downsend is the right school for your child
- To secure your child's place, simply complete and return the Acceptance of Place form, together with the requested deposit within two weeks of receipt
- If we do not hear from you within two weeks, we shall assume that you are no longer interested and the place will be offered to the next registered applicant
- Registered parents who do not return their Acceptance Form within two weeks are at liberty to contact the school and try again at a later date, but should be aware that the place may no longer be available.
- Once you have confirmed your acceptance of the place and returned the requested deposit, we shall send you a Joining Pack, containing all the information you need, in plenty of time for your child to start school
- As part of our induction process, we shall invite your child to spend some time with us prior to joining the school
- Our Admissions Registrar, Sarah Concanon, is always available to answer any questions and to help guide you through the process. You can contact her on 01372 372311 or email [admissions@downsend.co.uk](mailto:admissions@downsend.co.uk)



## DOWNSEND SCHOOL

### 7+ ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Most children, who enter the Lower School at Downsend from schools other than one of our Pre-Preps, join us at the start of Year 3. There is a formal assessment prior to a place being offered, but the process is designed to be child-friendly and bears in mind the young age of the children involved. The key stages are outlined for you below:

- Once children are registered for entry, they will automatically be invited to come to our assessment day and related activities
- Our 7+ Welcome Events, which are for registered children and their families, take place in November and January of the academic year prior to entry. This is an opportunity for you and your child to meet the staff who lead the Assessment Morning and spend some time getting to know Downsend in a relaxed environment
- The 7+ Assessment Morning is usually the following week. The children sit three tests: Reading, Writing & Mathematics. These tests are suitable for children from both education sectors and are designed to assess the standard of Year 2 children without being off-putting or overly challenging. Applicants will also be invited to an interview with either the Head of Lower School, Deputy Head of Lower School or the Headmaster
- Our results are usually sent out within two weeks. If we are unable to offer a child a place, we will always explain our reasons to the child's parents and current Headteacher
- Registrations will be considered in the order they are received. Offers of places are subject to availability and the admission requirements of the School at the time offers are made. Once all the available places have been allocated, a waiting list will be set up, based on the current admissions criteria. We are a selective school, not a competitive school, so places are not allocated based on test scores. Your child simply needs to pass in all three tests
- If you receive an offer from Downsend, simply complete and return the Acceptance of Place form, together with the requested deposit, within two weeks to secure your child's place
- If we do not hear from you within two weeks, we shall assume that you are no longer interested and the place will be offered to the next registered applicant. Registered parents who do not return their Acceptance Form within two weeks are at liberty to contact the school and try again at a later date, but should be aware that the place may no longer be available
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