



# Admissions Policy

## Policy No: 3.1

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### Policy Statement

As a non selective school, Sidcot does not use common entrance or examinations for admitting students according to their ability (except for Sixth Form, Sixth Form Foundation Course and International student entry, please see Admission criteria section further on) and if there are places available in the Year group, students can be accepted throughout the year in Years 0 to 9. Students are able to join examination Years 10 and 12 up to one term late, at the school's discretion, but students are not accepted into Years 11 and 13., An admission process has been carefully developed alongside this policy to enable parents and students to learn more about Sidcot, its educational approach, ethos and leadership. An overview of the process is available on the school website [www.sidcot.org.uk](http://www.sidcot.org.uk) or can be explained by our admissions department (see appendix 3 for contact details).

This policy has been written to inform parents of prospective students about the admissions process at Sidcot.

1 The **aims of** this policy are:

- To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes. Sidcot is a school with the ethos of the Religious Society of Friends ('Quakers') and accepts students aged 3\*-18 years.
- To identify and welcome children who will benefit from an academic education and activities at Sidcot and who will contribute to and benefit from the ethos of our school community.
- To set out an admissions procedure that is fair to all who apply.

2 **Equal Treatment:** Sidcot School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We welcome children from all ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected and balanced with the lawful needs and rules of our school community and the rights and freedom of others. All prospective students for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, orientation, property, birth or other status. We expect all of our students to attend Meeting for Worship and school assemblies, which are fundamental to our ethos. The school is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has an Equal Opportunities Policy - Children (2.11) in place that is reviewed by the Deputy Head Pastoral annually.

3 **Disability:** At present, our facilities for students with disabilities are limited, but we will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the school's culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to students 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 procedure and arrangements to enable a student, if he/she is able, to satisfy our admission requirements. If after due consideration we consider that suitable provision cannot be made for a particular student or that, his/her needs cannot be appropriately met by the School, we will inform the applicant of our decision. The school is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and has a Disability Policy (3.3) in place that is reviewed by the Deputy Head Pastoral annually.

## **Admission Procedure**

- Visit our website- [www.sidcot.org.uk](http://www.sidcot.org.uk), view or request our prospectus.
- Register interest with Admissions and attend an Open Morning.
- Send in copies of relevant school reports and/or examination results for consideration.
- Interview with Head Teacher or Deputy Head to ascertain whether or not the school can meet the student's academic needs.
- Application: Complete an application form, including any additional information and pay a non-refundable administration fee by spring half term. A character reference will be sought from the student's current school.
- Offer: Documentation will be compiled and sent by 1 April each year or as soon as a place becomes available for children on a waiting list.
- Acceptance: The legally binding Parent Agreement form needs to be read carefully and signed, then returned to the school along with the deposit and medical card by the 1 May each year.
- Any applications operating outside of this timetable will be on a first come, first served basis.
- Entrance Assessment days are held for all applicants 3 times in the year, all students must attend one day to complete a baseline assessment in English and Maths before starting.

## **Admission Criteria**

### **Junior School**

For entry to the Junior school: students are assessed for eligibility through their school report, and/or any other relevant reports and an interview with the Junior Head Teacher.

### **Senior School**

For entry to the Senior school: students are assessed for eligibility through their school report, and/or any other relevant reports and an interview with the Head or Deputy Head Teacher. Although students are not tested for acceptance during the admission process, all students entering Years 7-10 (Third Year to Lower Fifth) have to sit an assessment test in English and Maths. The outcomes of these tests are used to have a clear understanding of the student's ability in those subjects and to set them accordingly. These baseline tests form an important part of the student's educational monitoring and assessment throughout their time at Sidcot.

### **Sixth Form Entry**

For entry to the Sixth Form: students must gain at least 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE, especially in the subjects they wish to continue studying (if applicable) in the Sixth Form. If the student is considering taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma or the AQA Baccalaureate, they will need at least a GCSE grade A\*-C in Maths and English.

### **International Students**

All international students wishing to enter Sidcot must be able to speak and understand the English language. To assess their suitability for study at Sidcot, all students will be required to sit a test in English and Maths. This test must be conducted under strict examination conditions either at their current school or at an agent's office. We appreciate it is not always possible to visit the school for an interview beforehand; in these cases, we might use SKYPE or other such means to interview the student. Below is a guideline for the level of English we expect of an international student at each entry point to the school:

- Senior School Entry (Years 7-8): minimum IELTS (English Language Testing System) level of 4.5 in all four disciplines.
- Senior School, GCSEs and Sixth Form Foundation Entry (Years 9, 10 and 11): minimum IELTS (English Language Testing System) level of 5.0 in all four disciplines. (A level of 4.5 will be accepted for the Sixth Form Foundation Pre A Level course).

- Sixth Form A Level (Year 12): minimum IELTS level of 5.0 across all four disciplines is required and a Level B2 ability in the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) for Languages as stated by the UK Border Agency.
- Sixth Form International Baccalaureate Diploma (Year 12): minimum IELTS level of 5.5 across all four disciplines is required and a Level B2 ability in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as stated by the UK Border Agency.

### **International Students who Reside outside the EU**

All international students who reside outside the EU will also require a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Study) from Sidcot to be able to apply for their visa to study in the UK for the given period of their course. There is a £10 charge payable to Sidcot for the application to the UKBA (United Kingdom Border Agency) and additional postal charges for any supporting evidence required to support the application. We urge all students to read carefully the requirements of a Tier 4 Student Visa, to make sure they can meet the criteria before making an application to the school. These requirements are found at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk> . A student, who has accepted a place at Sidcot but fails to attend the course because their visa is refused, will be liable to pay a full term's fees in lieu of notice.

### **Children who require Learning Support**

Sidcot has a very successful track record for supporting students with the specific learning needs of Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. The school is registered with the CreSTed organisation and can provide resources to support children with mild to moderate educational needs in these areas. For students who need learning support, we require parents to send their child's most recent school reports, including the latest educational psychologist report to provide better understanding of the student's needs and whether we will be able to meet them in the classroom and/or through additional lessons. There is a £50 additional fee payable for these administration costs. A decision on whether we can meet the needs of the child will be made based on these reports before taking the application any further.

### **Taster Days**

Prospective students can take advantage of a Taster Day, called a 'Play Day' in Nursery and Reception years. These days are specifically designed to help students make an informed decision about the school. A Taster Day allows individuals to 'experience' Sidcot, participate in lessons and get a real feel for the school community. If the student is planning to become a boarder, an overnight stay in the house appropriate to their year group may be possible.

### **Interviews**

There are two kinds-

- **General interviews:** In all cases there will be a general interview to explore the prospective student'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.
- **Subjects interview:** At 16+ there may also be an "subjects interview" to explore a prospective student's academic ability in a particular subject. For certain option subjects (such as Art) prospective students may be asked to submit samples of their work.

### **Character reference**

The Head of the prospective student's current school will be asked to provide a written reference as to the student's academic ability, attitude and behaviour, involvement in the school community, talents and interests, and any other special circumstances such as special education needs, or a disability. The reference may also include the results of tests taken at the school (such as NFER or SATs) and predicted grades at GCSE (if appropriate).

### **Bursaries**

Means-tested bursaries are available in cases where financial assistance is required. The level of assistance varies each year according to the amount of funds available and the number of applications received, but may, in a limited number of cases, be as much as 100%. Bursary forms and further information about bursary applications are available from the Admissions department.

### **Other factors**

#### **Prospective student's age**

Very occasionally, we may offer a place to a student that means they will be one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement, that this would be in the best interest of the student and the school.

#### **Special circumstances**

We recognise that a prospective student's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example-

- If he/she is unwell when taking his/her tests or has had a lengthy absence from his/her 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 the prospective student has a disability or specific learning difficulty;
- If English is not the prospective student's first language.

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

### **Disclosures**

Parents must, as soon as possible, disclose any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, physical and mental well-being, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties. Failure to disclose important information regarding their child during the admission process is in breach of the Parent Agreement and may lead to a student being withdrawn from the school after acceptance.

Sidcot reserves the right to establish from any previous school that fees have been paid in full before accepting a student.

### **Special Considerations**

The school is oversubscribed. If we have to decide between two or more prospective students who meet our admission requirements after all appropriate allowances and special consideration have been given, we will give preference to children of Members and/or Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends. Further preference may also be given to:

- A child who is a current Junior school pupil seeking admission to the Senior School;
- A child who already has a brother/sister in the school or whose parent was a former pupil here;
- A child whose parent is a current member of our staff;
- A child with a particular skill, talent or aptitude;
- A child for whom, in certain circumstances, a boarding place is sought.

### **Waiting Lists**

Sidcot is a popular school. If there are no available places, students are invited to be on the waiting list for their chosen year group. When the non refundable registration fee is received, the position on the waiting list is secured and prioritises the students on a first come first served basis. When a place becomes available, the student at the top of the waiting list will be notified in writing to ascertain whether they want to take up the place, if they refuse, the option will go to the next student on the list and so on. A family on the waiting list for entry in a particular year, may defer entry once to a later year, however in doing so will forfeit their position on the waiting list (if one exists) and will be placed next in line of the new chosen year group.

### **Appeals Procedure**

In the event of a child not being offered a place at Sidcot, parents may appeal to the Head of the school, in writing, within 14 days of receipt of the school's decision. The letter of appeal should set out clearly the grounds for the appeal and any relevant supporting documentation should be included. A panel consisting of two members of the Senior Management Team and a member of the Committee of Management (i.e. a Governor) will examine the appeal. They may invite the parents to attend an appeal meeting, but are not bound to do so if they consider that the relevant facts are already available. The parents will be notified of the panel's decision, in writing, within 21 days of receipt of the letter of appeal. If an appeal is made during school holidays and the panel does not expect to be able to notify a decision within this period, parents will be informed of this in writing.

*\* Children may be admitted who are 'rising three years of age'. That is, that, in the term at which the child starts at the School, the third birthday is on or before 31st December, 31st March or 31st August.*

## Appendices to the Admissions Policy

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### Appendix 1 - Legislation, Regulations and Guidance that have informed this Policy.

The Equality Act 2010  
The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001  
ISI Regulations (2010)  
OFSTED Regulations  
UKBA (UK Border Agency) legislation for sponsoring Tier 4 students

### Appendix 2 - Related School Policies

2.11 Equal Opportunities - Children  
3.3 Disability Policy  
3.7 Bursaries Policy and Procedure  
6.15 Education and Welfare Provision for Students with Statements  
6.5 Learning Support Policy- Senior School  
10.28 Special Educational Needs Policy -Junior School

### Appendix 3 - Designated Persons

Responsibility for Admissions in the whole school and for this policy	Alison Wilde, Director of Marketing & Admissions
Responsibility for the management of the Admissions process	Valerie Kennedy, Admissions <a href="mailto:admissions@sidcot.org.uk">admissions@sidcot.org.uk</a> , 01934 845212
Responsibility for the overall assessment of a student's suitability for admissions	John Walmsley, Head
Junior school student assessment	Rosie Craig, Head of Junior School
Senior school academic assessment	Russell Spooner, Deputy Head Academic
Senior school pastoral needs including overall assessment of Special Educational Needs	Elizabeth Burgess, Deputy Head Pastoral
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)	Jane Chambers