
Admissions Policy and Procedures

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1 School Overview

Birkdale School is an Independent Day School providing for children aged 4 to 18. The School has traditionally admitted boys only from ages 4-16 and has a co-educational Sixth Form but from September 2020, the School began admitting girls in year groups PP1 (Reception) to P1 (Y3). The first intake of girls into S1/Y7 was in September 2024 and the School will become fully co-educational in September 2028. The School has a Christian ethos and welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. The School is open to all pupils considered by the Head of Prep and Head to be capable of benefiting from the education provided and of contributing to the life of the School. Admission is ultimately at their discretion. Parents of candidates to enter either the Prep School, Senior School or Sixth Form are invited to contact the Registrar. Admission to the Senior School and Sixth Form is academically selective usually dependent on the pupil achieving an acceptable standard in an internal assessment or external examination appropriate to the age group and academic pace of the School. Such examinations and tests are expected to be free of bias, as set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy. Due consideration is also given to educational experience when assessing pupils' achievement of an 'acceptable standard', and to maximising access for pupils to whom the School can add value.

This policy endeavours to take into consideration, as appropriate, the legal frameworks set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the subsequent Codes of Practice for Admissions and Appeals.

The School must also feel confident that subject to any reasonable adjustments, if required, it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of their potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers. This is to ensure that the pupil will have every chance of a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded adult with a good prospect of a satisfying life. Furthermore, these criteria need to be met throughout the pupil's time at the School.

It is the School's policy to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any pupil with disabilities or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who is not disadvantaged because of their disability.

The School therefore requires parents to give details of any known disability, learning difficulty or any other factor which may impact on that their child's potential to access the education offered. In assessing such applications, the School will act in line with its SEND Policy and, in accordance with this, it may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

2 Policy Statement

This policy aims to:

- 2.1 provide details of a clear, fair and objective admissions policy and the associated procedures
- 2.2 assist parents to make informed preferences in the choice of school for their child
- 2.3 ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes
- 2.4 inform parents as to their rights with respect to admissions and appeals including those children with special educational needs or disabilities;

- 2.5 comply with all relevant legislation and guidance in relation to equal opportunities (Equality Act 2010);
- 2.6 be sensitive to the timetables, deadlines and common dates set for the admissions process by the local admissions authorities and independent schools' code of practice;
- 2.7 clearly describe our over-subscription criteria and how they are applied;
- 2.8 explain what is expected from parents, and what the parent can expect from the School at each stage of the admissions process;
- 2.9 provide the name and details of the school contact for the provision of further information.

3 Equal Treatment

Birkdale School welcomes all pupils. Human rights and freedoms are respected but must be balanced with the lawful needs and rules of the School community and the rights and freedoms of others. All applicants will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' race, colour, religion and belief, nationality, ethnic status, class, gender, marital status, caring status, sexual orientation, learning difficulties and disabilities, age or other status or personal characteristic.

Birkdale School has a Christian ethos and we expect all of our pupils to attend our Church Services and School Assemblies – which may take the form of an act of collective worship, for example a Carol Service or Nativity performance - unless permission not to do so has been agreed with the Head or a senior member of staff. However, we welcome equally pupils of all faiths and none.

4 Registration

Places are provisionally reserved for entry in any given year in the order of when a registration is received. Although the majority of new pupils join at the beginning of the academic year in September, admission is possible in all year groups throughout the year, subject in the first instance to the availability of a place. All those who wish to join the School must firstly be registered, requiring completion of an online Registration Form and payment of a registration fee. Parents must also send a copy of the child's birth certificate and may also be required to send a copy of their child's most recent school report. Completion of an online Sixth Form Application Form is additionally required for Sixth Form entry. Early registration is recommended.

Although registrations received at any time of year will be considered, for some years of entry initial application deadlines do apply, and we recommend that these are observed where possible to increase the likelihood of a place being available. More details are provided for each entry point in the relevant section.

5 Age/Stage

Applicants are usually considered for the cohort defined by their date of birth/age. There may be circumstances however whereby, with parental agreement, the place offered is for an academic year behind (or very occasionally ahead of) the applicant's age. The main criteria will be what stage/year is most suitable for the progress of the individual child. Examples of considerations are academic standard, "young for the cohort", for example, June-August birthday, fluency in English, transfer from different educational system.

6 Financial Considerations

At registration and at all stages in the process, the School reserves the right not to admit pupils where there is sound reason to believe that there are insufficient funds or where there is an unwillingness to pay the fees or such portion of the fee as is liable after any scholarship or bursary is taken into account. The formal offer of a place is also subject (*where applicable*) to all financial obligations to the applicant's current school being fulfilled. Pupils whose accounts are in arrears at the end of a stage in their education will not be permitted to progress to the next stage; for example from P4 (Y6) to S1 (Y7) or from S3 (Y9) to S4 (Y10).

7 Specific Admissions Arrangements

7.1 Entry to Pre-Prep 1 (PP1/Reception) at 4+

Following registration, the formal offer of a place in PP1 (Reception) is subject to parents visiting the School for an Open Morning or personal appointment.

7.2 Entry to Pre-Prep 2 (PP2/Y1) to Prep 4 (P4/Y6)

Following registration, the formal offer of a place in PP2 (Y1) to P4 (Y6) is also subject to a satisfactory taster and assessment day. Whilst entry to the Prep School is not academically selective, during their visit day children are assessed in numeracy and literacy using age appropriate, nationally recognised, assessment materials. The assessment helps the School to identify if the child is working at a level within the range of their prospective peers at Birkdale. Areas of particular strength or weakness can be identified and thus supported should the child join the School. Consideration is also given to future progression to the academically selective Senior School and parents are advised if there are any concerns in this regard (see section 7.3).

If an offer is not confirmed for Prep School entry, the candidate may nevertheless apply for entry to the Senior School at 11+ as an external applicant.

7.3 Entry to S1/Y7 at 11+ (Prep School pupils)

One of the key aims and successes of Birkdale Prep School is the preparation of Prep pupils for progression to the Senior School. Entry to the Senior School is therefore automatic for the majority of Prep pupils, on the basis of continuous assessment in the Prep School.

The Head writes to parents of P4 pupils in the Christmas term the year before entry, to ask whether they intend for their child to transfer to the Senior School. Although, as outlined above, progression to the Senior School for the majority of Prep pupils is not conditional upon their performance in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests, pupils intending to transfer to the Senior School will nevertheless sit the tests to provide common assessment data for all those joining S1/Y7 and also to enable selection for academic scholarship consideration (see section 8). Please note that the School does not provide details of a pupil's performance in the Common Pre-Tests. Further information about the tests can be found on the ISEB website <https://www.iseb.co.uk/assessments/common-pre-tests/>

An exception to automatic progression to the Senior School may arise if Prep School staff have concerns that a child may not thrive at the Senior School and/or may struggle with the academic

demands placed upon them. Where it is deemed that the pupil is academically or otherwise unsuited to the Senior School, discussions will be held with parents in P3/Y5 or earlier, to advise that Senior School entry may not be automatic and that consideration of other options is recommended. Following these discussions, should parents still wish to pursue a place in the Senior School, progression will then be subject to a satisfactory performance in the Common Pre-Tests as it is for external candidates. The Head's decision on whether to admit a pupil to the Senior School is final.

7.4 Entry to S1/Y7 at 11+ (External applicants)

All external applicants who wish to join the Senior School at 11+ must first be registered. Entry is academically selective and applicants are required to sit the ISEB Common Pre-Tests when they are in Y6. The main test day takes place in January in the year of entry and the initial deadline for registration is in early December of the year before. All those who are registered by the deadline will be invited to attend on the main test day, when they will sit the Common Pre-Tests, which are online adaptive tests provided by the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB). Further information about the tests can be found on the ISEB website <https://www.iseb.co.uk/assessments/common-pre-tests/>

A report from the applicant's primary school is required in the form of the completion of a Google form provided by email to each school by Birkdale following applicant registration. Arrangements may be made for any applicants who do not live locally to sit the Common Pre-Tests under supervision in their current school (see section 13) or an alternative approved invigilation centre. The outcome of the main January sitting of the Common Pre-Tests will be communicated in the first instance by email within two weeks of the tests, followed by confirmation by formal letter to parents by the end of February. The letter will confirm whether or not a place is offered and also the outcome of any scholarship or bursary applications. In the event that there are more candidates meeting the standard for entry than there are places available, final confirmation of the place at either entry point will be on a first-come-first-served basis in order of when parents pay the acceptance deposit (currently £250) and return the completed acceptance form.

Please note that the School does not provide details of an applicant's performance in the Common Pre-Tests.

7.5 Entry to current S1/Y7, S2/Y8, S3/Y9 and S4/Y10

Parents considering their child joining Birkdale at any time after the start of S1/Y7 are advised to firstly contact the Registrar to enquire as to the availability of a place. Following registration, the formal offer of a place is subject to a satisfactory performance in academic assessment and a satisfactory reference from the applicant's current school. The applicant is required to attend for an assessment using age-appropriate papers in mathematics, English and non-verbal reasoning.

Although a reference from an applicant's current school is typically required prior to the formal offer of a place, the request for the reference can be delayed until after the outcome of the entrance assessment is known, if requested by parents. The formal offer of a place is also subject (where applicable) to all financial obligations to the current school being fulfilled.

Normally, three additional places are available for S3/Y9 entry. These may be used for parents wishing to defer entry for their child following the ISEB Common Pre-Tests taken in Y6 according to the procedure below;

- Parents are required to register their child and enter them for the ISEB Common Pre-Tests according to the timescales required for S1/Y7 entry in the relevant year (*see section 7.4*). Parents should indicate on the registration form whether they are considering entry for S1/Y7, S3/Y9 or both.
- Assuming that the child meets the standard for entry, a formal letter will be sent confirming the offer of a place for S1/Y7 and/or S3/Y9. In the event that there are more candidates meeting the standard for entry than there are places available, final confirmation of the place at either entry point will be on a first-come-first-served basis in order of when parents pay the acceptance deposit and return the completed acceptance form.
- For entry to S1/Y7 the standard acceptance deposit (currently £250) will be payable. To accept a deferred place for entry to S3/Y9, a larger deposit of £2500 will be payable to demonstrate commitment to taking up one of the three places added at this entry point. The deposit is non-refundable if the place is not taken up at either entry point. If a child joins at S1/Y7, the £250 deposit is refunded when they leave the school, less any monies outstanding. If a child takes up a deferred place at S3/Y9, of the £2500 paid as a deposit, £250 will be reserved as a standard acceptance deposit (see above) and the remainder will be credited to the billing account towards the fees payable for the child's first term.
- For children holding places for deferred entry, further assessment may be required nearer the time of entry (typically in the Easter term of S2/Y8), to inform setting decisions for certain subjects.
- Please note that if a scholarship or means-tested bursary is applied for and offered, this will only be applicable for S1/Y7 entry and cannot be deferred to entry at S3/Y9.
- In the event that the year group is not full at the start of S1/Y7, further places may be available for entry in S3/Y9, but applicants for earlier entry (i.e. with a start date up to and including January of S2/Y8) will be given priority over those for deferred entry to S3/Y9.

Admission is not normally possible into S5/Y11. Admission to S4/Y10 after the commencement of the academic year is not encouraged, but may be possible in exceptional circumstances.

7.6 Entry into S3/Y9 for S Anselm's pupils

One of the key aims and successes of S Anselm's School is the preparation of pupils for progression to Birkdale Senior School. Entry to Birkdale Senior School at S3/Y9 is therefore automatic for the majority of S Anselm's pupils, on the basis of continuous assessment during their time at S Anselm's.

The Head writes to parents of Y8 pupils in the Christmas term the year before entry, to ask whether they intend for their child to transfer to Birkdale Senior School. Although, as outlined above, progression to the Senior School for the majority of S Anselm's pupils is not conditional upon their performance in an entrance assessment, pupils intending to transfer to Birkdale Senior School will nevertheless sit the MIDYIS assessment during Y8 to provide common data for all those joining S3/Y9.

An exception to automatic progression to Birkdale Senior School may arise if S Anselm's School staff have concerns that a child may not thrive here and/or may struggle with the academic demands placed upon them. Where it is deemed that the pupil is academically or otherwise unsuited to Birkdale Senior School, discussions will be held with parents by the end of Y7, to advise that consideration of other

options is recommended. Following these discussions, should parents still wish to pursue a place in the Senior School, the confirmation of a place will then be subject to a satisfactory performance in the MIDYIS assessment. The Head's decision on whether to admit a pupil to the Senior School is final.

Parents considering progression to Birkdale Senior School for S3/Y9 are asked to register their child to provisionally reserve a place for them. Registration (by the beginning of the pupil's Y8 year is strongly recommended to guarantee place availability.

7.7 Entry into the Sixth Form (S5 pupils)

The majority of S5/Y11 pupils are expected to progress to the Sixth Form but, on the rare occasions that it is deemed that a pupil will not thrive in the Sixth Form at Birkdale, discussions will be held with the pupil and their parents, offering advice about their options.

S5 pupils are not required to complete an application for Sixth Form entry, but are asked to confirm their intention to continue into the Sixth Form following a process whereby they are supported in considering their options for A level study in the light of mock GCSE examination results and career ideas. A letter is sent to parents detailing their child's chosen A level subject options during the Easter term and parents are asked to contact the Deputy Head (Academic) if they have any queries or if there are any changes to be made. This process allows the pupil's subject choices to be taken into account when the option blocks are set.

To secure their place in the Sixth Form, S5 pupils are expected to achieve a minimum of five passes (grades 9-5) at GCSE, with at least four of these at grade 6 or higher including any subjects studied at GCSE which are to be studied at A level. Places are then confirmed following the publication of GCSE results in August.

7.8 Entry into the Sixth Form (external applicants)

Each year the School welcomes 40-50 new boys and girls from a variety of schools in and around Sheffield into the Sixth Form. For registered applicants, the formal offer of a place is subject to a satisfactory reference from their current school and an informal interview with the Head, Director of Sixth Form or Head of Year. The majority of applicants are studying GCSEs and are offered a place subject to the achievement of a minimum of five passes (grades 9-5) at GCSE, with at least four of these at grade 6 or higher including any subjects studied at GCSE which are to be studied at A level. Places are then confirmed following the publication of GCSE results in August. The deadline for application is in March of the year of entry with an earlier deadline for those wishing to be considered for a scholarship or bursary (see section 9). This enables an applicant's subject choices to be taken into account when the option blocks are set. Consideration of late applications may be possible subject to the School being able to accommodate the applicant for their chosen subjects. A Taster Day is normally arranged in late February/early March each year.

Upon receipt of the offer letter, parents are asked to confirm their acceptance by the date given in their letter (which will always be after the Taster Day) by returning the School Acceptance Form and paying a deposit which is retained until their child leaves the school.

Entry to the Sixth Form after the commencement of the academic year is not encouraged, but may be possible in exceptional circumstances.

8 11+ Scholarships

Birkdale School recognises the value of acknowledging and promoting excellence in certain fields, and the status of 'scholar' is significant. Academic, Music and Sports Scholarships are available for pupils entering S1 (Y7) of the Senior School. The maximum total fee remission from one or more scholarships is 25%. Awards for individual scholarships are typically in the range of 5-15% of fees.

The scholarship examinations and assessments are designed to be equally appropriate for pupils in both maintained and independent schools and are open to pupils already at Birkdale and to those currently at school elsewhere.

Entering a child for scholarship assessment presumes a firm intention to accept an award if one is offered. Candidates are welcome to apply for any of the available scholarships for which they are eligible.

If an award is made, it will be tenable from when a pupil joins the school at the beginning of S1/Y7 and will be held until the end of S5 (Y11) provided that in the opinion of the Head, in consultation with the Deputy Head (Academic), Director of Music and the Director of Sport as appropriate, satisfactory progress is maintained and the conditions of an award are adhered to. Should a pupil leave the school before this, but subsequently return, the award will no longer apply. During their S5 (Y11) year, pupils will be invited to apply for a range of 16+ Scholarships for entry to the Sixth Form.

8.1 11+ Academic Scholarships

An academic Scholarship comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees.

Consideration for an Academic Scholarship is by invitation following the ISEB Common Pre-Tests.

Parents of candidates who reach an appropriately high standard in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests (typically the top 12-15 candidates) will be invited to sit for an 11+ Academic Scholarship. The Examinations for this will take place shortly after the ISEB Common Pre-Tests and will consist of further assessment in:

English	Candidates will sit a written paper.
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Mathematics	Candidates will be assessed on more advanced mathematical topics.
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The outcome of the 11+ Academic Scholarship Examination will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will also be confirmed.

8.2 11+ Music Scholarships and Exhibitions

A Music Scholarship comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees and free weekly tuition in one instrument in school. The award of an Exhibition entitles the pupil to free weekly tuition in one instrument in school.

Candidates should typically be of good Grade III standard in their chosen instrument or voice. Another indication would be demonstrable commitment to singing in a choir for at least two or three years. All candidates should be able to show general musicianship commensurate with their technical skill. These are not the only indicators of a good candidate so if parents are unsure, they are advised to

contact the Director of Music to discuss whether or not their child may be eligible. Parents of pupils at the Prep School may also speak to the Prep Director of Music.

Successful candidates will be required to satisfy the general standards of admission to Birkdale School in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests, and to enter fully into the musical life of the school.

The application form and further details for the 11+ Music Scholarship assessment are available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on the School website. If applying for a Music Scholarship, this should be indicated in section 4 on the Registration Form and the application should be submitted by the stated deadline which is typically in early December. References will be requested following the scholarship application deadline.

The outcome of the Music Scholarship assessment will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also made to all those who have met the academic standard for entry.

8.3 11+ Sports Scholarships

A Sports Scholarship comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees. Candidates who excel in one or more of our main school sports are invited to apply. Candidates are required to submit an application form detailing their sporting interests and achievements and, if possible, a short video of their sporting performance. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to attend a practical assessment day.

Successful candidates should have the potential to play at representative level and will have regularly represented their club or school 'A' team in their chosen sport. The main sports of the school are **Cricket, Football, Hockey, Netball and Rugby Union**. Candidates should also be able to demonstrate the ability to make a significant contribution to school sport and a commitment to training and fixtures during the week and on Saturdays.

If parents are unsure whether their child might be eligible to apply, they are advised to contact the Director of Sport. Parents of pupils at the Prep School may also speak to the Head of PE and Games.

Successful candidates will be required to satisfy the general standards of admission to Birkdale School in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests, and to enter fully into the sporting life of the school.

The application form for the 11+ Sports Scholarship is available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on the School website. If applying for a Sports Scholarship, this should be indicated in section 4 on the Registration Form and the application should be submitted by the stated deadline which is typically in early December. References will be requested following the scholarship application deadline.

The outcome of the Sports Scholarship assessment will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also made to all those who have met the academic standard for entry.

9 Sixth Form Scholarships

Birkdale School recognises the value of acknowledging and promoting excellence in certain fields, and the status of 'scholar' is significant. Academic, Music and Sports Scholarships are available for pupils

entering Birkdale Sixth Form. The maximum total fee remission from one or more scholarships is 25%. Awards for individual scholarships are typically in the range of 5-15% of fees.

The scholarship examinations and assessments are designed to be equally appropriate for pupils in both maintained and independent schools and are open to pupils already at Birkdale and to those currently at school elsewhere.

Entering a child for scholarship assessment presumes a firm intention to accept an award if one is offered. Candidates are welcome to apply for any of the available scholarships for which they are eligible.

If an award is made, it will be tenable from when a pupil joins the Sixth Form and will be held until the end of Upper Sixth (Y13) provided that in the opinion of the Head, in consultation with the Deputy Head (Academic), Director of Music and the Director of Sport as appropriate, satisfactory progress is maintained and the conditions of an award are adhered to. Should a pupil leave the school before this, but subsequently return, the award will no longer apply.

9.1 Sixth Form Academic Scholarships

An Academic Scholarship comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees.

All candidates for an Academic Scholarship will sit a General Paper. They will additionally be assessed in two other subjects which they intend to study in the Sixth Form. All candidates will be interviewed by a senior member of staff. For most subjects, assessment will be by written examination. Candidates offering Art or Drama as one of their subjects will undergo practical assessment and an interview with the relevant Head of Department. The award of a scholarship will take into account the candidate's performance in the two subjects offered, the General Paper, and also in their interview.

Specimen papers or details of the assessment for the *General Paper* and the following subjects are available to view in the Admissions section on the school website:

Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classics, Computing, Design and Technology, Drama, Economics, English, French, Geography, German, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Physics, Politics, Religious Studies, Spanish

Candidates wishing to be assessed in another subject not listed above should contact the Registrar well in advance of the closing date.

Entry to the Sixth Form and the award of a Scholarship will ultimately be conditional on GCSE results. Standard entry requirements are a minimum of five passes (grades 9-5) at GCSE, with at least four of these at grade 6 or higher including any subjects studied at GCSE which are to be studied at A level. However, scholars would usually be expected to achieve five or more 8/9 grades at GCSE, and many do significantly better than this. The Scholarship award will be tenable from when a pupil joins the Sixth Form and will be held until the end of Upper Sixth (Y13) provided that, in the opinion of the Head, in consultation with the Deputy Head (Academic), satisfactory progress is maintained and the conditions of an award are adhered to.

The application form for an Academic Scholarship is available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on our website. If applying for an Academic Scholarship, this should be indicated

in section 4 on the Registration Form and the application should be submitted by the stated deadline, which is typically in early December.

The outcome of the Sixth Form Academic Scholarship Examinations will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will also be confirmed.

9.2 Sixth Form Music Scholarships and Exhibitions

A Music Scholarship comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees and free weekly tuition in one instrument in school. The award of an Exhibition entitles the pupil to free weekly tuition in one instrument in school.

Candidates should normally be of Grade VII and above in their first instrument, which may be the piano, organ, any orchestral instrument or voice. All candidates should be able to show general musicianship commensurate with their technical skill. These are by no means the only pointers to a good candidate so if unsure, parents are advised to contact the Director of Music to discuss whether or not their son or daughter would be considered.

The successful candidates will be required to satisfy the general standards of admission to Sixth form and to enter fully into the musical life of the School.

The application form and further details for the Sixth Form Music Scholarship assessment are available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on our website. If applying for a Music Scholarship, this should be indicated in section 4 on the Registration Form and the application should be submitted by the stated deadline which is typically in early December. References will be requested following the scholarship application deadline.

The outcome of the Music Scholarship assessment will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also made.

9.3 Sixth Form Aspiring Athlete Programme (Sports Scholarship)

The Aspiring Athlete Programme comprises a level of fee remission, typically in the range of 5-15% of fees and also supports those admitted to the programme in achieving their academic potential during their time in Birkdale Sixth Form.

Candidates are required to submit an application form detailing their sporting interests and achievements and, if possible, a short video of their sporting performance. Shortlisted candidates will then be interviewed by the Director of Sport and the Head.

Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate a high level of proficiency and an established record of achievement in their main sport, which may be one of the main sports played in School (Rugby Union, Football, Cricket, Hockey and Netball) or any other sporting discipline. They should currently be at minimum county level standard or equivalent in their chosen discipline and/or be able to demonstrate the ability to make a significant contribution to school sport. If unsure whether a pupil might be considered, parents are advised to contact the Director of Sport.

All successful candidates will be required to satisfy the general standards of admission to Sixth Form and to enter fully into the sporting life of the School.

The application form for the Sixth Form Aspiring Athlete Programme (Sports Scholarship) is available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on our website. If applying for the programme, this should be indicated in section 4 on the Registration Form and the application form should be submitted by the stated deadline which is typically in early December. References will be requested following the scholarship application deadline.

The outcome of the interviews will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also confirmed.

10 Means-tested Bursary Funding

Birkdale School seeks to offer means-tested awards/bursaries for children/families in accordance with The Charity Commission's principles that for a charitable fee charging school:

- the opportunity to benefit is not unreasonably restricted by the ability to pay fees, and that;
- people in poverty are not excluded from the opportunity to benefit.

Applicants must also satisfy the School's entry criteria and all awards are subject to the availability of funds and places.

Whilst bursaries are offered for the length of time specified in the relevant section below, they may be subject to periodic review of parental means. A bursary will remain in place for the length of time specified in the offer letter provided that:

- (a) the pupil or their parent(s) has not breached the **"Conditions of an Award"**
- (b) there has been no material change to the parents' financial circumstances. A material change is defined to be 10% or more. **It is a mandatory requirement to notify any material change; failure to do so may result in the bursary being withdrawn in full.**

If a bursary is awarded, the value is dependent on a full assessment of a family's financial circumstances. A bursary may be awarded alongside a scholarship to increase overall fee remission or as a stand-alone award. In either case, the funding can cover up to 100% of tuition fees. Bursaries are typically awarded at entry to either S1/Y7 or Sixth Form though can be awarded exceptionally at other entry points in the Senior School. Bursary funding is not normally available at Prep School level.

10.1 11+ Bursary awards

A bursary awarded to a pupil entering the school for S1 (Y7) would be tenable until the end of S5 (Y11) in the first instance. Bursary funding is also available for pupils continuing into the Sixth Form subject to a satisfactory performance in a General Paper and interview, which take place in the January of S5 (Y11), and assessment of an up-to-date bursary application.

The School is not typically able to offer bursaries to all candidates who apply, and who would be eligible, for means-tested funding. When shortlisting applications for bursary funding therefore, consideration is primarily given to performance in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests. However, a candidate's performance in assessments for academic, music and sports scholarships, if entered, may also be taken into account.

If means-tested bursary funding would be required for acceptance of a place, this should be indicated in section 5 on the Registration Form. The Bursary Application Form is available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on the School website and should be submitted, along with the supporting documentation required, by the stated deadline which is typically in early December.

The outcome of any Bursary applications for 11+ entry will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also made to all those who have met the academic standard for entry.

10.2 Sixth Form Bursary awards

If a bursary is awarded, it will be tenable from when a pupil joins the Sixth Form until the end of Upper Sixth (Y13).

Applicants for a Sixth Form Bursary are invited to attend the Academic Scholarship and Bursary examinations which typically take place in January of the year of entry. Sixth Form Bursary applicants are required to sit a General Paper and be interviewed by a senior member of staff, but many also apply for an Academic Scholarship and therefore also sit two subject papers (see further information above). The School is not typically able to offer bursaries to all candidates who apply, and who would be eligible, for means-tested funding. When shortlisting applications for Sixth Form Bursary funding therefore, consideration is primarily given to performance in the General Paper and at interview. However, a candidate's performance in assessments for academic, music and sports scholarships, if entered, may also be taken into account.

If means-tested bursary funding would be required for acceptance of a place, this should be indicated in section 5 on the Registration Form. The Bursary Application Form is available on request from the Registrar and in the Admissions section on the School website and should be submitted, along with the supporting documentation required, by the stated deadline which is typically in early December.

The outcome of any Bursary applications for Sixth Form entry will be communicated in writing by the end of February, when the formal offer of a place at Birkdale will be also confirmed.

10.3 Hardship bursary funding

The School's expectation is that parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time of application will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the School – except in wholly unforeseen circumstances, in which case hardship bursary funding may be offered, subject to means tested criteria and the availability of funds.

Parents should be aware that the School would not expect to provide financial assistance within the first two years of a pupil joining (other than being in receipt of a bursary on entry), since it is expected that sufficient financial resources exist to cover school fee commitments during this period.

11 Acceptance of a Place

To secure a place offered, parents are required to complete and return the School Acceptance Form and pay an acceptance deposit.

The deposit is repaid by means of a credit without interest to the final payment of fees or other sums due to the School, after the pupil leaves the School. If a place is not taken up after Acceptance, the deposit is retained by the School.

If a place is not taken up, the first term's fees are also payable unless a full term's notice has been given.

If commencement is in September (beginning of the school year) the Registrar will be in contact during the preceding summer term to supply parents with further detail including term dates, uniform list and New Parents' Meetings. If commencement is at an alternative time, term dates and uniform list, etc. will be conveyed in an appropriate period. Parents/guardians will be required to provide further information about their child prior to joining e.g. medical information.

12 Disability and Special Educational Needs

Admission to Birkdale School is dependent upon a pupil meeting the entry requirements stated previously. However, we are able to offer places to pupils with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD), Special Educational Needs (SEN) or for whom English as an Additional Language (EAL) is appropriate. In cases of LDD or SEN, a copy of a valid report from a teacher with a Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) qualification, an Educational Psychologist or other Specialist, or a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education and Health Care Plan, should be submitted to the Registrar who will then consult with the Head or a senior member of staff and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).

The School has limited facilities for disabled pupils but will make reasonable adjustments to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice. The School needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a child's ability to take full advantage of the education provided at the School. Parents of a child who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the School with full written details at registration, or subsequently before accepting the offer of a place. The School needs this information so that, in the case of any child with particular needs, we can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the child's needs both during the admission process and if an offer of a place is made. Similarly, if special education needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the School will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments.

If a pupil is accepted into the School with known Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) or Disability, a Statement of Special Educational Needs/Education and Health Care Plan, or English as an Additional Language, the School has a duty of care to meet the needs of that pupil within reasonable expectation. The School has a limit to the amount of additional support that can be provided, e.g. in class support or 1-1 lessons. The School will therefore agree with the parents (and pupil as appropriate) prior to enrolment how such needs can best be met and whether the School can provide the additional support deemed appropriate.

In order to help us care for each pupil's needs, Birkdale requires that each parent acts in good faith by sharing in full the child's education history, plus unedited versions of any professional, educational, medical or psychological reports. If, on offer of a place, all information about a child's learning needs are not disclosed this will be deemed as a breach of contract. Should the School feel that with reasonable levels of additional provision and adjustments those needs cannot be met the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place.

With regards to entrance assessment, the entry criteria are applied; however, adjustment is made in respect of the precise nature of the disability/need e.g. location and/or nature of assessment, use of ICT or time permitted.

A separate Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy is available.

13 Overseas Applicants

Short-term study programmes (minimum of one academic year) are available between PP1/Reception to S3/Y9, subject to the availability of a place in the appropriate year group. From S4/Y10 onwards the School expects all pupils to complete the whole course of study ie GCSEs and/or A levels.

13.1 Pupils residing with parents or independently arranged guardians

Birkdale School welcomes overseas pupils residing with parents or guardians in this country. If a pupil is to reside with an independently arranged guardian, residence must be registered by the School with appropriate external authorities in order to fulfil its duty of care.

13.2 Pupils with guardianship arrangements through ICON Education

Birkdale School works with ICON Education and other organisations to recruit a small number of suitably qualified pupils to join the Sixth Form for a two year A level course. For these pupils who typically come to the UK independent of their family, ICON provide full guardianship services, including homestay arrangements.

13.3 Entrance assessment for overseas applicants or UK applicants who do not live locally

If possible, overseas applicants will undertake the relevant entrance assessment for the stage of entry in the same way as a local applicant. If this is not possible however, alternative arrangements can be made which would typically involve the applicant's current school facilitating them sitting the assessments in examination conditions. These arrangements are also possible for UK applicants who do not live locally where it would be logistically difficult for them to visit Birkdale for entrance assessment.

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Birkdale School, a level of fluency in English language is required. For applicants for whom English is not their first language, this may be demonstrated by achievement of an appropriate qualification e.g. IELTS or by a combination of interview (in person or via video call) and performance in the entrance assessments.

Following assessment, if the offer of a place can be confirmed, parents are asked to confirm their acceptance by the date given in the offer letter by returning the School Acceptance Form and paying an acceptance deposit. If the parents are UK based, the deposit payable is the standard fee. If the parents reside overseas, the deposit payable is a term's fees. In all cases, the deposit is retained until their child leaves the school.

13.3.1 Senior School entry (S1/Y7 – S4/Y10)

Applicants will be assessed in English and mathematics using examination papers of an appropriate level for the year group of entry.

13.3.2 Sixth Form entry

Applicants will sit GCSE level papers in a minimum of two of their proposed A level subjects to assess if they have the required pre-requisite knowledge for A level study

13.4 Student Visa sponsorship

Birkdale School is able to sponsor applicants requiring a Child Student Visa or Student Visa. The process for the School to be able to issue the Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) is as follows;

- Following formal confirmation of an unconditional offer of a place at the School, prospective pupil's parents to complete and return the Acceptance Form and deposit for their child (as above)
- Parents are then referred to a third party immigration consultancy (Holmes and Partners) to undergo verification of their supporting documentation. The cost of this is payable by parents directly to Holmes and Partners. Information about required documentation can be found in the UKVI guidance documents online but these essentially relate to providing evidence of the required amount of money for school fees and living costs and other aspects including parental consent and guardianship arrangements (where applicable).

Checking of this supporting documentation will not guarantee that a visa application will be successful and the School does not bear responsibility for the outcome of the visa application.

- **CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study)** – The CAS provided following successful verification is valid for six months and the application cannot be made more than three months before the start of the course.
- On arrival, the pupil's E-Visa share code must be shared with the school so that the details can be recorded.

14 Over-Subscription

Should a particular year group be over-subscribed, if possible an extra teaching group may be created to accommodate the demand or the child will be put on a waiting list. However, priority for places in S1 (Year 7) will be given to Prep School pupils, according to academic ability and to siblings of current pupils. Once offers have been communicated to parents, the places will be confirmed on receipt of the Acceptance Form and deposit payment on a first-come-first-served basis.

15 Excluded Children

Any pupil permanently excluded from another school will be considered for entry to Birkdale School subject to the availability of a place in the appropriate year group and the usual selection criteria. However, the Head will take into account the reason for exclusion and consider the potential impact upon the existing pupil body and upon the reputation of the School, by the inclusion of such a pupil. If an excluded pupil is accepted into the School, the Head of Section (Senior School) and Class/Form tutor will take particular care with the induction process in respect of this pupil to ensure supported introduction of the pupil.

16 Siblings

Siblings are assessed according to the processes previously explained, but may be given preference against a candidate of equal aptitude in the assessment process; the school reference will also be taken into account. A level of fee remission is available when three or more siblings are pupils at the School at the same time.

16.1 Twins

Where twins apply to the school, their applications will be considered on individual merit but, in the event of one twin being successful and the other unsuccessful, the Head of Prep or Head will consult parents before making a formal offer to avoid unnecessary distress.

17 Induction

17.1 Prep School

For pupils joining the Prep School at the beginning of the new school year, 'visits' (PP1/Reception pupils) or 'moving up' days (PP2/Y1 – P4/Y6 pupils) are held in the summer term. Parents are invited to year group specific information events.

17.2 Senior School

Pupils joining S1/Y7 to S4/Y10 are invited to attend a 'Transition Day' during the summer term. Parents are invited to a 'Welcome Evening' in the summer term.

An 'Activity Day' is held in August for the new S1 intake.

17.3 Sixth Form

Pupils joining the Sixth Form are invited to attend a three-day Induction Course during the last week of the summer term. Parents are invited to a 'Welcome Evening' in the summer term.

18 Other

18.1 It is recommended that prior to submitting an application, all parents and their child will visit the School either at one of our open events or by separate appointment.

18.2 A satisfactory reference will be sought from the Head Teacher of the current school for any applicant to Birkdale School.

- 18.3** If parents are considering moving their child from another Independent School, we ask that the courtesy is extended to the Head Teacher of their current school of advising him/her of the interest/application, before a reference is sought by Birkdale School.
- 18.4** Parents/guardians of prospective pupils may be required to provide copies of recent school reports.

19 Admission Register

An admissions register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The register is maintained electronically by the Registrar and regularly backed-up. The register records:

- The pupil's full name
- The pupil's gender
- Day, month and year of birth of the pupil
- The name and address of every person known by the school to be a parent of the pupil (as well as an indication of which parent the pupil normally resides with and which parents hold parental responsibility as defined by Section 3 of the Children Act 1989)
- Where a parent notifies that the pupil will live at an additional or alternative address, the age and address of the parent with whom the pupil will normally reside in the future and the date from which they will reside at this address.
- At least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency. In line with safeguarding guidance, all pupils should have at least three emergency contact telephone numbers, at least one for each parent, and where a pupil only has one parent that parent must be asked to provide two emergency contact numbers.
- Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school of the pupil
- Name and address of the last school attended by the pupil, if any
- The name of the destination, or additional, school notified by the parent and the date at which the pupil will first attend

In cases where a pupil's name is deleted from the Admissions register, the school will report such deletions within 5 days to the Local Authority in cases where:

- the pupil has been removed from the school to be home educated
- the pupil's family has apparently moved away from the area
- the pupil is declared as medically unfit to attend school
- the pupil has been in custody for more than four months
- the pupil has been permanently excluded

The school will also inform the Local Authority when it adds or removes a pupil from the register at a non-standard transition point. This will be done within 5 days of addition or removal from the register. In the cases where a pupil does not return to school after a period of more than 10 days authorised (or 20 days unauthorised) leave, the school will not delete the pupil from the register until it has made reasonable efforts in conjunction with the Local Authority to establish the pupil's whereabouts. In such circumstances the pupil may only be removed from the register with the express permission of the Head after reasonable enquiries have taken place.

The school will also notify the Local Authority in cases where a pupil fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school for more than 10 days consecutive unauthorised leave.

20 Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints regarding our admissions process and procedures; however, the School's Complaints Policy is available to you, under which you should write in the first instance to The Head.

21 Contractual Terms and Conditions

See the published Acceptance Form and Terms and Conditions.

22 Contact

For further information, please contact the School Registrar via admissions@birkdaleschool.org.uk or 0114 266 8409.

23 Review and Development

23.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of its procedures, is reviewed annually by the Policy Committee and Governing Board and as events or legislation change requires.

23.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix: Conditions of an Award

Scholarship or Bursary

Conditions of an Award

1. **Obligations of the pupil:** A pupil who is the subject of an Award is required to work hard, to contribute positively to the life of the School, to be a credit to the School and to set a good example to other pupils. These are the *Purposes of the Award*.
2. **Obligations of the Parent/s:** The parents are expected to support and encourage the pupil to achieve the purposes of the Award and to uphold the aims and the good name of the School.
3. **Withdrawal of the Award:** The Award may be withdrawn by written notice sent to a parent if, in the opinion of the Governors acting in good faith, the pupil or a parent has not complied with the obligations set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, or the pupil has fallen below the required standards of conduct and progress and in the further opinion of the Governors there has been no significant improvement following consultation with a parent and/or the pupil and a written warning. Withdrawal of the Award shall take effect from the start of the following term. Further, the Award may be withdrawn by written notice if the balance of the account remains unpaid 28 days after a written reminder has been sent to parents.
4. **Fees in lieu of notice:** For the avoidance of doubt, the benefits payable under an Award do not apply to any term for which the School has required payment of fees in lieu of notice
6. **Birkdale School Terms and Conditions:** These Conditions of Award take precedence over any of the Birkdale School Terms and Conditions which are inconsistent with them but in all other respects the standard terms and conditions as amended from time to time shall apply and these Conditions of Award shall be interpreted in accordance with them.