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EXETER CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Nursery | Pre-Prep | Prep

Admissions Policy

Last reviewed: May 2020

Next review: May 2021

Governance oversight: Full Board

General

Exeter Cathedral School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of rising-3 and 13. The School was founded in the 12th century as the Chorister School for Exeter Cathedral. Nowadays it offers a broad and balanced education to about 275 boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of interests, talents and skills. Choosing the right school for your child is an important decision, and an important step in the process is to visit us for a tour. In addition, and as an alternative for (for example) applicants from overseas, our virtual look-around videos are available. With that in mind we hope that you and your son/daughter will visit ECS to get a sense of what life is like here, and to get a flavour of the values that underpin the education that we offer.

Entry to the School

There is no formal entrance test for children to sit. However, we have a strong focus on academic rigour, as well as on pastoral care and extracurricular activities, and we want all of our pupils to be able to thrive inside and outside the classroom and to be happy here. Getting a feel for a child's academic engagement and potential therefore forms part of the ECS entry process: this will usually be assessed by class teachers or subject specialists during the lessons that the child takes part in during his or her Taster Day. We acknowledge that, under some circumstances and for some families, a Taster Day will not be practicably possible (see below). Our entry process is designed to identify pupils who show potential and who will be able to benefit from a balanced and well-rounded education, and who will be able to make a positive contribution to the broader life of the School.

Entry can be to any academic year in the School in which there is space, and for which the pupil is the right age and maturity.

Although the usual joining time is the start of a term, pupils can join at any stage throughout the academic year. Our School is a kind and welcoming one, and pupils who join part-way through a year/term are always warmly welcomed: we find that they settle in quickly and soon feel a real sense of belonging.

Whilst the School calculates ages, for the purpose of entry, according to the UK 1st September to 31st August custom, we are conscious that, in extremis, it can be more beneficial for a child to be in the academic year below (or, very rarely, above) that determined by his or her age. Parents/guardians are invited to discuss this with the School should they wish; the decision as to the appropriate year-group for a pupil, taking into account all of the relevant circumstances, is a matter for the Headmaster, whose decision is final.

Selection to the School (the offer of a place) is based on the following:

- Where circumstances permit, a Taster Day will be held. A satisfactory Taster Day will allow the School and the family to have confidence that a child has the appropriate emotional, behavioural, and social maturity; the intellectual potential; and the commitment and willingness, to benefit from the education we offer; and that the School can meet the needs and expectations of the family.
- Receipt of a positive confidential reference/report from the child's present school (where applicable). Where a reference is delayed, the Headmaster may consider making an offer of a place subject to receipt of a positive confidential reference.
- Candidates for the Cathedral Choir satisfy the requirements of both the Cathedral Department of Liturgy and Music and the School as to their suitability to be a chorister and a pupil of the School.
- In the case of an applicant for the Nursery classes, parents are able to give an assurance that lavatory training has been satisfactorily completed by their child.
- There are sufficient vacancies in the appropriate year group, Cathedral Choir or boarding house.
- The School is able to provide adequately for any disability or special educational needs (if any) the applicant may have, making reasonable adjustments where necessary; and having made reasonable adjustment, the School has the capacity to cope with any disability the applicant may have.
- The pupil's present school (where applicable) reports satisfactory attitudes and conduct on the part of the parents/guardians and the pupil, and that fees have been paid (where applicable).

Parents/guardians who wish for their son or daughter to be considered for a place at ECS should contact the Admissions Manager or the Headmaster in the first instance.

Equal Treatment

ECS wants to encourage applications from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We are a welcoming, considerate and compassionate school, and a variety of backgrounds helps to enrich our community and develop our pupils' global outlook and appreciation.

No pupil or prospective pupil will be treated less favourably on the grounds of their skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, gender, religious faith, disability, or socio-economic group.

The School's provision for bursaries is described below.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The School is inclusive and welcomes applicants with disabilities and special educational needs. We promote a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs and we will not treat an applicant less favourably on these grounds. However, at present, our facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited but we will do all that is reasonable to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately. Exeter Cathedral School consists of many separate and historic buildings which cover a reasonably wide area; none are currently provided with lifts. In order to provide specialist facilities, many subjects (in Year 3 and above) are taught in subject areas and the more senior pupils therefore move from classroom to classroom and building to building in the complex site between lessons. However, some parts of the School are accessible to those with a level of impaired mobility.

In order for the School to consider what reasonable adjustments it may need to make for each individual pupil, full disclosure by parents/guardians of any medical reports, educational, psychology or psychiatric assessments, or any other relevant information, in advance of any application is essential. All prospective

parents/guardians will be asked to complete a form detailing any issues or concerns known at the time of application. In cases of doubt, parents/guardians should raise them with the School in advance of any application. The School will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he or she becomes a pupil at the School.

The Taster Day

The aim of the Taster Day is for all 3 parties (School, pupil, parents/guardians) to ascertain that the pupil will be happy and will thrive at ECS. It is not a day of tests - though there will be some informal assessing taking place through taught lessons (in the case of the Nursery and Reception, activities/sessions) - and it matters to us very much that we see prospective pupils interact with current pupils, take part in lessons and activities, join in at break/lunch time, show interest in and commitment to education in its broadest sense - beyond the confines of the curriculum - and that we can spot the sparks that make up their character. To that end, the Taster Day will be a normal school day during which a prospective pupil will join a form (class) for the day, getting involved in all of the activities of the day. If a child has a particular interest (PE, Art, music eg) the taster day can be arranged on a day when this activity takes place. Pupil mentors are assigned to take special care of visiting children. For EYFS children, a half-day may be more appropriate.

The Headmaster (or another senior member of staff) will spend some time meeting each prospective Prep School pupil. This is kept relatively informal, and aims to explore the child's character, emotional intelligence, work ethic and areas of interest.

Members of staff (in the case of the Nursery, the key workers and the Head of Nursery; in the case of the Pre-Prep, the class teacher; in the case of the Prep School, the form teacher or subject specialists) who have taught the prospective pupil will give feedback to the School's Senior Deputy Head about how the prospective pupil fared in the lesson: this information (which may be discussed with but is not published to parents) may include how much he or she was able to access, the level at which he or she worked, how quickly he or she picked up new material, how engaged he or she was with the topic and with his or her learning. Feedback on social/emotional/behavioural/pastoral elements will also be given. The Senior Deputy Head will feed back to the Headmaster. We may sometimes ask that a child come back for a second taster day to help the decision-making process.

Offer of a place

Any subsequent offer of a place (or otherwise) will be made by the Headmaster (the task may be delegated) and communicated by the Admissions Manager

Over-subscription

In the event of the number of children registered for any year group exceeding the places available, children will be placed on a waiting list.

Accepting a place

Parents/guardians are notified of the closing date for acceptance of an offer of a place at the School.

A non-returnable deposit of £250 is required as well as the registration fee of £75. This deposit is held as a credit against the final fee account that is presented after a pupil leaves the School.

With the exception of Nursery places, and barring exceptional circumstances, all places at the School are offered as, and charged as, full-time places.

Siblings

Most siblings join us at ECS. However, this is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

Cathedral Chorister Admissions

Auditions for the Cathedral Choir may take place at any time, by appointment, if there are vacancies in the Choir to be filled. The main voice auditions take place early in the Lent term each year, for entry in

the September, or occasionally, more immediately. The offer of a Choristership by the Department of Liturgy and Music and the School is made on the understanding that the pupil will remain in the School and Choir (in the case of boys, voice changes permitting) until the end of Year 8.

Bursaries

Bursaries are means-tested. Both parents/guardians (with parental responsibility) are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need, but is usually capped at 50%.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income and according to the School's means.

Bursaries are only offered to families who are resident in the UK.

Awards

The School offers 11+ Entry Awards (fee remission for pupils able to offer a significant contribution to the School in Music, Sport, Academic, Visual/Performing Arts) to pupils joining the School into Year 7. This includes the Devon Award: a free place at the School throughout Year 7 and 8, available means tested to a pupil joining from a Devon LEA state primary school.

Overseas pupils

ECS welcome pupils from overseas, providing that they are legally entitled to live and study in the UK, and that they have a legal guardian to look after them in the UK at times when they are away from School.

Religious Beliefs

As the Cathedral School, ECS has strong Christian roots. It does not, however, select for entry on the basis of religious belief: we welcome children and families of all faiths and none. Parents/guardians should, though, be mindful of the large part that the Cathedral and its buildings play in the lives of ECS pupils, all of whom are expected to attend Morning Worship Assemblies and School services in the Chapter House and Cathedral. The School is responsive to families with reasonable requests for exceptional consideration.

Permanent Exclusions

Permanent exclusion details are outlined in the School's Permanent Exclusion Policy.

Complaints

The School hopes that parents/guardians do not have complaints about its Admissions Process, but the School's Complaints Policy is available on the School website or can be sent to parents on request.

Records and Review

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice.

Registered pupils are listed on the Admissions Register and the following data is categorised and recorded in full:

- Name
- Gender
- Name and address of every person known to the School to have parental responsibility for the pupil
- Emergency contact numbers
- Date of birth
- Day, month and year of admission
- Name and address of last school attended

- Boarder or day pupil

The School will not hold the personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will general be (no more than 6 months following an unsuccessful application?) but reasons to retain for longer might include: if the parents express an interest in their child re-applying for any reason at a later date, or in the potential application of a sibling, or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.