CHELTENHAM COLLEGE CHELTENHAM PREP SCHOOL

Admissions Policy

Reviewers: Jaqueline Lowden / Duncan Simpson
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'Cheltenham College' refers to Cheltenham College Senior School *and* Cheltenham College Preparatory School (including Cheltenham College Pre-Prep and Nursery School)
'College' refers to Cheltenham College Senior School
'Cheltenham Prep' refers to Cheltenham College Preparatory School
'Nursery and Pre-Prep' refers to Cheltenham College Nursery School and Pre-Prep

1. Introduction

Cheltenham College is an established co-educational HMC school educating pupils from the age of 3 to 18. The two schools that form Cheltenham College operate a common Admissions Policy.

Our overriding aim is to ensure that every pupil who joins is capable of accessing and achieving in the full breadth and depth of the curriculum, both academic and co-curricular; this forms the basis of our Admissions Policy. While the primary focus is academic, overall, we aim to ensure that every child who is educated at Cheltenham College progresses in a well-rounded manner and has a happy and successful time. Cheltenham College aims to unlock their talents whether previously discovered or not, stretching and challenging pupils in the process. For illustrative purposes, at GCSE the standard curricular expectation includes 9 or 10 subjects. The core curriculum requirement includes English, Maths and at least two sciences. Further detail about achievement and entrance to various stages of education at Cheltenham College is contained in Appendix 2; please read it.

Bursaries are available to enable as many as possible, who meet the admission criteria, to attend Cheltenham College.

All enquiries, visits, registrations and admissions to Cheltenham College are communicated and managed via the Admissions Offices. Unless specifically stated, the provisions of this document apply to both the Prep and the Senior School.

Further details are available on the School website and in our Admissions and Information Booklet.

This policy can be made in larger print or more accessible format if required.

Please refer also to the following policies available on the Cheltenham College website or via the Admissions Departments:

- Bursary Policy
- Disability Policy
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Learning Support and SEN Policy

- Reasonable Adjustment Policy

2. Equal Opportunities

Cheltenham College is committed to equal opportunity for all, regardless of an applicant's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.

Cheltenham College's aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world.

Special educational needs and disabilities

Cheltenham College welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require and cater for any additional needs in School and that our site can accommodate them. In general, the needs of most pupils with mild specific learning difficulties can be met. Children with specific learning difficulties are assessed using a set procedure at the Admissions stage to ensure that we can offer the support required and that pupils can access the curriculum, achieve and progress in order to enjoy learning and succeed.

We strongly advise parents of children with special educational needs, learning difficulties, physical or mental disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with us before he/she sits the entrance exam/admissions assessments so that we can make adequate provision for them. Parents should provide (with the Registration Form) a copy of any information relating to a child's learning needs, this may be an educational psychologist's report, a medical report or a JCQ Form 8 or Form 9 detailing exam access arrangements for Year 10 pupils upwards at the time of application, if they have one.

Discussion with parents is ongoing during the application process so families are aware whether the School feels that they can make an adequate provision for the child. The School will also discuss thoroughly with parents (and, with the necessary consent, their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the School.

Religious beliefs

Although Cheltenham College has Christian roots, the School welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and of no faith. Cheltenham College does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief.

3. Registration

Parents may register their child for entry to the school at any time by completing the Online Registration Form (also available from the Admissions Offices) and paying a non-refundable registration fee. Registering a child does not guarantee admission or constitute an offer of a place at Cheltenham College and neither does it in any way bind parents.

EYFS Admissions and Registration

There is no registration fee for families accessing only the 15 hours of government-funded childcare under the EYF Scheme.

Parents requesting additional paid sessions beyond the funded entitlement will be subject to the standard deposit and acceptance terms as set out in the Parental Terms and Conditions.

4. Admission Process

Whilst the School is proud to operate a broad and inclusive entry policy, it is nevertheless academically selective. Entry criteria are fair, apply to all applicants and are set to ensure that all pupils joining Cheltenham College are able to access and thrive whilst studying a syllabus that will usually include

Common Entrance (or equivalent subject specific assessments/exams where CE is not followed) prior to Year 9, 9 or 10 GCSE subjects or at Year 12 (16+), 3 A Levels or equivalent and an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or 4 A Levels.

The specific admissions procedures for each entry level at the School can be found at Appendix 1 of this policy.

In every application a reference will be taken from the current school which will request details of any safeguarding concerns. Any child protection considerations will inform and override all admissions decisions.

We offer a 10% discount for third and fourth children if at the school at the same time or if at least one child has been at the school for five years. Parents who wish their children of the same gender to be in the same house will get priority if space is available.

The dates for the assessment process for the current year are published on our website, together with the dates that results are posted to families and the closing date for acceptances. Should more candidates be successful than places available, places will be allocated on academic performance and the remainder will be added to a waiting list. As places become available places will be offered on the basis of academic performance.

Parents should contact the School as soon as possible if they or their child require reasonable adjustments to be considered or made during the admissions process.

International students

We welcome overseas pupils at Cheltenham College, provided that he/she has a relative or has appointed a guardian or responsible adult living in the UK with whom he/she can stay as and when required, more details of which are contained in the School's Guardianship Policy which is on the website and the Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions). However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that we do not run a short-term study programme and expect overseas pupils to finish at least one term.

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Cheltenham College, pupils must be fluent English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense, if required. The School retains the right to require a pupil to attend EAL lessons where (in our opinion) we consider that the pupil does not have sufficient fluency of the English language to gain full access to the curriculum offered by the School.

All pupils whose parents are resident overseas, regardless of nationality, and those with parents in the armed services who are likely to be absent for periods in the year must appoint a guardian in the UK to whom pupils may be sent in the event of sickness or school evacuation and must have addressed all issues relating to visa requirements. Upon request, the Admissions Offices will provide the necessary documentation (CAS letter) to enable those pupils requiring a Child Student Visa (previously Tier 4 Visa) to apply.

5. Offer of a Place

The decision to admit a pupil is taken by the Deputy Head (Academic) in liaison with the Head. At The Prep, this decision also includes the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Houseparent (where appropriate).

In the event of a pupil not being offered a place, the reasons in relation to ability to fully access the curriculum and co-curriculum and thrive at College will always be given and any conditions clearly articulated. College does not publish details of results other than to announce those awarded and accepting scholarships or exhibitions.

5.1 Acceptance of a place

Parents who wish to accept a place for their child at Cheltenham College are required to complete and sign the Acceptance Form and pay a deposit, refundable upon completion of their education at the School. Acceptance of a place is subject to parents agreeing to Cheltenham College's Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions) which are available on the School website and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

The deposit is non-refundable if a parent withdraws their child within 18 months before their arrival at the school, or if there are any outstanding extras due at the time of departure.

EYFS Acceptance of a place

For families accessing only the 15 funded hours, no deposit or registration fee is required.

For families combining funded and additional hours / additional services set out under additional services clause in the EYFS Terms and Conditions, the usual acceptance and deposit terms apply to these additional services only as set out in the Parental Terms and Conditions.

In the situation above, College EYFS will require parents to pay a £300 deposit to accept a College EYFS place. This deposit will be refunded after their child completes their final term at the College in accordance with the Parental Terms and Conditions.

The payment of the deposit above does not guarantee a place in the reception class of the College EYFS. The admissions procedure for the reception class is initiated through the online 'Nursery to Reception Enrolment Form' which is available on the College website.

For parents combining funded and additional hours, this includes parents registering their interest for the Reception and paying a £240 non-refundable registration fee before the half term break of the Autumn term in the child's final nursery year.

6. Scholarships, Exhibitions and Bursaries

Scholarships are available for entry at Year 7, Year 8 and Year 12. These awards are available for Academics, Art, Drama, Music and Sport. Parents are asked to indicate on the Registration Form whether they wish to apply for a scholarship. Details of the arrangements for applying for a scholarship will be sent to all who express an interest.

Bursaries are means tested and are offered at all entry levels to those pupils not otherwise able to afford to access Cheltenham College. These are not dependent on the award of any type of Scholarship; they are made subject to the pupil in question meeting the appropriate entry requirement and availability of funding. Where pupils are offered academic or other awards (for example music or sports scholarships) the value of these awards will be considered alongside bursaries, based on the financial background of the pupil.

During a pupil's time at Cheltenham College, parents whose financial circumstance has changed adversely may also apply for bursary consideration. A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions). Further details of bursary assistance can be obtained via Cheltenham College's website. Please refer also to the Bursary Policy, a copy of which may be found on the website.

7. Appeals

Parents whose child is not offered a place may appeal against this decision by writing to the Chair of the Education Committee within 14 days of receipt of the decision not to offer their child a place.

The Chair of the Education Committee decides, after considering the appeal, upon the appropriate course of action to take and may ask to meet with parents for a discussion about their appeal, normally within ten days of receiving the complaint during term time. The Chair of the Education Committee may conduct an investigation of the appeal. Once the Chair of the Education Committee is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents informed of this decision in writing (normally within a further 14 working days after the initial discussion during term time). The Chair of the Education Committee will also give reasons for his/her decision. In any event College aims to respond to any written complaint, including EYFS, within 28 days or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable. The Chair of the Education Committee can be contacted via the Secretary to Council.

8. Records and review

Applicants' details will be held securely on file with due regard to applicable data protection legislation and Cheltenham College's Privacy Notice, which is accessible on Cheltenham College's website.

Cheltenham College will not hold the personal data of prospective parents or children for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will generally be no more than 12 months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain information for longer might include: e.g. if the parents express an interest in the candidate re-applying for any reason at a later date, or in the potential candidacy of another sibling; or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application. Personal data in successful applications will be transferred to the pupil file to the extent that it is required to provide an education to the child.

9. Admissions Process for Identified Mental Health Needs

Where the College is made aware of a significant existing mental health need, the following process will apply:

- The Assistant Head (Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare), or an appropriately delegated senior member of staff, will meet separately with parents and the pupil to understand the nature, history and likely impact of the disclosed mental health need.
- Where a boarding place is requested, a Suitability to Board assessment will be completed as part of the admissions process.
- A reference from the pupil's previous school will be requested, including relevant information relating to pastoral support, welfare and mental health. The pupil and parent will need to give consent for this information to be shared with College.
- A report from relevant mental health professionals involved in the pupil's care may be requested to support assessment, including consideration of the pupil's suitability for a boarding environment. Professional advice will inform, but will not determine, the College's decision.
- Where necessary, a meeting may be convened involving the Assistant Head (Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare), the College Doctor, the Hsm and a representative from Student Support Services to consider whether the College can meet the pupil's needs safely, reasonably and effectively within the educational and boarding context.
- The pupil, may be asked to complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) or similar assessment tool to support the evaluation process.

Throughout this process, the College will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Decisions will be evidence-based and proportionate, balancing equality duties with the College's safeguarding responsibilities and its capacity to provide safe support within a school and boarding environment.

A place will only be confirmed where the College is satisfied, on the basis of available evidence, that it can provide appropriate support without compromising the welfare or safety of the pupil or others.

Appendix 1: Admissions procedures

1. Preparatory School Entrance – Nursery to Year 8

1.1 Nursery

Children join us from the term in which they turn three. All children will attend taster sessions to help us to get to know them, and to ensure they will be able to thrive in our structured Nursery day. We require children to be toilet trained to enable them to access the full range of opportunities provided at The Prep. There may be exceptional circumstances where, after full consideration of all the aspects of an individual application, we are unable to offer a place.

1.2 Pre-Prep (Reception to Year 2)

Pupils join Pre-Prep from a range of settings with varied experiences and requirements. We believe that assessing academic ability in very young children for entrance purposes can be unreliable and even unsettling, so we do not rely on the academic profile alone when assessing entry up to and including Year 2. We always want to provide the best possible support for each child's curriculum, developmental and social needs and ensure they are able to fully access the curriculum at The Prep. To help ensure they can be appropriately accommodated, all children will be expected to attend a Taster Day so teaching staff have the opportunity to fully understand the child's social and academic development.
There may be exceptional circumstances where, after full consideration of all the aspects of an individual application, we are unable to offer a place.

1.3 Lower School and Middle School (Years 3-6)

Entry into Years 3-6 is based upon our assessment of a child's ability to access the full breadth and depth of the curriculum. Pupils are expected to attend a Taster Day, during which assessment takes place. Assessment takes the form of CAT4 assessments in Verbal, Non-Verbal, Spatial and Quantitative Reasoning and a short written English paper or EAL test. A pastoral interview is included. CAT4 results from another school setting can be used as long as they are less than 12 months old. This helps give staff a snapshot of the strengths and areas for development of each child. If a pupil finds these assessments particularly challenging, they may be referred to the Learning Support Department so that staff can spend a little longer with them on a 1:1 basis to understand their learning profile. Following this, dialogue will take place between the School and parents to discuss the specific needs of the pupil and how these might be met if they were offered a place at the Prep. EAL assessments ensure that the child's level of English is sufficient for them to be supported in accessing the curriculum and that they can settle into the school environment, further supported by additional EAL lessons where needed. These EAL lessons are charged to parents each term (see the EAL Policy on the website).

Entry into Years 3-6 does not guarantee entry to the Senior School at the end of Year 8. All pupils are required to participate in the separate entrance process (see below) to gain a place for Year 9 onwards.

If boarding is being sought at any stage from Year 3 onwards, the taster day includes a sleepover in the boarding house.

1.4 Upper School (Years 7-8)

Entry into Years 7 and 8 is via CAT4 assessments and through Cheltenham College's entrance papers in Maths and English. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, also take an EAL paper.

Entry at, and into, Year 7 and 8 normally leads to entry into the Senior School at 13+ (Year 9) except where the Heads, in their absolute discretion, are not satisfied that it is appropriate for the pupil to progress into the Senior School, having regard to the pupil's academic attainment and all other relevant circumstances.

1.5 Exclusion

Entry to College is not normally open to a pupil who has been permanently excluded from Cheltenham Prep.

2. Senior School (College) Entrance - Age 13 to 18

Pupils enter the Senior School at Year 9 (13+), Year 10 (14+) and Year 12 (16+).

Entry into Year 9 is either via the ISEB 13+ Common Entrance examinations or via College Entrance or Scholarship papers. Entry into Year 10 (14+) is via College Entrance papers. Entry into Sixth Form (16+) is via College Entrance or Scholarship papers. Entry at Year 12 is also subject to:

- achieving a minimum of 5 grade 6s or the equivalent at GCSE; many courses at A-Level also require specific entry requirements and these are all stated in the Sixth Form booklet on the website.
- CAT4 assessment, except for international pupils whose native language is not English, who take UKISET instead.
- Receipt of a satisfactory school reference

International pupils of all ages whose native language is not English will be required to provide a full UKISET report with their registration or sit the OPT exam, the College EAL paper and CAT 4. All pupils will have a Skype interview with a member of the academic staff.

To allow parents earlier peace of mind that a Year 9 place is secure, Cheltenham College offers early assessment of pupils during Year 6, 32 months in advance of entry. Pupils attend the College Entrance Day during which they participate in English and Maths tests as well as a number of discussions and activities. Suitability for the full breadth and depth of the College curriculum, both academic and co-curricular is assessed. Suitability criteria include attitude, participation, collaboration, behaviour, knowledge, expression during interview and skills demonstrated. SEN information must be made available in advance so that it can be taken into consideration during the assessment. This includes a pupil's JCQ Form 8 or Form 9 where relevant, the document showing exam access arrangements that have previously been applied for. Schools are expected to review exam arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate, practicable and reasonable; current arrangements may not be replicated exactly at College. Satisfactory reports about performance in relation to the above criteria, in combination with a satisfactory reference from the pupil's current school, forms the basis for College to make place offers, together with a House allocation, for entry in Year 9. Usually offers are made within approximately two weeks of Entrance Day. However, where necessary SEN information and references from the current school are not received two weeks prior to Entrance Day, Cheltenham College may not be able to offer a place within the usual time period; it is important that there be adequate time to follow up and/or liaise further where necessary. The offer will be subject to successful completion of Common Entrance examinations in June of Year 8 or College Entrance Exam papers post November of Year 8.

2.1 Senior School (College) Boarding House Allocation

When parents register their child for a place at College, or any time thereafter, they are invited to state their preference for a boarding House. It is recommended that parents state a first and a second choice of House. College will endeavour to allocate places according to these preferences but reserves the right to place a pupil in a different House if space is not available or if it is in the interests of a good community balance. If the application is considered a late entry, then it is possible that an unallocated house place or wait list option will be offered. We do not hold long wait lists, so as to give a child every opportunity to either consider another option or resolve to come to College. However, if an offer is made it is essential that a decision is received quickly, so as to secure the place as a 'Final Acceptance' in the College system.

Once at College, pupils may only change House with the permission of the Deputy Head Pastoral. Only in exceptional circumstances will House changes be considered and only if the pupil is changing Boarding Status or for extreme pastoral reasons. House changes that do occur will only be actioned at the beginning of a new academic year. New pupils joining the College will have preference on available spaces.

A limited number of Day Boarding places are available each year. Normally 25% of any year group, unless there is bed availability. Places will be allocated in order of date of registration. However, we reserve the right to allocate boarding/day boarding spaces as we see fit within the balance of present school, boarding and day boarding. Registration for these places is recommended at least 4-5 years prior to entry.

A change of status from Boarding to Day requires a term's notice.

Appendix 2: Achievement and entrance to next phase

We are committed to the wellbeing and success of each child throughout their time at Cheltenham College. Ensuring their continued progress and fulfilment of potential is underpinned by a strong set of aims, broad and balanced curriculum, inspirational teaching and learning, and assessment. Cheltenham College is ambitious in its aspirations for each pupil and is committed to ensuring individuals are well placed to meet their academic potential. We believe that communication is at the heart of an effective partnership between home and school which is essential to ensure pupils are able to thrive. Therefore, any concerns, including SEN or EAL, are identified and shared as early as possible to ensure any additional support can be targeted in collaboration with the child's parents. Further information about additional support is available in (3) below and in the Learning Support and SEN Policy and the EAL Policy, both of which are available on the website.

1. The Prep

1.1 Pre-Prep (Nursery to Year 2)

Assessment of pupils is ongoing and underpinned by teacher observation as well as some more specific tasks which provide feedback as to a pupil's preferred way of learning, potential and understanding in some key subjects. These help inform the planning of teachers and aid identification of any areas that may require consolidation or support. Any concerns regarding pupil progress, development or ability to access the curriculum will be discussed with parents.

1.2 Lower School (Years 3 and 4)

Ongoing assessment of pupils through teacher observation and more formal assessed tasks help inform staff and parents of the progress a pupil is making, with any concerns about progress being discussed with parents.

1.3 Middle School (Years 5 and 6)

The progress of pupils is reviewed on an ongoing basis in Middle School to ensure they can adequately access the full breadth of the curriculum. All pupils sit assessments at the end of and at other key points of Year 5 and 6, and these are reviewed in conjunction with their academic ability profile to ensure they are meeting their full potential. Pupils who may be considered as not attaining this or have caused some concern are highlighted and staff meet to discuss what support can be given (usually provided by the regular teachers in class or by a general learning support worker attached to the whole set) to help the child achieve their best.

Ensuring pupils are well suited to the requirements of College and able to thrive is extremely important. Therefore, time is taken at this stage to fully assess and discuss the suitability of pupils to this environment in preparation for them leaving The Prep at the end of Year 8. At the end of Year 8, the majority of pupils, having successfully completed the Entrance@11 process for entry to College, go on to College and continue their academic journey. During November of Year 6 the main entrance process into College (Entrance@11) takes place and offers of places are made by the end of the Autumn term. This process involves reviewing cognitive ability profiles, observing pupils participating in a variety of activities during the entrance day and taking English and Maths tests. An election meeting follows, where each pupil is discussed. This holistic process aims to ensure that College is able to meet the needs of pupils and that it will be the best environment for individuals to thrive both pastorally and academically, given the full breadth of the GCSE curriculum already described. Where there are concerns that this might not be the case, a place may not be offered. Ongoing assessment and dialogue between The Prep, College and parents help inform the next steps to ensure the best interests of the pupil.

1.4 Upper School (Years 7 and 8)

All pupils are monitored closely in Upper School with exams in May and assessments at the end of the Autumn and Spring Terms. This data is compared to their academic potential and any concerns discussed with parents.

The pupils who are identified as having a strong academic profile through the cognitive ability testing that takes place are monitored closely by the Deputy Head (Academic) and Academic Heads of Department to ensure they are being sufficiently challenged and to identify the suitability of individuals for preparation for scholarship application.

Pupils in Year 7 sit Progress Tests in English and Maths at the end of the year so that progress can be monitored.

2. Cheltenham College

2.1 Common Entrance/Upper School Assessment Framework

For candidates with a confirmed place, Common Entrance at 13+ and the Upper School Assessment Framework in non CE subjects is used internally for setting purposes in Third Form (Year 9). Where Common Entrance results are below the usual pass mark (average of 55%) and there may be concerns about his or her ability to access the curriculum, parents will be invited in to meet the College Deputy Head (Academic) immediately following Common Entrance to discuss the monitoring and support required. An evaluation of progress and attainment is made at the end of Autumn Term and shared with parents.

2.2 Entrance to the Sixth Form

Pupils are required to gain a minimum of 5 grade 6s (or alphabetical equivalent) at GCSE for entry into the Sixth Form. Parents of pupils who are at risk of missing this bar are written to in June of Fourth Form (Year 10), and the Head of Lower College monitors their progress closely throughout Fifth Form (Year 11). Parents are invited to discuss with senior staff whether College is the most appropriate place for their son or daughter to thrive in Sixth Form. Mock Exam results in January are used to help inform a final decision about an ongoing place in the Sixth Form. Where a pupil does not achieve the minimum 5 grade 6s, admission to Sixth Form may be granted at the Head's discretion. In these cases, a pupil's academic and disciplinary record to date will be closely scrutinised.

3. Support for Pupils

Full details of provision available can be found as part of the Learning Support and SEN Policy or the EAL Policy for the respective schools, which are on the website.

Most support is provided initially by class teachers through differentiated activities. From Year 3 onwards, where extra lessons with specialist staff are needed, arrangements are agreed in advance with parents. Such lessons are charged each term.

A specific learning difficulty or additional needs may only become apparent as a pupil matures, and the same criteria for entry to the next phase will be applied as all pupils move through the school; ensuring pupils continue to be able to fully access the curriculum, achieve their potential and progress as this is essential to their welfare and self-esteem.