



Admissions Policy

Applies to	Whole School
Responsibility	Director of Admissions, Marketing and Enterprises
Approving Body	Finance and Audit Committee
Date reviewed	Michaelmas 2024
Next review	Michaelmas 2025

1. General

Wells Cathedral School ("Wells"/"School"/"We"/"Our"/"Us") is a co-educational, independent, day and boarding school for pupils from age 2 to 18. The School currently has around 750 pupils of whom around 300 are boarders. In order for prospective parents and pupils to meet us, we hold a number of open events throughout the year which give a general introduction to the School. Details are published on our web site and in the local press, and are available upon request. We also welcome prospective parents and pupils at other times for individual visits and tours and ask all families to arrange such a visit. Please contact the Admissions Office either by telephone on +44 (0)1749 834213 or by email admissions@wells-cathedral-school.com.

2. Entry Procedure

Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

Registration is the first formal part of the admissions journey and on receipt the Admissions team will start the assessments. Admission to Wells is assessed through a baseline entry assessment (CAT4), a review of a recent school report (if appropriate), an interview at the School (or an online interview), a taster day for entry to the Prep School, and a reference from the candidate's previous school(s), as appropriate. Where appropriate, candidates may also be required to take an EAL test, or provide equivalent evidence, in order to demonstrate their level of English.

In the Senior School (NC Years 7-13) the usual points of entry are at the beginning of the academic year in September into Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+), Year 10 (14+) and Lower Sixth (16+). Entry is also sometimes possible at other points, both at the beginning of the academic year and once it has commenced - please contact the Admissions team for details. In the Prep School (Nursery to Year 6) pupils join at all age groups, again, normally at the beginning of the academic year, but also sometimes once it has commenced.

Little Wellies Nursery (age 2+)

Pupils may enter the Nursery in the term following their second birthday. There is no entrance test. Parents can choose the number of sessions (morning and/or afternoon) they wish to have, subject to availability of places. Parents should be aware that funding received may influence the number of sessions that must be taken. Please see our Little Wellies Admissions Policy for more information.

Pre-Prep: Reception and Years 1-2 (ages 4 to 6+)

Entry is normally to the Reception Class at the start of the Michaelmas Term in the September after the fourth birthday, although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms and year groups - please contact the Admissions team for details. There is no

entrance assessment or test. Registrations are placed in order of receipt and parents are informed when a place is available. Parents are encouraged to visit the School; the Head of the Prep School is available for appointments both during and outside regular school hours – please contact the Admissions team for details.

Prep School: Years 3-6 (ages 7+ to 10+)

Entry is normally at the start of the Michaelmas term although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms – please contact the Admissions team for details. Baseline assessments (including CAT4 tests) are typically taken as part of a taster day for entry in the following September, although these can be sat at other times if entry at a different point is envisaged. The assessments are of a standardised type and therefore no specific preparation is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and extra-curricular skills. It is important that, where possible, we would encourage all children to have an opportunity to see the School before coming to sit the assessments.

Senior School: Years 7-11 (ages 11 to 15+)

Entry is normally at the start of the Michaelmas term although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms – please contact the Admissions team for details. Admission is assessed through a baseline entry assessment (CAT4), review of a recent school report, an interview at the School (or online interview) and a reference from the candidate's previous school(s), as appropriate. Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

No specific preparation for the entrance assessments is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their aptitude.

Scholarship assessment tests are held annually at the School in January, for entry the following September, although these can be sat at other times if entry at a different point is envisaged. Candidates for Years 7 and 9 (and, exceptionally, in Years 8 and 10) can compete for Scholarships in a range of areas. They undergo an assessment in their chosen area, and are interviewed by senior staff.

Year 9 candidates who are taking the Common Entrance examination may sit this at their preparatory school but this is not an entry requirement of Wells as all Year 9 candidates take our own baseline assessment, either online or at our Scholarship Day. A reference from the Head of the candidate's current school will also be required.

It is possible for pupils to enter Year 10 at 14+ to begin the two-year GCSE courses. Candidates will usually be interviewed by the Head Master and will need a reference from the Head of their current school. They will also need to take our entrance test, either online or at our Scholarship Day. We do not normally recommend entry to Year 11, being the second year of the two-year GCSE courses, however we can admit pupils who have been taking GCSEs with the same exam boards, and where a satisfactory reference can be provided. All such cases are considered in detail on an individual basis.

Sixth Form - Lower & Upper Sixth (ages 16+ to 17+)

Entry is normally at the start of the Michaelmas term although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms - please contact the Admissions team for details. Admission is assessed through a baseline entry assessment (CAT4), a review of a recent school report, an interview at the School (or online interview) and a reference from the candidate's previous school(s) including predicted GCSE grades if applicable, as appropriate. Our admissions process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

No specific preparation for the entrance assessments is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their aptitude.

Pupils enter the Sixth Form at the end of two-year GCSE courses or equivalent. Candidates new to the School will usually be interviewed by the Head Master and will need a reference from the Head of their current school showing a capacity to cope both with the academic demands of studying A levels, and with the demands of a busy co-educational school. They will normally be expected to secure at least six grade 5 passes at GCSE level, with grade 7 or above in the subjects to be studied at A level, where applicable. All internal candidates will be expected to secure the same GCSE qualifications as external candidates, although individual cases are always considered on their own merits.

Scholarship assessment tests are held annually at the School in January, for entry the following September.

Registration Deadline

Registration may take place at any time, however applicants are strongly advised to register by 1 December in the year preceding entry in order to guarantee being considered for a place. The completion of the registration form does not guarantee a place. Registrations submitted after 1 December will be considered if places remain available.

Musicians

If musicians interested in joining our Specialist pathways are successful at the main auditions, which take place three times a year (please see our website for dates and further details), candidates will then be offered a Specialist or Special Provision Music place, subject to gaining satisfactory results in an online baseline academic assessment and being able to provide satisfactory references. Some latitude in academic entry requirements may be allowed in the case of exceptionally gifted and talented Specialist Musicians. The main audition programme is typically sent in advance which will include precise details of the timing of the auditions. A non-refundable audition fee is payable upon acceptance of an invitation to the main auditions. The Director of Music is always happy to discuss specialist music entries further.

Choristers: Boys and Girls - Years 3-9 (ages 7+ to 13+)

Chorister voice auditions, or trials, for both boys and girls are normally held in November for entry the following September, following a successful pre-audition. Depending on availability, late applicants may also be considered - please contact the Admissions Department for details. A voice trial is typically held in the morning with academic baseline assessments in the afternoon. The results are normally conveyed to parents within five

business days and we hope that parents and successful trialists will be sufficiently committed to accept the offer of a place straight away. The chorister trial programme is sent on application, typically following a successful choral pre-audition, and precise details of the timing of the trials are sent a week before the date of the trials. The Head of the Prep School (for entrants into Years 3 to 6) and the Head Master (for entrants into Years 7, 8 and 9) are always happy to discuss chorister entry. There is no charge for pre-auditions but a non-refundable main audition fee is payable upon acceptance of an invitation to the voice trials.

3. Assessment Process

The aim of the assessment process is to identify potential. We are looking for pupils who will flourish at Wells with an emphasis on the development of confidence, independence, friendships, curiosity, creativity and teamwork. The School has strong traditions in choral singing, Music, Drama, Art, debating, community activities and Sport. There are many co-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

4. Equal Treatment

Wells is committed to equal treatment for all and recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to those with protected characteristics.

Our 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. Means-tested awards and bursaries are offered to endeavor to make it possible for as many as possible who meet our admission criteria to attend the School irrespective of their parents' financial circumstances. Our provision for bursaries is described below.

5. Special Needs

We welcome pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, provided that we are able to offer them the support that they require, through reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our complex site can cope with them. However, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with us before they sit the assessments so that we can make suitable provision for them.

Where an applicant has a clear need, we would typically ask for a copy of a recent assessment (within the past three years), either done in their current school or by an appropriate expert (for example an Educational Psychologist or a Psychiatrist). Parents should notify the Admissions team at the earliest opportunity and when completing the School's registration form, or they become aware subsequently, if they are aware or suspect that their child has an educational need. Where this is unavailable a basic assessment

would be carried out by a member of the Learning Support staff at the School, and a specific report would be required from their previous school. In cases where there is any uncertainty about the level of support required by an applicant, the School reserves the right to request an expert report before offering a place.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably and practicably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the School.

6. Sibling Policy

Most siblings join us at Wells. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

7. Scholarship Awards

For pupils in Year 7 and above, Wells offers a number of scholarship awards each year for excellence in:

- Academic subjects
- Art
- Mathematics
- Sport
- Drama
- Music

Candidates who excel in more than one area may be awarded two scholarships.

8. Choristerships

There are several scholarships and bursaries - some administered and awarded by the School, and some by third parties - that are only available to choristers. All choristers automatically benefit from a 25% discount on tuition fees and a 50% discount on boarding fees, and may also be considered for further bursaries and financial assistance. On average, choristers receive around 50% off their School fees, with some receiving considerably more than this, depending on financial circumstances. Please contact the Admissions team for more information.

In addition, once pupils have finished their time in the Choir, they receive a discount worth 5% of their school fees for each year they were in the Choir, worth up to 20%, for the rest of their time at the School.

9. Purpose of Scholarship Awards

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of their achievement, each awardee is offered a reduction in their tuition fees of 10 %. For those candidates who are awarded two Scholarships, the second will be an Honorary Scholarship without an additional financial award. Scholarship applicants can also be considered in exceptional circumstances for a discretionary Head Master's award.

The duration of any scholarship award can usually be expected (barring a change in circumstances) to last throughout their time at Wells, subject to an award holder meeting the expectations of the scholarship. All Scholars will receive a formal review of their progress at the end of each key stage in their education. For Art, Academic, Drama, Music and Sport Scholars this will be November of Year 8 and Year 11. For Specialist Mathematicians this will be November of Year 9 and February of Year 11. This will involve a pupil one-to-one meeting with the leader of their scholarship field and a written report to parents. Pupils will be evaluated against the expectations of scholarship holders.

Details of the various scholarships and awards can be found on the School's website, or by contacting the Admissions team.

10. Bursaries

Our bursary programme is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet Wells' entry criteria to take up a place. However, despite its long history, the School is not well endowed and until we have built up a sizeable endowment, the School is necessarily limited in the amount of bursarial support that it can provide. Notwithstanding this limitation, we offer a number of means-tested bursaries each year to entrants at the usual points of entry. All bursaries are means-tested using a confidential financial circumstances questionnaire in which both parents are required to provide proof of their income and expenditure, assets and liabilities. The level of support varies according to parental need but can, in exceptional cases, extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need.

Bursaries are offered for the duration of a key stage, and are reviewed at this point. The recipient family is required to provide fresh information about its financial circumstances for every year that their child attends the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income and/or assets.

The School's practice is to allocate the bulk of its available bursary funding on entry subject only to retaining a prudent reserve against genuinely unforeseen circumstances e.g. death of the primary earner. The School's expectation is that parents, who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed, will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

Confidential financial circumstances questionnaires, the means by which the decision making of our Bursary Committee (the School's award-making body) is informed, will be

sent to all who express an interest.

We encourage parents of awardees who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the boarding and/or tuition fees, to apply at the same time for one of the School's means-tested bursaries described below, when they register their child.

11. Music and Dance Scheme (MDS)

Pupils who are either from the UK or the European Union, OR have at least 2 years' residency in the UK or the European Union, who are offered a place as a Music Specialist may become eligible for financial support from the UK Government's Music and Dance Scheme (MDS). This means-tested award can cover up to 100% of tuition AND all boarding fees for UK pupils, or up to 100% of tuition fees only for EU pupils. Wells has a strictly limited number of places available each year. All eligible applicants will automatically be informed of their eligibility as part of the admissions process, and will be guided through the application process.

12. Other Fee Remissions

The School offers fee remissions for siblings, as well as for children of clergy and members of the armed forces. Proof of eligibility for this will be requested as part of the application process.

13. Overseas Applicants

Wells has a thriving international community and looks to admit pupils who will both benefit from, and contribute to, the cultural breadth which the School is seeking to foster. Pupils from all parts of the world are considered for admission at all ages by face-to-face or online interview. A workable standard of written and spoken English and mathematical ability is required as is the potential to engage in active learning and living within a pupil body predominantly from a UK-based background.

We warmly welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Wells as boarders, provided that they have an educational guardian living in the UK with whom they can stay for exeat weekends, half terms, etc, and who can act *in loco parentis* in an emergency e.g. hospitalisation. Please see the School's Educational Guardianship policy.

14. Supervision

All pupils at Wells Cathedral School are required to be either living with a responsible adult, aged 25 or over, or to board at the School in one of the Houses for the duration of their time in the School. This is to enable the School to fulfill its duty of care to the pupil.

15. Fluency in English

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Wells, pupils must be good English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English medium to a standard to enable them to thrive in an academic environment where the language of instruction is English before coming to the School. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parents' expense but in some cases the School may require candidates to complete an external intensive English course of the type recognised by the British Council. International students will need to have the potential on admission to reach IELTS level 6.5 or equivalent standard for progression into higher education entry in the UK or overseas on leaving the School.

16. Religious Beliefs

Wells has a Christian foundation dating back over 1,100 years. We do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief: we offer the opportunity of an education for those of all faiths and none. All pupils are expected to regularly attend assemblies in the Cathedral. Boarders also attend house chapels and a regular Sunday service in the Cathedral. These communal acts of worship in beautiful and historic buildings underpin the spiritual life of the School.

17. Particular Religious, Dietary, Language or Cultural Needs

All reasonable provision will be made for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs by the appropriate departments within the School. This provision is coordinated by Form Tutors / Tutors / House Parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's EAL Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and SEND Policy.

18. Routines

Wells is both a boarding and day school; during term time the community flourishes for 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Day pupils are at school from at least 8.30am to 4.00pm (3.30pm in the case of Pre-Prep). Most of them choose to be here for much longer in order to benefit from and contribute to the activities, work and leisure of the School. Parents should be aware that there is compulsory Saturday morning school from Year 9 upwards. Much sport is played on Saturday mornings / afternoons, including a full list of fixtures against other schools.

19. Terms and Conditions

Copies of our Parental Contract are on the School's website and are made available to parents as part of the admissions process. All parents are required to sign the Contract in order formally to accept a place at the School, whereupon an acceptance deposit becomes payable. This is held on account and refunded upon payment of the pupil's final bill (less any outstanding expenses).

Specialist Musicians, and their parents, are also required to sign up to the Specialist Music Charter. Parents of choristers are also required to sign up to a Chorister Contract.

If you would like to discuss any issues relating to our admissions process, please contact the Director of Admissions, Marketing and Enterprises via email admissions@wells-cathedral-school.com.