Clifton High School

ADMISSIONS

Policy applies from EYFS to Sixth Form and to all Staff	
Date policy reviewed:	16.10.2026
Date of next review:	13.10.2027
Version:	10.26 v1
Author:	Finance Director and Admissions Manager
Owner:	Finance Director

Version	Date	Section	Material change	Approval
11.25 v1	19.11.2025	6.1, 8.1 and 10	Sections updated.	Mr Michael Stewart
05.26 v1	22.05.2026	2, 7 and 15	Updated to reflect new admissions process for The Downs pupils entering in Year 9.	Mr Michael Stewart
09.26 v1	15.09.2026	7.1.1 and 7.1.2	Procedure updated for pupils joining from The Downs.	Mr Michael Stewart
10.26 v1	16.10.2026	N/a	No material changes.	Mr Michael Stewart

Clifton High School is committed to child protection and safeguarding children and young people and expects all staff, visitors, and volunteers to share this commitment.

Related Policies
Accessibility Plan
Attendance
Data Protection
Data Retention
Early Years Entitlement
English as an Additional Language (EAL)
Enhanced Learning
School Terms and Conditions

1. Introduction

Clifton High School is a co-educational independent day school for children aged 3 to 18 and, together with The Downs Preparatory School (**The Downs**), is part of Pembroke Education.

Since the School's establishment nearly 150 years ago, our approach has focused on realising the individual brilliance of every pupil. We aim to provide an environment in which children will thrive and perform well academically and in their personal development, and our admissions procedure aims to identify children whose abilities will enable them to benefit from a demanding education of the highest quality.

2. The entry procedure

Clifton High School is a selective school. The admissions procedure is designed to identify pupils whose personal qualities, academic and other abilities accord with the School's ethos, aims and values, such that the pupils benefit from the many opportunities offered by the School, contribute to the School community, and realise their own individual brilliance.

We expect applicants and their parents to act in accordance with our ethos and values - and during the admissions process and beyond - conduct themselves in a respectful and reasonable manner.

The usual points of entry into the Infant and Junior School are:

- The Hive (the School's Pre-School) (3+)
- Reception (4+)
- Year 3 (7+)
- Year 5 (9+).

The usual points of entry into the Senior School are:

- Year 7 (11+)
- Year 9 (13+)
- Sixth Form (16+).

The School admits pupils at other points where places are available. Please contact the Admissions Department for details.

The procedure for pupils transferring from The Downs to Clifton High School in Year 9 is set out in section 7 below. Sections 4.3 (School reports), 6.3.2 (Senior School – Entry into Years 8 – 10) and section 13 (Offer of a place) of this Policy will not apply to those transfers. All other procedures will apply.

3. Equality and diversity

The School welcomes applications from families from a diverse range of backgrounds and is committed to equal treatment for all. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in all areas of School life, including during the admissions process.

The School is non-denominational with a Christian ethos and welcomes applications from prospective pupils of all faiths and none.

4. Registration and information requirements

4.1 Registration form

Applicants for admission should register their interest by completing the School's Registration Form, which is available on the School's website and from the Admissions Department.

4.2 All relevant information

We require parents to inform the School when they submit their Registration Form about any needs which their child may have or any other significant matters which the School should reasonably be aware of because, for example, it would necessitate tailored provision and/or would materially impact on their child's attendance at School and/or ability to engage in day-to-day School life. The School may wish to discuss these matters with the parents and/or require some further information.

Parents must ensure that information provided is accurate, complete and not misleading and relevant details and information (or changes to them) are shared in a timely and transparent manner. The provision of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information, or a failure to disclose relevant information may - in some cases - lead to the withdrawal of an offer or termination of the School Terms and Conditions.

4.3 School/nursery report

Applicants must provide a copy of their child's most recent school or nursery report. The School will write to the Head of the applicant's current school (or nursery if the child is entering the Hive Pre-School or Reception) requesting a confidential reference. A parent may request that a reference only be taken up with the current school or nursery when the rest of the assessment process has been completed. However, the outcome of the admissions process will not be concluded and any offer made will be conditional until the most recent school or nursery report and reference is received by the School and considered as part of the assessment process.

If a parent is applying for a place for their child in the Hive Pre-School or Reception and the child does not attend a nursery at the time of applying, it will at the School's discretion as to whether to waive the requirement to provide a nursery report and reference.

5. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

5.1 Inclusion and accessibility

The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, provided that we can reasonably offer them the support that they require and cater for any additional needs they

may have, and that the School site can accommodate them. The School aims to ensure that all pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, are provided with a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn.

5.2 The admissions process for pupils with SEND

Our admissions criteria are used to assess all prospective pupils to ensure that the School is the right fit for every child. We require parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities or allergies (suspected and diagnosed) to discuss their child's needs with the School at the outset of the admissions process so that we can consider and, to the extent reasonable, make appropriate provision for them.

5.3 Required documentation

The School requires parents to provide full details of all relevant information about their child's needs, including copies of any educational psychologist's reports, any medical reports or assessments or other relevant expert third party reports about their child's needs (educational health or otherwise) when they submit their Registration Form. This is so that the School can assess the child's needs and consult with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) about any adjustments that are proposed/required and whether those adjustments can reasonably be made. This information should be provided prior to the admissions assessment process.

If your child has an EHC needs assessment or EHCP (whether at the application stage, draft or final form), it is important that these (and the applicable supporting documentation, e.g. educational psychologist reports or other expert assessments) are shared promptly with the School and that the School is kept up to date with respect to any relevant decisions of the Local Authority or changes in provision.

5.4 Adjustments

Where parents of a prospective pupil feel their child requires adjustments (in respect of the admissions process and/or with regards to education at School and participation in School life in the event they are offered and take up a place at the School), parents should raise these with the School at the outset and the School may – depending on the circumstances - require some further information from parents or request further assessments in respect of the needs identified and will discuss with parents (and their child's medical advisers, if appropriate) the adjustments proposed and whether they can reasonably be made for the child if they were to become a pupil at the School.

5.5 Circumstances where we may not be able to offer a place

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the School is not able to offer a place for reasons relating to a child's special educational needs or disability. For example, if despite

reasonable adjustments (in the case of a disability), we feel that a prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully access the education offered, or that their health and safety or those of other pupils or staff may be put at risk, or where the School cannot reasonably accommodate the adjustments required or reasonably provide the nature or level of the support required.

5.6 Updating information

Sometimes, the circumstances of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs may change between an offer of a place being made and the pupil starting at the School. The School requires parents to be pro-active in updating the School as to any significant changes which mean that the information provided during the application process is out of date or incomplete. In the vast majority of cases, this will not affect a pupil's place at the School. However, the School may, in exceptional circumstances, need to reconsider the offer of a place if a pupil's circumstances change materially. It is in the pupil's interests that any such decision is made as early as possible to avoid any disruption to their education, so parents are urged to be forthcoming and transparent in their communications with the School about any material change to their child's circumstances.

6. Assessment Process

The assessment process varies depending on the applicant's age and year of entry.

6.1 Hive Pre-School and Infants

Children applying for entry into the Hive Pre-School or Reception are expected to show the potential to be able to access the full Early Years curriculum. Assessment is by observation of your child as they play alongside other children in their peer group. This assessment will take place during a taster session at the School. The School uses the Government's "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" as its guide to assessment. The child and their parents will be invited to meet with the Head of Infants and Juniors, or another member of the Infant and Junior School leadership team.

Applicants for entry into Years 1 and 2 are expected to be able to access the full school curriculum and demonstrate the potential to progress through the School. Assessment involves participating in a variety of learning activities, both individually and in groups, and includes an assessment of mathematics, reading and writing. This assessment will take place in the form of a taster day in the child's current year group, by the class teacher informally assessing the child during the day. The child and their parents will meet with the Head of Infants and Juniors, or another member of the Infant and Junior School leadership team.

The School is a registered provider for the purposes of the Free Early Education Entitlement, in particular the universal 15 hours for all 3 and 4-year-olds. Separate terms and conditions apply. Further details are available on the School website and from the Admissions Department.

To be eligible for Free Early Years Entitlement funding, the child must live in England.

6.2 Junior School

6.2.1 Children in Year 2 applying for entry into Year 3

The assessment process for applicants for Year 3 who are currently in Year 2 mirrors the assessment process for entry into Years 1 and 2.

6.2.2 Children in Year 3 and above applying for entry into the Junior School

Pupils applying for entry into the Junior School are expected to be capable of accessing the full curriculum and demonstrating the potential ability to perform to the required standard to progress to the Senior School.

Children will visit for a morning or an afternoon during which time they will sit formal assessments in literacy, reading and mathematics under test conditions. Subject to the outcome of these assessments, children will be invited back for a taster day, with assessments made in the classroom as they work alongside their year group. The taster day will involve the child integrating fully into the school day, including specialist subjects. The child and their parents will also meet with the Head of Infants and Juniors, or another member of the Junior School leadership team.

If children are relocating to Bristol, they will be invited into School for a whole day with assessments in the morning and the afternoon spent with their year group; they are not required to return for a separate taster day if this is not practical.

6.3 Senior School

Pupils applying for entry into the Senior School are expected to be academically able to have the potential to access a wide range of GCSE subjects (the norm is 9 subjects), and to take a minimum of 3 A levels. The expectation is that all pupils will be capable of going on to Higher Education, regardless of the final route taken.

6.3.1 Entry into Year 7 (11+)

Applicants for Year 7 entry are invited to attend a Year 7 Experience Day in the Autumn Term of Year 6 and are required to sit entrance tests in Mathematics, English and Verbal and Non-verbal reasoning. No past papers are provided. School references will be sought from the Head of the applicant's current school as part of the assessment process.

The dates for the assessment process are published on the School website, and parents will be notified by the School of the dates that results will be posted to families and the closing date for acceptances.

If parents wish to put their child forward for a scholarship, the procedure set out in section 8.1 below will apply.

6.3.2 Entry into Years 8 – 10

The admissions procedure for applicants for Years 8 to 10 entry consists of assessment in the form of entrance tests, a meeting with the Head of School or another senior member of staff and in certain circumstances upon consideration of work that the pupil has completed recently.

The entrance tests will take the form of a written examination in Mathematics and English. No past papers are provided. Those who perform well will be invited with their parents for a meeting with the Head of School or another senior member of staff. School references will be sought from the Head of the applicant's current school as part of the assessment process.

In addition to the assessment process set out above, a decision by the School to offer a place to an applicant will also take into account whether the applicant would integrate both academically and socially into the relevant year group.

6.3.3 Entry into Year 11

The School does not normally accept applications for entry into Year 11, other than in exceptional circumstances. The assessment process would mirror that for entry into Years 8 to 10.

6.3.4 Sixth Form

The School's minimum entry requirements for external entrants into the Sixth Form are at least a Grade 7 in the GCSE examinations for the subjects that the student wishes to study at A Level and a further 6 GCSEs at Grade 6 or above which must include Mathematics and English Language if they are not the chosen A Level subjects. All offers made before the public GCSE results are announced are conditional on GCSE results.

Students will be assessed on the basis of their predicted GCSE grades, current school reports, a personal statement and an interview with the Head of Sixth Form. Students applying from countries outside the UK, and therefore not having GCSE predicted grades, may be asked to complete tests in the subjects they intend to study for A Level.

A Level subject choices are dictated by pupil demand and subject to timetabling.

7. Transfer from The Downs Preparatory School at Year 9

Pupils at The Downs may transfer to Clifton High School for Year 9 without sitting a formal entrance examination. This specific procedure applies only to transfers at the end of Year 8;

admissions at any other entry point must follow the standard procedures set out in this Policy.

7.1 Application process

7.1.1 Registration

Parents who wish to move their child from The Downs to Clifton High School for Year 9 will be invited to submit a registration form in the Summer Term of Year 7. Before registering, parents may meet with the Head of The Downs to discuss their child's suitability to move to Clifton High School.

While pupils from The Downs are not required to sit formal entrance examinations, admission to Clifton High School is subject to a mutual agreement between both Headteachers that the pupil can successfully access the full curriculum. To support this decision, The Downs will share the pupil's latest school report and data from recent informal assessments with Clifton High School, and the Head of Year 9 may also visit the pupils considering transferring to Clifton High School.

7.1.2 Offer of a place

Provided a completed registration form is submitted by the end of the Summer Term of Year 7 and the Heads of The Downs and Clifton High School agree that Clifton High School is suitable for the pupil, a place will be available for any pupil wishing to transfer.

The School will write to all applicants to confirm whether the School is offering a place to them, together with any relevant conditions if the School is awarding a scholarship to the pupil.

An offer of a place for the pupil at the School is accepted by the submission of the completed Acceptance Form and by agreeing to the transfer of the deposit paid to The Downs on joining The Downs to Clifton High School.

7.2 Scholarship applications

Pupils from The Downs may apply for a scholarship upon registration at the end of Year 7.

In the Autumn Term of Year 8, pupils from The Downs will be invited to attend Scholarship Assessments at Clifton High School, alongside pupils applying from other schools.

The School's scholarship policy and procedure are set out in section 9.1.1 below.

8. Sibling admissions policy

Clifton High School welcomes applications for siblings of pupils already at the School. However, admission 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.

In circumstances where a particular year group is oversubscribed, Clifton High School reserves the right to prioritise applications for siblings of pupils already at the School over other applications.

Where the Hive Pre-School is oversubscribed, priority will be given to children who have siblings at Clifton High School and whose parents intend for their child to move into Reception, followed by children who do not have siblings at other schools and whose parents intend for their child to move into Reception.

9. Financial assistance and fee concessions

9.1 Scholarships

Clifton High School offers scholarships in academic subjects, Music, Sport and Realising Individual Brilliance (which can include Art and Drama). Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement the scholar's parents may be offered a percentage reduction in the fees for the duration of their time at the School. In addition, scholars have access to a programme relevant to their area of excellence.

9.1.1 Years 7 - 11

Scholarships are only available in the Senior School. They are typically awarded to internal and external applicants on entry into Year 7 and to external applicants on entry into Year 9. However, in exceptional cases, they be awarded to external applicants entering different years and to pupils already at the School where their exceptional performance warrants.

Parents of current pupils in Year 6 and external applicants will be asked when they register to confirm if they wish to put their child forward for a scholarship. If a current Year 6 pupil wishes to apply for an academic scholarship, they will sit the Year 7 entrance tests alongside external candidates.

Academic scholarships are assessed on the basis of the entrance tests and an interview. In-person assessments are undertaken for scholarships in Music, Sport and Realising Individual Brilliance, and the pupils may also have an interview with a relevant member of staff. Additional references and portfolios of work may be requested.

9.1.2 Sixth Form

Scholarships are also available to internal and external applicants joining/applying for a place in the Sixth Form. Scholarships may be general in nature or related to a particular subject. In addition to the information already provided for Sixth Form entry in paragraph 6.3.4 above, assessment for a scholarship will be based on a written submission to the Head of School and interviews with subject leads, the Head of Sixth Form and the Head of School.

Clifton High School

9.1.3 Withdrawal of scholarships

Scholars are expected to work hard, achieve excellent results, and contribute positively to the life of the School. A scholarship may be withdrawn if for example, the pupil decides not to pursue the subject for which the scholarship is awarded, or if the pupil or their parents breach the School Terms and Conditions. Scholarships may also be withdrawn if, in the opinion of the Head of School, a child's attendance, progress and/or behaviour and/or the behaviour or conduct of parents no longer merits the continuation of an award.

9.2 Bursaries

Clifton High School's bursary programme is designed to make it possible for applicants who meet the School's entry criteria, but whose parents require financial support, to take up a place at the School. The School offers the opportunity to apply for a means-tested award for entrants to the Senior School where parents have indicated they may require financial support. This support is not normally available other than for entrance into Years 7, 9 and 12. The School's ability to award bursaries is governed by the funds available.

Bursaries are means-tested and both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need but can extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need. The School uses a third party, Bursary Administration Limited, to undertake the means-testing assessment on its behalf. This may include a home visit or online interview.

All Bursaries are subject to periodic review. Parents may be required to provide fresh information about their circumstances during the course of the pupil's time at the School. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income or wealth.

The School's practice is to allocate its entire available bursary funding on entry. The School's expectation is that parents who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time their child is being assessed as part of the admissions process will not require financial support throughout the time that the pupil attends the School, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

Bursary awards are subject to conditions of award set out in the School Terms and Conditions.

9.3 Other concessions

Clifton High School offers discounts where two or more siblings are enrolled at the School at the same time. There is also a discount available where at least one parent or grandparent is a former pupil of the School. For further details please contact the Admissions Department.

10. Financial information

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary or scholarship is granted). The School may also ask for proof of the source of the funds being used to pay school fees.

11. Applications from overseas

The School welcomes international pupils, provided that they have the legal right to enter, live and study in the UK, and live for the duration of the School's term time with a person who resides in the UK and has parental responsibility for the pupil. Please contact the Admissions Department for further information.

Overseas applicants may sit their entrance tests at their current school or may sit them at home, provided that they have first signed a Home Entrance Exam Declaration. More information can be provided by the Admissions Department.

The School is a sponsor for UK Visas and Immigration. Parents must inform the Admissions Department when returning a completed Registration Form if their child requires sponsorship from the School to obtain a visa to study at the School. Parents of children who it is proposed will be sponsored/are sponsored by the School must provide immigration information if requested by the School and must agree to allow the School to take and retain copies of their child's passport and visa. It shall always be the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child has the appropriate immigration permission to reside in the United Kingdom and to study at the School.

If a child does not hold a British passport (whether sponsored by us or not), parents must provide the School with a copy of their child's passport and details of their entry into the UK (i.e. a flight ticket or similar).

12. Fluency in English

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the School, pupils should have the appropriate level of English required to access the curriculum in their year group of entry. Each application from a pupil for whom English is not their first language will be reviewed by the English as an Additional Language Department (EAL) as part of the admissions process. Tuition in EAL can be provided at the parents' expense and may be a condition of an offer. A charge will usually be made for the provision of EAL tuition.

13. Offer of a place

The School will write to all applicants to inform them of the outcome of the assessment process and to confirm whether the School is offering a place to the applicant, together with any

relevant conditions (for example the award of a scholarship).

An offer of a place at the School is conditional upon:

- completion of a taster session at the School for pupils joining the Hive, Infant and Junior School and Year 7;
- written assessments for pupils joining the Junior School and Senior School;
- receipt by the School of satisfactory school or nursery reports and references; and
- any other relevant conditions.

The School often has a waiting list of applicants and therefore the offer letter will also set out any deadline by which parents must accept. An offer of a place for the pupil at the School is accepted by the submission of the completed Acceptance Form and payment of the deposit.

14. Parental responsibility

Other than in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the School alone, the School requires all those with parental responsibility for a pupil to sign the Acceptance Form, irrespective of court order or other arrangement that parents may have entered into regarding the division of responsibilities.

15. School Terms and Conditions

The School Terms and Conditions will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process. The School Terms and Conditions include, amongst other things, arrangements for the payment of fees, notice periods and the respective responsibilities of the School and parents. By submitting the Acceptance Form and paying the deposit (or agreeing to the transfer of the deposit from The Downs in the case of pupils transferring from The Downs in Year 9), parents agree to be bound by the School Terms and Conditions.

16. Pupils progressing through the School

Once a pupil has taken up their place it is assumed that they will progress through the School each year until they complete Year 13. However, the School shall not be obliged to permit a pupil to move up through the School unless satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, having regard to the pupil's academic attainments and all other relevant circumstances. If the School is concerned that a pupil is not meeting the required academic standards, parents will be informed, and the School will discuss with the parents how the pupil can best be supported.

If the School has concerns that a pupil in the Junior School may not meet the required standards for learning in the Senior School, their parents will be informed by the end of the Year 5 academic year, so that the School and the parents can discuss how the pupil can best be supported.

The Head of School will have a meeting with all pupils and their parents in Year 6 progressing into the Senior School.

17. Feedback

The offer a place, and any conditions relating to that offer, remains entirely the decision of the School. The School will not provide feedback about the results of any entrance test or any other part of the assessment process.

The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website and can be sent to prospective parents on request but is not available for use by prospective parents.

Although there is no right to appeal an admissions decision made by the School, the School welcomes feedback on the admissions process (rather than the outcome). Prospective parents should email admissions@cliftonhigh.co.uk if they wish to provide feedback.

18. Records and review

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation, the School's Privacy Notices and its Data Protection and Data Retention policies. The School will not hold the personal data of prospective parents or pupils for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose. This will not normally be beyond the end of the academic year following the year of application.

19. The admissions register and local authority returns

A pupil's name will be added to the admission register on the first day they attend the School, and the School will submit a new pupil return to the local authority if the pupil joins the School at a non-standard transition time. Further details are set out in the Attendance Policy.

Clifton High School

Version history

Version	Date	Section	Material change	Approval
10.23 v1	13.10.2023	2 5 6.1, 6.3.1 8.2 11	Usual points of entry updated. Updated to confirm the documents required for applicants to the Hive and Reception. More information added. Information re. third-party means testing added. Confirmed conditionality of some offers.	Mr Michael Stewart and Mrs Rebekah Gray
01.25 v1	07.01.2025	4.2 5 7 8.2 9 10	Policy updated to clarify information that must be provided by parents. Section updated. Sibling policy for children in the Hive clarified. Section updated, including information required and review and conditions of award. New section added. Information requirements clarified.	Mr Michael Stewart and Mrs Rebekah Gray
11.25 v1	19.11.2025	6.1, 8.1 and 10	Sections updated.	Mr Michael Stewart
05.26 v1	22.05.2026	2, 7 and 15	Updated to reflect new admissions process for The Downs pupils entering in Year 9.	Mr Michael Stewart
09.26 v1	15.09.2026	7.1.1 and 7.1.2	Procedure updated for pupils joining from The Downs.	Mr Michael Stewart
10.26 v1	16.10.2026	N/a	No material changes.	Mr Michael Stewart