



# Ackworth School

## Admissions Policy

1. This policy applies to all sections of Ackworth School including the Senior School, the Autism Resource, the Junior School (Coram House), and the Nursery.

### **Introduction**

2. This Policy has been authorised by the School Committee (Governing Body), of Ackworth School. It is addressed to prospective parents and pupils and to all members of the teaching and administration staff.

### **Policy Statement**

3. Ackworth is a Quaker co-educational, independent, boarding and day school for pupils from ages 2½ to 18. Ackworth School's purpose is to create a happy and secure environment in which all pupils realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others.
4. Ackworth School is an inclusive learning community catering for pupils including those who are 'gifted and talented' and those with mild to moderate learning support needs and disabilities; whilst taking into account the need to balance the learning needs of each class as a whole.
5. Ackworth School accepts pupils throughout the year from Nursery to Year 9. Pupils are able to join examination Years 10 and 12 up to one term late, at Ackworth School's discretion, but it will not normally accept pupils into Years 11 and 13.

6. Ackworth School has carefully developed an admissions procedure alongside this policy to enable parents and pupils to learn more about Ackworth School, its educational approach, ethos and leadership.
7. Details are published on our web site. We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents and their children at other times for a personal visit. Please contact, our Admissions Secretary, Rebecca Stephenson, on 01977 233600 or email on [Admissions@ackworthschool.com](mailto:Admissions@ackworthschool.com) to arrange a visit.

#### **Policy Aims:**

8. The **aims** of this policy are:
  - To ensure compliance with the School's charitable purposes,
  - To ensure that Ackworth School identifies and welcomes children who will benefit from an academic education and who will contribute to and benefit from the ethos and activities of our school community.
  - To set out an admissions policy and procedure that is fair to all who apply;
  - To comply with Ackworth School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

9. In applying the policy and procedure, Ackworth School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, welcoming pupils from all ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds whilst balancing human rights and freedoms with the lawful needs and rules of Ackworth School community and the rights and freedoms of others. Ackworth School will treat prospective pupils for admission equally, irrespective of their race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, disability or special educational needs. Ackworth School does however, expect all its pupils to attend Meetings for Worship which are fundamental to its ethos.
10. Ackworth School is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has an Equal Opportunities Policy and a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice Policy.

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

11. We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can cope with the specific need. However, at present Ackworth School's facilities for pupils with disabilities are limited, but it will do all that is reasonable to ensure that we make our premises, culture, policies and procedures, accessible to pupils with disabilities. Ackworth School is not academically selective beyond an expectation that each pupil is able to access Ackworth School curriculum as a whole, subject to reasonable adjustments being made.
12. Parents must inform Ackworth School when making an initial inquiry of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by Ackworth School and keep Ackworth School apprised of any changes. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.
13. When Ackworth School becomes aware of a pupil's disability or special educational need, the Registrar or a member of the admissions team will consult with Ackworth School's SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) and parents to consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to the admissions procedure (although not to the admissions test itself which enables Ackworth School to ascertain the pupil's ability without adjustments) and access arrangements, to enable a pupil, if he/she is able, to satisfy the admission requirements.
14. Parents of disabled children may be invited to a preliminary meeting with the Head to discuss ways in which any disadvantages could be lessened or eliminated to ensure that the applicant can be adequately catered for should an offer of a place be made.
15. If, after due consideration, Ackworth School considers that it cannot make suitable provision, or appropriately meet the pupil's needs, it will inform the parents of its decision and the reasons for it.

16. If an applicant's disability becomes apparent after admission, Ackworth School will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made in order to allow the child to continue at Ackworth School. If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, Ackworth School is unable to adequately cater for and meet the needs of the pupil, the Head may request parents to withdraw their child. Fees in lieu will not be payable in these circumstances and the acceptance fee will be returned.

### **Admissions Criteria**

17. The aim of the process is to identify potential. We are looking for well-rounded pupils with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense of the word, with interests that stretch beyond the confines of the academic curriculum. The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art, sport and community service. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.
18. No specific preparation for the entrance tests is needed, all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude.
19. We may interview candidates as part of our assessment process for each age group throughout the year (apart from Nursery and Reception).
20. We will offer places to candidates throughout the year, however our entrance tests for Year 7 are held in January.

### **Nursery**

21. The Nursery admits children between the age of 2½ and 4 subject to availability. Children in Nursery and Reception are offered places subject to a 'taster session' which usually lasts over an hour during which the children's social skills and readiness for learning is informally assessed. Assessment for Reception and Nursery is based on observing informal play in small groups.

## **Coram House**

22. The usual points of entry into the Junior School, Coram House, are at 4+ years of age/Reception and at 7 years of age /Year 3. Prospective pupils below the age of 7 are offered places following a taster day during which informal assessments are carried out. Prospective pupils aged 7 and over are required to sit the school's entrance test and to reach the required standard. Our admission procedure for the Junior School involves an assessment/taster day, a report from the pupil's current school or Nursery setting and any other relevant reports, including disability assessments if applicable

## **Senior School**

23. The usual points of entry into the Senior School are at 11+/Year 7, and 16+/Year 12. However, we do admit pupils into all year groups depending upon availability of places, throughout the year. All candidates for entry into the Senior School, (below 16+) sit papers in English, Maths and Non Verbal Reasoning, which are designed for their age group. If they are not already in Coram House then a report is required from the pupil's current school.

## **Sixth Form**

24. The standard required for studying A levels is a significant step up from that of GCSE. For this reason, the normal entry requirement for the Sixth Form is 3 'B' grades and 2 'C' grades or the international equivalent. 'B' grades would be expected in the subjects a pupil wishes to study to A2 level. Each pupil is considered on an individual basis taking account of their abilities and their career aspirations. Progression from the Lower to the Upper Sixth is dependent on approach to learning (ATL) and attainment grades in Year 12. Candidates for entry at 16+ sit papers in the subjects that they propose to study at A Level. Our offer of places into Year 12 is conditional upon a candidate achieving a minimum of 3 'B' grades and 2 'C' grades at GCSE or the international equivalent. 'B' grades would be expected in the subjects a pupil wishes to study at A level. A report is also required from the pupil's current school if they are not already at Ackworth School.

## Autism Resource

25. Ackworth School accepts pupils with autism or autism conditions/presentations into its Autism Resource. These pupils will have a statement of needs and will be accepted if it is felt, after assessment and discussion with relevant parties, that the school is in a position to fulfil the objectives in the statement and able to meet the pupil's needs. If the requirements of the pupil develop or change, or if key information about pupil needs is unknown at entry, and the school is unable to meet these needs, this will be discussed at Annual Review and alternative placements sought.
26. Although there are no set criteria for admission in terms of behaviour, language or social or cognitive ability, the Autism Resource will admit any pupil whose needs the Head of Autism Resource and the Head of Ackworth School feel we are able to meet. 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 may be referred by their own Local Authorities.

## International Pupils

27. We welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Ackworth as a boarder provided that he/she has a relative or legal guardian living in the UK. However, parents of overseas pupils should appreciate that Ackworth School runs a number of different study programmes for international pupils.
28. Pre-A Level Course: The curriculum is designed to build the four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) for success in the British education system. Pupils sit a range of exams from Cambridge ESOL qualifications (including KET and PET) to Cambridge IELTS (General Training). Some also sit IGCSE English examinations as a Second Language. Pupils on the Pre-A Level Course will also sit IGCSE Maths (taught by the Maths Department). They are also provided with an introduction to academic subjects which include Science, Business Studies, History, British Culture, Art, and Design Technology.

Advanced Level Course: Pupils who have managed to achieve an IELTS score of 4.0-4.5 can enter our Advanced Level Course. The focus is on the A Level curriculum and on studying English to prepare pupils for A Level studies.

## **International Pupils Entering the Sixth Form**

29. All International Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form in Year 12 to study AS/A2 must have an IELTS score of 5.0 or above. All International Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form must be able to speak and understand the English language. They will be required to sit a test in English and Maths. The test must be conducted under strict examination conditions either at their current school or at an agent's office. We appreciate that it is not always possible to visit the school for an interview. In these circumstances we may use SKYPE or other such means to interview the pupil.
30. All International Pupils who reside outside the EU will require a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies) from Ackworth to be able to apply for their visa to study on the UK for the given period of their course.

## **Admissions Procedure - Senior School, Coram House and Nursery**

31. The parents should complete an application form, including any additional information and pay the registration fee (non-refundable) by cheque or BACS. Ackworth School will seek a character reference from the prospective pupil's current school.
32. Ackworth School will send an offer document once an application is complete, or as soon as a place becomes available for those pupils on the waiting list. Any conditions of an offer of a place will be set out in the offer letter. An offer of a place will not be confirmed until satisfaction of any conditions of entry. An offer of a place at Ackworth School will be subject to Ackworth School's terms and conditions set out in the parent contract.
33. The pupil's parents must read the legally binding parent contract before signing and returning it with the acceptance fee to the Admissions Secretary, in order to confirm the place. The amount of the acceptance fee will be advised at the time of application. The acceptance fee is non returnable and will form part of the general funds of Ackworth School. In the case of a pupil on ~~in~~ the Pre-A Level Course and Advanced Level Course the acceptance fee is £1000 and they will receive £600 when the pupil leaves on condition that all monies owed to the School have been paid.
34. A confidential reference will be requested from the pupil's current school or nursery setting and possibly from previous schools.

35. Pupils may be interviewed by the Head or other senior staff. Parents are required to inform us of any special needs which may require consideration during the entrance procedure or in educational provision should their son/daughter be offered a place.
36. Places will be offered on the basis of the information produced during this entrance procedure, taking into account the pupil's past performance and current potential and Ackworth School's ability to realise that potential.
37. As a Quaker School with a strong commitment to the family, wherever possible and in keeping with the school's academic standards, preference may be given to siblings of pupils already in the school and those transferring from one part of the school to the next.
38. When entry into a given year is oversubscribed the School will take into account performance in entry tests, references and suitability to the School. If we have to decide between two or more prospective pupils who meet our admission requirements after all appropriate allowances and special consideration has been given, we will give preference to children of Members and/or Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends and to the date when registration took place.
39. When entry into the Nursery or Reception years is oversubscribed and all the entrance criteria have been met, preference will be given to pupils with older siblings already in the School and to the date when registration took place.

#### **Admissions Procedure - Autism Resource**

40. The Autism Resource accepts referrals and tender consultations from Local Authorities (LA). We are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process. We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and make a joint application.
41. Once a referral to the Autism Resource has been received from a parent and/or LA, the application will be read by the Head of the Autism Resource, (Lynne Ward) and discussed with the Deputy Head Pastoral. If we are not able to meet that pupil's needs (Appendix 1) or there are no places available, a letter will be sent to the parent and/or Local Authority to inform them that the referral is not going to be followed up. If the referral is suitable for assessment, the parent/carer will be invited to visit the school, if they have not already done so.

42. The next step will usually be that the child is invited to attend the Autism Resource for a brief visit with a parent/carer/member of staff from current school.
43. The Head of the Autism Resource may arrange to visit the child at their existing school (or elsewhere if not in school) to carry out an initial assessment.
44. If the visit is successful, a further programme of visit or visits, normally without external support, will be arranged. These will be evaluated and a decision on suitability of placement made by the Head of the Autism Resource, Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of the School with the relevant Local Authority.
45. The assessment will typically consist of:
- Discussions with parents and staff who have regular contact with and know the child well.
  - Observations in class and/or in the playground.
  - Discussions with and paperwork from involved professionals.
46. Once the initial assessment has been completed and all relevant information has been gathered, a brief initial assessment report will be compiled and a decision may be made, at this stage, as to whether the Autism Resource at Ackworth School will be an appropriate placement for the child that will meet his or her needs.
47. The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice:
- Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child’s needs?  
Current pupils – would the placement be compatible with the ongoing educational needs of the other children with whom the child will be educated?
48. Depending on the source of the referral, the LA and/or parent/carer will be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment. The process is deemed to be complete when all information has been gathered.
49. If the Autism Resource at Ackworth School is able to meet the child’s special educational needs, an offer of a place; and a start date (which may include a period of transition) will be suggested to the Parent and/or the LA. When the parent and/or LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up and funding is in place, Ackworth School will send a letter confirming this to the LA and to the parents.

50. The parent is responsible for making transport arrangements with the LA and will inform the school accordingly.
51. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer. Transitions are often difficult for children who have autism. It will be essential to consider mechanisms/strategies (e.g. phasing) that may make the process easier for the child.
52. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the School.

### **Sibling Policy**

53. Most siblings join us at Ackworth School. 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.
54. Pupils wishing to enter Ackworth School's Pre-A Level or Advanced Level Course will be required to sit a test in English and Maths. The test must be conducted under strict examination conditions either at their current school or at an agent's office. We appreciate that it is not always possible to visit the school for an interview. In these circumstances we may use SKYPE or other such means to interview the pupil.

### **Fluency in English**

55. In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of Ackworth, pupils entering into GCSE and A level programmes of study must be proficient English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

### **Religious Beliefs**

56. Ackworth School is a Quaker School, founded by the Society of Friends. Although Ackworth has very strong Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we encourage applications from those of different faiths and those of no faith.

## **Taster Days**

57. Prospective pupils can take advantage of a Taster Day in the Junior School, Coram House, or Senior School, or a 'Play Session' in the Nursery and Reception. These are specially designed to help pupils make an informed decision about the school. A Taster Day allows individuals to 'experience' Ackworth, participate in lessons and get a real feel for the school community. If the pupil is planning to become a boarder, an overnight stay in the boarding house may be possible.

## **Prospective Pupil's Age**

58. Very occasionally, we may offer a place to a pupil that means they will be one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider that, as a matter of professional judgement, this would be in the best interest of the pupil and the School.

## **Special Circumstances**

59. We recognise that a prospective pupil's performance may be affected by particular circumstances, for example

- If he/she is unwell when taking tests or has had a lengthy absence from his/her school;
- If there are particular family circumstances such as a recent bereavement;
- If there is a relevant educational history, for example education outside the British system;
- If the prospective pupil has a disability or specific learning difficulties;
- If English is not the prospective pupil's first language.

60. In any of these cases, we may request further information such as a medical certificate or educational psychologist's report and any associated correspondence or details from the pupil's current school (including samples of work) or any family history of dyslexia, as we consider necessary to make a fair assessment. In the case of EAL pupils, a test will be sent to the applicant in advance and this will be marked in School by the EAL staff, who will be able to assess the correct level of ESOL support required.

## **Guardian Requirement for International Pupils**

61. During their time at Ackworth School, all international pupils who reside outside the EU must have a UK Guardian. Guardians may be a relative or a family friend who is over 21 years of age. They may not be living in pupil or university student accommodation, and must have suitable accommodation available to them. The Guardian must be appointed by parents before the pupil arrives in the UK. If there is no appropriate friend or family member who is able to accept the role; the parents must appoint a Guardian from a professional guardianship agency - Ackworth School recommends one registered with AEGIS. Ackworth School does not appoint Guardians on behalf of pupils. The Guardian must be able to care for the pupil at short notice, at times of illness, recuperation, in the event of an exclusion, or otherwise as necessary, in addition to liaising with Ackworth School as necessary and providing the first point of contact. It is a condition of entry to Ackworth School that the Guardianship agreement is completed to Ackworth School's satisfaction in respect of overseas pupils.

## **International Pupils Who Reside Outside the EU / EEA**

62. All prospective international pupils who reside outside the EU will also require a CAS (Certificate of Acceptance of Study) from Ackworth School to be able to apply for a visa to study in the UK for the given period of their course. All prospective pupils must read carefully the requirements of a Tier 4 Pupil Visa, to make sure they meet the criteria before making an application to Ackworth School. These requirements are found on the UK government website ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)). Ackworth School has the support of The Taylor Partnership Ltd. If parents require advice they can contact Mark Taylor for assistance at an additional cost set by The Taylor Partnership.

63. A prospective pupil, who has accepted a place at Ackworth School but fails to attend the course because a visa has been refused, must pay a full term's fees in lieu of notice. ACAS will not be issued until Ackworth School has received the signed acceptance form, deposit and registration fee in full and a copy of the passport and details of an appointed UK guardian.

## **Pupils who Require Learning Support**

64. Ackworth School has a very successful track record for supporting pupils with mild to moderate learning support needs including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. For prospective pupils in need of learning support, parents must send their child's most recent school reports, including any educational psychologist's report, speech and language reports or health report to enable Ackworth School to ascertain whether it can meet the pupil's needs in the classroom and with additional lessons. Ackworth School will decide whether it can meet the needs of the child based on these reports before taking the enquiry any further. It is important that parents disclose relevant information as close to the beginning of the admissions process as possible. Ackworth School will also bear in mind the resources available in each year group before making a decision.

## **Disclosures**

65. Parents must as soon as possible disclose any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties.

## **School's Contractual Terms and Conditions**

66. Copies are on the School's web site and will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

## **Complaints**

67. We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process; but a copy of the School's complaint procedure can be found on the School website or a copy can be sent to you upon request.