



# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## Introduction

The Laurels School is an independent day school offering an all-round education within a Catholic framework to girls aged 11-18. Catholic teachings and values influence all aspects of our school life and is underpinned by the PACT *Charter of Educational Principles*, which emphasises the important role that parents have to play as the first educators of their children.

## Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- a) to ensure compliance with PACT's charitable purpose of promoting schools and supporting families with a deep desire for their children to grow into adults of integrity, committed to living their lives by Christian principles; and
- b) to identify and admit children who are most likely to benefit from the education and formation that The Laurels School offers.

## Admissions Criteria

Subject to availability of places, girls of a wide range of academic ability are accepted as long as they are able to take full advantage of the education offered. We are committed to equal treatment of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or social background.

Although The Laurels School is imbued with a strong Catholic ethos, girls who are not Catholics are welcomed by the school and, in accordance with the *Charter of Educational Principles*, all sincerely-held belief is respected.

Places will be offered on the basis of confidential references obtained from prospective pupils' previous schools, performance in the entrance examination and interviews of the prospective pupil and her parents. The Laurels School reserves the right to refuse entry to any pupil if, in the opinion of the Head, the school does not meet the educational needs of the pupil concerned. The criteria below will be applied in cases of oversubscription:

- a) Commitment to Catholic ethos and the *Charter of Educational Principles*
- b) Siblings in a PACT school
- c) Commitment to keeping girls until Sixth form

## **Sixth Form**

Entry to the Sixth Form is subject to the same principles as to the rest of the School but the procedure differs. In the case of external candidates, references are sought from their current school and the candidate and her parents are interviewed. Both internal and external candidates need to meet the academic requirements specified on the school website. These requirements, which are phrased in terms of GCSE or equivalent qualifications, may change from time to time.

## **Admissions Procedure**

Upon contacting the school, parents are invited to visit and to meet the Head. This is an opportunity for the parents to see the school in action and for the Head and parents to discuss the ethos of the school. Parents are encouraged to visit the school website in order to gain further details, as a great deal of information is published there.

Parents who wish to apply then complete the application form, which is available on our website, as well as submitting a non-refundable application fee.

Once an application has been received, the assessment procedures outlined below will be followed in order to determine whether or not pupils are eligible for a place at our school:

- If this hasn't already taken place, an interview with the Head will be arranged in order to discuss the family's commitment to our school and ethos.
- References from the child's current school may also be sought.
- A non-refundable registration fee is payable at the time of application.
- Offers will be made to those candidates who, in the opinion of the Headmistress, are most likely to benefit from the education that The Laurels provides, subject to the number of places available. Any eligible candidates not given an offer at this time will be placed on a waiting list. Parents of children who are not eligible will be informed as soon as possible.
- To accept the offer of a place, parents should return the offer form together with the required deposit and a signed contract by the date specified in the offer letter. The terms and conditions of the offer are detailed in the contract.

### **Assessment of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils for Entrance Examinations**

Early and open communication with the School about all matters which may be relevant to a prospective pupil's education is very important. If parents are unsure about what might be relevant information they should contact the Head of Admissions directly prior to making an application for a place. There is an expectation that any SEND requirements or other special/particular needs should be disclosed when the application for a place is made. This will allow for appropriate consideration for any reasonable provision which the child may require before an examination or interview.

Girls with SEND may be given extra support during the Entrance Examination. Extra time or laptops may be allowed during the tests provided the application is supported by an Educational Psychologist's Report or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) dated within 3 years of the date of the exam. The SENCO will make all final decisions on whether a pupil is to receive extra support. If information regarding SEND requirements or other special/particular needs is not disclosed before or during the admissions process, this may lead to a review of any place offered and may result in the withdrawal of an offer if the School is not able to provide adequately for the prospective pupil's social, physical or emotional needs, once any reasonable adjustments have been made.

### **Allocation of Places**

Once the assessment process has been completed, pupils who are eligible will be offered a place (subject to availability). If no places are currently available, these girls will be placed on a waiting list.

Parents of girls who are not eligible will be informed shortly after the assessment. The selection process is designed to identify pupils who will benefit from our educational approach and highlight those families who will make a positive contribution towards the life of our school.

Where forms are oversubscribed, offers of places will not be issued on a first come first served basis. Applications for last available places will be considered over a reasonable period of time and the oversubscription criteria will be applied accordingly.

Whilst consideration is given to pupils who have attended the PACT primary school (Oakwood), there is no automatic right of transfer from one PACT school to another.

Parents accept the offer of a place by returning the signed Acceptance Form as provided in the Parent Contract and a deposit. This constitutes a formal acceptance of their child's place, and the deposit is non refundable if the place is not taken up. Thereafter a full term's notice, in writing, must be given should parents wish to withdraw their child from the school. The deposit will be returned in the child's final term of attendance at the school, provided all outstanding fees and charges have been paid. Further terms and conditions can be found in the Parent Contract.

## **Bursaries**

Means-tested bursaries and non-means-tested academic and specialist scholarships are also offered in Year 7 and in other year groups where appropriate. The breadth and depth of scholarships awarded each year varies depending on the quality of the applicants. The worth of a bursary is awarded on a sliding scale, depending on parental means.

Bursaries are awarded if a girl is successful in the entrance exam and interview, her family's bursary application is successful and if there are sufficient funds available in the bursary fund.

Any queries about bursary applications should be emailed to the Finance Department.

## **Scholarships**

The Laurels offers an Overall Academic Scholarship and also scholarships in Art, English, Maths, Drama, Music and Sport. These are available for each entry point.

Scholarships are typically in the range of 10% of the school's annual fees and are renewed until the holder leaves the school, subject to satisfactory progress and conduct. Applicants will be considered

on the basis of their performance in the entrance examination and interview, as well as their current school's reference. All girls are automatically considered for the Maths, English, Drama and Overall Academic Scholarships. Families who are interested in pursuing an Art, Music or Sports Scholarship should make their formal interests known to the Head of Admissions when registering.

In addition, The Edith Stein Scholarship is occasionally awarded to a candidate who demonstrates a commitment to excellence and potential to be a role model for others.

## **Fees**

Fees are charged on a termly basis, i.e. 3 times a year. Notice of an increase in the fees is sent to current parents before the end of the penultimate term before the increase is set to take place.

Fees are payable in full on or before the first day of the term by Direct Debit unless alternative arrangements are agreed in advance.

## **Equal Opportunities**

In line with the Equality Act (2010), we do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. Our school has due regard for, and complies with, the protected characteristics as listed in the above Act.

Our school recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or other person with whom the pupil is associated, by treating them less favourably because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

Our school offers a place, subject to availability, to any child whose parents support our PACT *Charter of Educational Principles* and who will benefit from the education we provide, given the educational facilities, support and financial resources available at the time.

Our school makes provision for children with moderate special educational needs. Parents are invited to discuss any arrangements, including financial, that may need to be made if they wish our school to accommodate a child with more severe learning difficulties.

The Laurels welcomes pupils with physical disabilities, provided that the school site is suitable. However, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to

discuss their child's requirements with the Head at interview, or before they sit the assessment, to determine whether we can make adequate provision for them. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisors the adjustments that can reasonably be made for any child who becomes a pupil at our school.

<b>This policy will be reviewed every 2 years</b>	
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