

AMDG



Donhead Preparatory School

Admissions Policy

This policy applies to the Early Years, Pre-Prep and Prep departments.

Donhead Preparatory School is a Roman Catholic independent school for boys and girls, aged 3-11 years, in the trusteeship of the Society of Jesus.¹

Jesuit schools strive to give a first-class education, but they are also places committed to outstanding character formation. We believe in 'cura personalis' – the development of the whole person. Each child will experience this differently, based around their interests, talents, choices and personality, but all will benefit from this approach. While academic performance is important, learning and personal growth extend far beyond the classroom at Donhead.

Families are warmly invited to visit Donhead on an Open Morning or for a personal tour of the school to see our values in action.

Admissions Criteria

Priority in the allocation of places in all year groups is given in the following order:

Category 1: pupils with a sibling currently attending Donhead or who previously attended Donhead;

Category 2: baptised Catholic pupils from practising Catholic families, as defined in note 2;

Category 3: baptised Catholic pupils; and

Category 4: other applicants whose families are supportive of the Catholic ethos of the School.

Where the number of applicants within a category exceeds the number of places available, priority will normally be determined by the date on which the completed registration and Registration Fee were received, with earlier registrations taking precedence.

Pre-school Admissions

Children joining the pre-school will normally transfer to Reception in September following their fourth birthday. Subject to the continuing terms of the parent contract and the conditions applying to offers set out later in this policy, a reception place is reserved for each child admitted to the pre-school.

All children registered for pre-school will be invited to attend a taster session or have a nursery or home visit as part of the admissions process and before starting at Donhead.

Our pre-school provision is based on a progressive curriculum where learning is built each day. Our attendance offering is therefore as follows:

Monday - Friday (5 days per week, whole day attendance)

Monday - Friday (5 mornings per week, half day attendance)

Monday - Friday (5 mornings per week, half day attendance + selected afternoons)

During the term before entry to Reception, children are expected to attend from Monday to Friday for five mornings and at least two afternoons each week, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with the School to meet an individual child's needs.

The pre-school does not have routine nappy-changing facilities. We recognise that young children may have occasional accidents and ordinarily expect children joining us to be out of nappies, dry during the day and developing independence in using the toilet. Where a child has a medical condition, disability, developmental delay or other identified need affecting toileting, the School will discuss the child's needs with their parents and consider what reasonable adjustments and individual support can be provided.

Reception Admissions

All children with an accepted place for Reception will be invited to attend a taster session or have a nursery or home visit before starting at Donhead. For children already attending Donhead pre-school, a Reception place is reserved subject to the continuing terms of the parent contract and the conditions applying to offers set out in this policy.

Children are admitted into the Reception Class in the September after their 4th birthday as full-time pupils.

Parents of summer-born children, born between 1 April and 31 August, may request deferred entry to Reception within the academic year in which their child is due to start school, or may request admission to Reception in the following September outside the child's normal age group. The School will consider each request individually and, in the child's, best interests, taking account of the parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, relevant medical history and whether the child has previously been educated outside the normal age group.

7+ Admissions

The assessment for entry into the school at 7+ (Year 3) will take place in November. To sit our 7+ assessment children need to be registered with Donhead using the link below.

Following registration, applicants will be invited to an assessment appropriate to entry into Year 3. The School will also consider information provided by the child's current school and any relevant information supplied by parents about the child's individual needs. Offers will be made in accordance with the admissions criteria in this policy and the availability of places.

Occasional Places

Occasional vacancies may be available in other year groups and parents are advised to contact the school directly. Children registered for an occasional vacancy are required to complete an application process that will include:

Completion of a taster day.

The child will complete standardised assessments in Mathematics and English, appropriate to the year group for which entry is sought. The results will be considered alongside the child's age, current educational experience, individual needs and any reasonable adjustments required.

The School will receive and review a report from the child's current school and, where appropriate, a confidential reference or direct communication with that school. This information will be considered fairly and in the context of the child's age, individual needs and any reasonable adjustments required.

Joining the School

We aim for a smooth and gentle introduction to school so that all children are happy, secure and ready to learn. Parents are invited to a New Parents' Welcome Evening in Trinity Term and all parents are invited to a Curriculum Information Session at the start of the Michaelmas Term.

Equal Treatment

The School is committed to equal treatment and to complying with the Equality Act 2010. Applications are considered without unlawful discrimination, including discrimination because of disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or age, where the relevant protections apply. The School welcomes pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and believes that this enriches the community and prepares pupils for today's world.

Religious Beliefs

We welcome pupils from other faiths who support our Catholic ethos. Parents/guardians must agree to pupils attending Mass, Collective Worship and participating actively in RE lessons.

Individual Learning Needs

We welcome applications from pupils with individual learning needs and physical disabilities. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's requirements with the School before or during a visit so that the School can understand the child's needs, identify appropriate provision, and consider any reasonable adjustments. Relevant Educational Psychologist, medical or other professional reports, and reports from previous schools, should be provided with the application where available. The School will consider each application individually and will discuss with parents and relevant professionals the support and reasonable adjustments that may be required.

Where a child is undergoing an Education, Health and Care needs assessment or has an Education, Health and Care Plan in place, the School will work with the responsible local authority, the child's current educational setting, relevant professionals and the child's parents. This process will consider the child's individual needs, the provision specified or proposed, the reasonable adjustments that may be required and whether the School can meet those needs within the applicable statutory framework.

Where appropriate, a separate meeting with the School's SENDCo will be arranged to enable parents to discuss their child's individual needs and support requirements.

Registration

Parents are invited to register their interest by completing a registration form, available for completion via the school website <https://www.donhead.org.uk/admissions/online-registration-form> and paying the non-refundable Registration Fee of £130.

Important Dates

When a place is offered, the offer letter will state the deadline for returning the Acceptance Agreement and paying the £1,100 deposit. Of this amount, £600 is described as the non-refundable Enrolment Fee and the remaining £500 is credited against the parents' final invoice when the pupil leaves Donhead. If the School subsequently withdraws the offer before entry following its consideration of any of the conditions applying to the offer, the full £1,100 deposit, including the Enrolment Fee, will be refunded.

Offers are subject to the following conditions: parents having visited the School or met the Admissions Team or Headteacher in person or virtually; receipt and review of a Nursery or School report, where applicable; and completion of a taster session, home visit or nursery visit, as appropriate. Information gathered through these steps will be considered fairly, consistently and in the context of the child's age, individual needs, and any reasonable adjustments required.

For applicants residing overseas during the application and admissions process, the School will agree a tailored process. The first term's fees become payable by 5.00 pm on the last working day of the term preceding entry. If parents withdraw after that deadline, the fees paid will be forfeited, subject to the terms of the parent contract.

Other Relevant Policies

- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Equal opportunities Policy
- Complaints Policy

Admissions decisions are made by the Headteacher in accordance with this policy. Parents who believe that the admissions process has not been applied fairly may raise their concern under the School's Complaints Policy. The complaints process does not provide a rehearing of the academic or professional judgement underlying an admissions decision.

These policies along with others can be viewed online at www.donhead.org.uk

The Governing Body may amend this Admissions Policy and the associated criteria. Any material amendment will be approved through the School's governance arrangements, published promptly and applied fairly to affected applicants. Where an amendment could affect an existing offer or accepted place, the School will also have regard to the applicable contractual terms.

Date approved: September 2026. Next review date: September 2027, or earlier if there is a material change in legislation, regulatory guidance or the School's admissions arrangements.

1. *The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is a Religious Order of the Catholic Church founded in 1540. It has international work in schools. The ethos and principles of Jesuit schools are set out in the document The Characteristics of Jesuit Education (1987).*

2. *A family is normally regarded as a practising Catholic family where at least one parent has been baptised and observes those precepts of the Church which, in the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 'are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life'. (CCC 2041)*

3. *Parents or adults with parental responsibility for the child.*

