

ADMISSIONS POLICY

1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 In terms of section 5 (5) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Governing Body of a public school must determine the admissions policy of that school.
- 1.2 The Governing Body of **OATLANDS PREPARATORY SCHOOL** has accordingly constituted the following as the admissions policy of the school, in the belief that its provisions are consistent with:
 - 1.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/ 1996).
 - 1.2.2 The National Education Policy Act (Act 27/1996) and any applicable policies determined in terms of this Act, including the Regulations for Admissions to Schools.
 - 1.2.3 The South African Schools' Act (Act 84/1996) and subsequent amendments.
 - 1.2.4 The Eastern Cape Schools Education Act (Act 1/1999).
 - 1.2.5 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3/2000).
 - 1.2.6 The Health and Safety Act.
 - 1.2.7 Judgments of the Constitutional Court on the rights, powers and obligations of school governing bodies.
- 1.3 Whereas **OATLANDS PREPARATORY SCHOOL** is a public school, the governing body:
 - 1.3.1 acknowledges that it has been entrusted with a public resource which must be managed not only in the interests of those who are learners and parents at the time, but also in the interests of the broader community in which the school is located, and in the light of the values of our Constitution;
 - 1.3.2 defers to the relevant legal provisions and enactments to the extent that they are valid and binding upon them and take precedence over the right of the governing body to determine the admissions policy of the School;
 - 1.3.3 commits to working in partnership with the Head of the Eastern Cape Education Department to find workable solutions to matters of disagreement, and to engage meaningfully and in good faith on any disputes, including disputes over this policy and any decision taken on the basis thereof; and
 - 1.3.4 agrees thereto that any such engagement will be directed towards furthering the interests of learners, taking account of the best interests of the child insofar as this does not impinge upon the rights or best interests of other children.
- 1.4 At the same time it requires of the Principal, the Head of the Eastern Cape Education Department and their delegates that they will at all times during any admissions process take the provisions of this policy into account, demonstrably, fairly and in accordance with the law.

2 POLICY

- 2.1 It is the aim of the school to:
 - 2.1.1 Provide an environment where the race, culture, religion and economic standing of the individual are in no instance an impediment to his/her access to, or progress in, any aspect of school life.
 - 2.1.2 Make provision during the enrolment process for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - 2.1.3 Promote transformation in line with the country's constitution and eradicate such policies or practices which are unfairly discriminatory.
- 2.2 It is the policy of the school that:
 - 2.2.1 No pupil will be refused admission on grounds of race, gender, culture, language, religious belief or financial circumstance. This aspect of the admissions policy will be applied with due cognizance of the following:
 - 2.2.1.1 Whereas it is determined that the medium of instruction is English, learners applying to be admitted to the school in preference to a school where the LOLT matches the home language of the learner, need to be sufficiently proficient in English so as not to prejudice their ability to progress academically.
 - 2.2.1.2 Preference will be given to applicants who for at least one year have attended a Departmentally registered pre-school where the LOLT is English.
 - 2.2.1.3 Parents must agree to pay the compulsory school fees, which have been agreed upon by the present parent body. However, parents may apply for partial or full exemption of school fees, which will be considered according to the regulations laid down by the Department of Education.
 - 2.2.2 Any pupil admitted to the school is admitted to the total school programme, and will not be suspended from classes, denied access to cultural, sporting or social activities of the formal school programme on the grounds of an **inability** by his/her parents to meet the required school fees.
 - 2.2.3 The admission of pupils will be so managed that the school's intake aims to include representation of the major demographic segments (i.e. cultural, religious, ethnic and economic) broadly reflective of the composition of the community it serves, without prescribing or accepting any predetermined quotas, numbers or proportions in respect of such representivity.
 - 2.2.4 The School recognises:
 - 2.2.4.1 that the diversity of cultural and religious expression and belief in our country be acknowledged and celebrated;
 - 2.2.4.2 that sound ethical and spiritual values are to be encouraged within a framework which is equitable and allows for the recognition of the religious views of the diverse people in our country.

- 2.2.5 There will be a religious component to each general assembly, which by reason of the fact that the great majority of families whose children attend the school profess to be Christians, will be of a Christian character. Attendance at the religious component of the general assembly is free and voluntary, and permission for a child not to attend will be granted upon written application by a parent.

3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADMISSIONS POLICY

In order to achieve the foregoing, but also to ensure a just and equitable selection process *should the school be oversubscribed*, the measures listed below will be implemented during the management of the enrolment process.

- 3.1 Applications received by the closing date will be given preference over late applications.
- 3.2 It is specifically noted that the parent/legal guardian of a minor learner has the exclusive right to take an initial decision concerning which school they wish to apply to for their child/ward to be enrolled. Consequently, no application will be accepted or regarded as being valid unless it is made by the parent, legal guardian, person entrusted with the care of the minor learner by order of a competent court, or by a person authorised thereto, in writing, by one of the foregoing.
- 3.3 Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places in the **school or grade** for which application is made, applicants will be placed on the following basis, bearing in mind the school's policy on non discrimination:
- 3.3.1 Whether placement in the School is considered by the school to be in the best interests of the learner concerned.
- NB The ability of the school to provide adequately for the educational needs of the applicant (including but not limited to the language needs and other special needs) will be regarded as part of the best interests of the child, and will be considered before offering a place to a learner.
- 3.3.2 In accordance with the criteria listed in 4 below.
- 3.4 While no admissions test will be administered to applicants, all applicants and their parents will be expected to attend a meeting/interview with the Principal and/or his/her representative.
- 3.5 Applications received by the cut-off date will be processed before those received after the cut-off date.
- 3.6 Applications for siblings of children already enrolled at the school should be submitted according to the laid down criteria. It must not be assumed that siblings will be granted automatic entrance to the school.
- 3.7 Only after all applications received by closing date have been dealt with, will the school consider late applications, and then only if there are still places available in the school.
- 3.8 A written response to every application received will be forwarded to parents.
- 3.9 Should application for admission be made after the closing date due to one or both of the child's parents being transferred by their employer, proof of transfer must accompany the application.

4 ADMISSION DECISIONS

4.1 General expectations

In considering applications, a potential learner will, in the first instance, be expected to:

- 4.1.1 Convince the school in personal discussion and/or a written deposition that she/he will be able to cope academically with the specific pressures and unique demands of the school.
- 4.1.2 Be supportive of the ethos of the School to the extent that it is evident that there is a clear desire to be educated in a school environment such as the one provided by the school.
- 4.1.3 Be willing to contribute in the four critical areas of school life: i.e. **academically** as well as sport, culture and service, and to participate in activities offered by the school.
- 4.1.4 Be amenable to school discipline as applied in this school, and display levels of behaviour and self-discipline, such that she/he is likely to help create, maintain and enhance rather than to disrupt an orderly and disciplined school environment, the teaching process of the school, or the learning of the other learners.

4.2 Factors and circumstances to be borne in mind during the admissions decision processes

The precise application of the admissions criteria and the weighting afforded to each of the criteria shall remain within the discretion of the School Governing Body. One of the criteria is balancing of genders in the intake: i.e. one gender will not outnumber the other by more than 3%.

4.3 General criteria binding on all applicants

- 4.3.1 The successful completion of or promotion out of the grade immediately below the grade in which the admission is sought.
- 4.3.2 The age of the applicant (i.e. learner to be admitted.) Please note that an applicant whose age varies by one year or more relative to the statistical age norm of the grade cohort will not **normally** be accepted into the school. (Statistical age norm = grade to which admission is sought + 6: e.g. statistical age norm for grade 1 = 1 + 6 = 7: an applicant aged 8 may therefore not be admitted to Grade 1).

4.3.3 The age requirements for admission are as follows:

G R	5 or 6 years
Grade 1	6 or 7 years
Grade 2	7 or 8 years
Grade 3	8 or 9 years
Grade 4	9 or 10 years
Grade 5	10 or 11 years
Grade 6	11 or 12 years
Grade 7	12 or 13 years

5 FINAL TOTAL NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS

It is accepted that *the school governing body's powers in respect of admissions are not unfettered, that this policy is not immune to intervention, and that the policy does not inflexibly bind other decision-makers in **all circumstances**. Thus, the final number of learners accepted into the school at any one time may vary from the calculated capacity on the basis of specific enrolments of individual learners in a particular year, or upon the intervention of the Head of the Eastern Cape Education Department, with the understanding that any *decision to overturn an admission decision of the principal, or depart from this admissions policy, must be exercised reasonably and in a procedurally fair manner. The grade and school enrolment shall in any event not exceed the calculated capacity by more than 2% in any one grade or two learners in any one class, without the ratification by the School Governing Body of a motivated explanation from the School Management Team or Head of the Eastern Cape Education Department for such excess.**

DEFINING DESIGNATED SCHOOLS AND CAPACITY

1 CAPACITY

The capacity of the school is 280 learners, distributed not more than 30 per class.

The capacity of the school is based on:

- 1.1 The number and size of classrooms in the school.
- 1.2 The need to provide space for class teaching which is not less favourable than that laid down in the norms and standards legally enacted in respect of public schools.
- 1.3 The creation and maintenance of a stimulating and sustainable educational environment. This is in part dependent on having designated, exclusive and appropriately-developed space for the following broad educational facilities, at least to the levels envisaged in the state's norms and standards for school infrastructure:
 - 1.3.1 A Library.
 - 1.3.2 A computer laboratory.
 - 1.3.3 A Music room.
 - 1.3.4 A School Hall.
 - 1.3.5 The need to support the educational process administratively by providing designated, appropriately furnished, relevantly equipped and exclusive space for:
 - 1.3.5.1 A Staff common room and staff workroom.
 - 1.3.5.2 Offices and working spaces for management, administrative and support staff.