



Admissions Policy 2026–2027

This is a whole School policy applying to all members including EYFS

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Policy Statement

Copthorne Prep School is a co-educational school for pupils aged 2 to 11. Located on the border of Surrey and West Sussex, the school comprises Nursery (2-4 years) and Prep (ages 4-11). Copthorne is proud to be part of the Caterham Family of Schools.

Copthorne Prep School is committed to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and enriching environment that welcomes pupils from diverse faiths, cultures, races, and family backgrounds. Our admissions process aims to enrol pupils who will benefit from our educational provision, contribute to school life, and grow as intellectually curious and emotionally intelligent individuals. We strive to admit pupils who will thrive in our nurturing environment, in line with the School's values of personal growth, achievement, and enjoyment.

Copthorne Prep School ensures all prospective pupils are treated equitably, regardless of their or their parents' sex or gender, religion or belief, race or ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, family status, or background. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion enriches our community and prepares young people for today's dynamic world. We actively encourage applications from children of all backgrounds, believing that a diverse pupil body enhances the educational experience and equips pupils for an interconnected world.

This policy outlines the admissions procedures for Copthorne Prep School, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the School's charitable objectives. It applies equally to prospective pupils and current pupils seeking progression through the School.

We are committed to transparent communication with parents and those holding parental responsibility throughout the admissions process. We ensure that parents are kept informed of key stages, including receipt of application and decision outcomes. The School may require evidence of parental responsibility and details of any court orders or other legal arrangements that may affect educational decision-making. It is the responsibility of parents to provide accurate and complete information during the admissions process.

The School will not unlawfully discriminate against any applicant on the grounds of disability and will make reasonable adjustments to the admissions process where appropriate. The School will work in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, external professionals to determine whether reasonable adjustments can be made and whether the School can adequately meet a child's needs within the resources available.

The School reserves the right to refuse admission where it reasonably considers that it is unable to meet a prospective pupil's needs adequately, or where admission would not be in the best interests of the pupil or the School community.

Entry Procedure

Admission and entry to the School are subject to the availability of places and the prospective pupil satisfying the necessary admissions requirements. For pupils with disabilities, reference should be made to the School's SEN Policy and Accessibility Plan. The School operates an Equal Opportunities Policy.

Details on application deadlines, assessments, and preparation are available through contacting the Admissions team via admissions@copthorneprep.co.uk. Parents of applicants will be contacted regarding the relevant entrance processes and assessments.

Prospective pupils are considered candidates for admission once the online application form has been submitted along with the non-refundable application fee. Parents or guardians may register a child at any time from birth. The application form requires the signing of a declaration by all parents of the prospective pupil outlining any known special educational needs.

All prospective parents are encouraged to contact the School to arrange to meet the Head and tour the School. Additionally, Visitor Mornings are held each term. Event dates are listed on our website: [Visitor Events - Copthorne Prep](#) .

Admissions Criteria

- Ability and potential shown in taster sessions and/or assessments, such that the School is confident that the pupil will thrive in the pace of our learning environment.
- Potential to contribute positively to the wider life of the School, shown through references from the pupil's current school or setting and meetings with the child.
- Satisfactory references or reports shown from the pupil's current school or setting.
- Any known SEND declared on the application form, with the School confident it can meet the pupil's requirements.
- For non-native English speakers, proficiency in English shown through written assessments and interviews, either in person or electronically, appropriate to the pupil's entry point.
- Compliance with any applicable immigration, visa or residency requirements, where relevant.

The School also takes the following factors into account when considering priority in the offer of places: siblings currently attending the School; exceptional talent; parents employed by the School; the School's ability to provide necessary support for the welfare of the child; extenuating circumstances affecting the child or family.

It is assumed that pupils will automatically progress through the School, provided they meet the required standards of behaviour and academic progress, and the School is able to continue meeting their needs. Progression criteria are detailed in this Admissions Policy.

The School maintains reserve lists for all entry points where demand exceeds available places. Places that become available will be offered in accordance with the School's admissions criteria and the needs of the year group at that time. Families on reserve lists will be kept informed of their status and reserve lists will normally be maintained until the end of the relevant admissions cycle.

Entry to Nursery

Pupils may be admitted to our Nursery following their second birthday. All parents applying for a Nursery place for their child are encouraged to join our Little Caterpillars Toddler Group for at least one session. Parents are invited to book in an initial settling in session with their child. This involves time with one of our Nursery Practitioners to learn more about the child and to help them settle swiftly and happily into nursery life. At this initial session, parents have the opportunity to fully explore the nursery with their child and book a further unaccompanied settling in session, where parents drop and leave their child for a morning of activity with the other nursery children, including lunch.

Places will be offered following the two initial sessions, on the basis of observation and general assessment of nursery readiness, as well as the submission of a child's latest Early Years development report from their current nursery setting, where applicable. It is important to note that at this very young age, we are looking for potential, rather than what has already been learnt, taking into account national age-related expectations.

If a child has any additional needs or English is not their first language, parents should inform us as soon as possible so that any specific arrangements or support can be put in place in advance.

Entry to Reception

Pupils are admitted to our Reception class in the September following a child's fourth birthday. Up to 36 children are admitted into Reception. All of our children are full-time from the start of the academic year. Parents will have the option to book breakfast club and after-school care. Details of wraparound care can be found on the School's website.

Children applying for Reception are encouraged to attend visitor events, such as our Little Caterpillar Adventures toddler group, or our regular Saturday morning taster events, details of which can be found on the School website. Themed Saturday morning taster events allow children (aged 3 to 5) to get involved with fun teacher led activities while parents have the opportunity to speak to our team.

Children are invited to attend a morning taster session with our pre-school class where they may join their peers to take part in play-based activities which could include music, PE, swimming or languages. Places will be offered on the basis of observation and general assessment of school readiness during these visits as well as satisfactory references for a child's current nursery setting. It is important to note that at this young age, we are looking for potential, rather than what has already been learnt, taking into account national age-related expectations.

If a child has any additional needs or English is not their first language, parents should inform us as soon as possible so that any specific arrangements or support can be put in place in advance.

Entry into Years 1-6

Prospective pupils are assessed for entry in accordance with the admission requirements of the School, to ensure that they are working within the same academic range as the current pupils in the Year Group for which the application is being made. A reference and a copy of their most recent report is requested from their current school.

The School will invite children in for an assessment morning. Each child will spend some time with one of the classes in their current year group and also complete assessments in core subjects.

In evaluating the completed assessments, the Head of School will be seeking evidence of a standard of academic ability whereby the prospective pupil will be able to develop and prosper in the academic and social environment of the year group at the School.

Offers, Acceptance of a Place and Deposit

Successful applicants are formally offered a place by the Head of School for the Year of Entry, which may be subject to such conditions as specified in the letter.

Parents are directed to the Open Apply admissions portal to accept their child's place. We ask that parents read the School's latest Terms & Conditions (the Parent Contract) and subsequently complete and sign the on-line Acceptance Form (two signatures are required unless some other arrangement has been made with the School). A deposit payment is made on-line to complete the process. The Terms and Conditions are to be retained by the prospective parents for their information.

The Admissions team will email prospective parents acknowledging receipt of the Acceptance Form and deposit payment and confirming the place.

Deposit payments are £500 for standard admissions.

An offer is subject to the Cross Association Code of Practice for Schools agreement criteria whereby parents of new pupils are required to have discharged all obligations at their existing School.

Transition through the School

It is assumed that pupils will automatically progress through the School, provided they meet the required standards of behaviour and academic progress, and the School is able to continue meeting their needs.

The progress of each child is monitored closely each year through incidental and focused observations, systematic tracking and assessments linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum or National Curriculum. If the School has any concerns that a pupil is finding it difficult to cope with the curriculum, discussions with the pupil's parents are entered into in order to advise alternative future schooling arrangements in the Spring Term before transition occurs.

Transition events for new families

In the Summer Term prior to the pupil taking up their place at the start of the next Academic Year there are a range of events for new families. Joining Information will be sent to all new parents via an online link in June (before the September they are due to join).

New parents will be invited to attend an Information Evening where they will have the opportunity to meet members of staff and learn more about the School, the curriculum and information about the start of term. Parent Handbooks, including information about school uniform, will also be distributed.

New pupils will attend the School for a morning (in late June/early July) in order to meet their new teacher and also their new class members, thus starting the induction process.

Fee Discount for Siblings (Reception to Year 6)

There is an automatic termly fee discount available for a second child of 5% and a third child of 15%. Details of sibling discounts are available from the School and may be amended from time to time at the School's discretion.

Staff Training and Record Keeping

The School ensures that all staff and volunteers receive regular guidance and training, both during induction and at appropriate intervals thereafter, to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities. The level and frequency of training depend on the individual's role. Records of all staff training are maintained.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

All records created under this policy are managed in accordance with the School's record retention and destruction policies. A confidential admissions record is kept for each prospective pupil. The School's use of personal data complies with applicable UK data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Further details regarding the processing of personal data can be found in the School's Privacy Notices, available on the School website.

Complaints

The School's Complaints Procedure is available on the School website and can be provided on request. The procedure applies to complaints raised by current parents, prospective parents and former parents where appropriate.