St Swithun's School
Admissions Policy

Policy History	
Reviewed and updated	**October 2026**
Date of next review	**October 2028**

Admissions policy contents

1. Equal opportunities and (non) discrimination Page 2
2. Year 7 entry for pupils not attending St Swithun's Prep School Page 2
3. Year 7 entry for pupils attending St Swithun's Prep School Page 2
4. Year 9 entry Page 3
5. Year 12 entry Page 4
6. Late entry candidates Page 4
7. Short-term placements Page 4
8. Candidates whose first language is not English Page 4
9. Candidates requiring Child Student Visa sponsorship to study in the UK Page 4

Reviewed by:

Headmistress
Jane Gandee
Date: October 2026

The Education Committee
Steve Bailey, Chair
Date: October 2026

Equal Opportunities and (non) Discrimination

The school treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way. Each applicant is considered on her ability and aptitude. The school accepts applications from, and admits, students irrespective of disability, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief), sexual orientation or special educational needs (SEND).

Parents must inform the school when submitting the registration form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and / or ability to participate fully in the education provided by the school. If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately care for their needs, the school will not offer a place to a child with disabilities.

Means-tested awards called bursaries could be available to students who meet the admission criteria, but who are unable to attend St Swithun's due to financial hardship. Details of how to apply for a bursary are available on the school website or from the school office.

Year 7 Entry for Pupils Not Attending St Swithun's Prep School

Entrance to the school at Year 7 for candidates in UK schools (and not attending St Swithun's Prep School) is by means of the school's own entry examinations in English and mathematics and by the ISEB's Common Pre-test; both written papers and computer-based tests are taken in November. Candidates should be registered with St Swithun's by 30 September of their Year 6.

Overseas-based candidates should be registered with St Swithun's by 30 September of their Year 6 equivalent. Candidates for whom English is not their first language should sit a Ukiset test in November of their Year 6 equivalent. The St Swithun's entry papers, together with the school's English language paper, if appropriate, must be taken on the last Saturday in October at the candidate's nearest British Council or St Swithun's-approved invigilator. In some cases, overseas candidates may sit the papers at their current school if invigilation is possible.

A confidential reference must be provided by the candidate's current school.

Year 7 Entry for Pupils Attending St Swithun's Prep School

Girls attending St Swithun's Prep School who joined the school in Year 4 or earlier are offered a place at St Swithun's Senior School based on their performance in tests and in class and on the head's recommendation. This offer is usually made in May of Year 5. They are not required to sit St Swithun's entry papers but they are required to sit the ISEB Common Pre-test in November of their Year 6. The data from this is taken into account in organising forms for L4 (Year 7).

Girls who join St Swithun's Prep School after the first day of the academic year in Year 5 may receive an offer of a place at the end of Year 5. If there is not enough data or information available for an offer to be made at that point they will sit the Pre-test on a competitive basis in November of their Year 6. They might receive an offer of a place after that or they may be required additionally to sit St Swithun's entry papers alongside external candidates.

Year 9 Entry

Entrance to the school at Year 9 for candidates at UK schools is by means of a pre-test (currently the ISEB Common Pre-test) in the autumn of Year 6 followed by a creative task and interview with the headmistress in the spring term of Year 6. After the pre-test, the girl may be made a firm early offer conditional on achieving at least 60% overall in the Common Entrance exams, sat in the June of Year 8, or at least level 7 in the Prep Schools Baccalaureate. UK-based candidates who have not been tested in year 6 may take the ISEB Pre-test in the autumn of their Year 7. Some candidates may be rejected after this Pre-test; others, who cannot be made a firm early offer may be invited to take the school's entry examinations on a competitive basis in the November of Year 8.

We expect all girls to achieve at least 60% overall at Common Entrance (or at least level 7 in the Prep Schools Baccalaureate) and the majority of successful candidates achieve over 70%. However, a girl's previous educational background and level of preparation for the examination will be taken into account as will her head teacher's confidential report. Internal assessments and interviews by heads of department may occasionally form part of the entry process, if they are considered to be in the interests of the candidate.

In some exceptional cases, (for instance the girl has recently been accepted for a school using Common Entrance and known to be of the same academic standing as St Swithun's) the examination requirement may be waived. This is at the discretion of the headmistress.

Overseas-based candidates aiming for an early offer should be registered with St Swithun's by **30 September of their Year 7 equivalent.** Candidates should take the ISEB Pre-test by the third Friday in November. After the pre-test, the girl may be made a firm offer conditional on achieving at least 60% overall in the school's own entry papers which are taken on the last Saturday in October of her Year 8. These exams are in English, mathematics, science and a modern European foreign language if appropriate. The St Swithun's entry papers, together with the school's English language paper, must be taken on the last Saturday in October at the candidate's nearest British Council or St Swithun's-approved invigilator. We may also require an English Language Certificate.

Overseas-candidates who are not aiming for an early offer should be registered with St Swithun's **by 30 September of their Year 8 equivalent**. Candidates for whom English is not their first language should take a Ukiset test by the third Friday in November, or the ISEB Common Pre-test if their first language is English.

13+ Common Entrance candidates, Prep Schools Baccalaureate candidates or overseas-based candidates, who sit the pre-test but do not wish to secure their place by payment of a deposit, may sit the school's own Year 9 entry papers in the November of Year 8 (if in the UK) or on the last Saturday in October at their nearest British Council (if overseas) on a competitive basis.

A confidential reference must be provided by the candidate's current school.

Year 12 Entry

For entry into the sixth form at Year 12, girls sit examinations and are interviewed in three of the subjects that they wish to study for A level. UK-based students undertake standardised cognitive ability testing and overseas-based students are required to sit the UK independent Schools' Entry Test (UKiset).

All girls for whom English is not their first language must also take the school's own use-of-English-language paper.

In some cases, when an application is submitted after a candidate has gained her GCSE results, we may waive the need for addiitonal entrance exams, and make an offer based on GCSE grades and interviews.

Late-entry Candidates

There are sometimes places available in year groups other than the main entry points detailed above. Entry at Year 8 or Year 10 is by means of the school's own entrance papers in mathematics, English, science and a modern European foreign language. These papers are taken at the earliest opportunity in the year prior to entry. Students for whom English is not their first language will sit a UKiset test.

In addition, there are occasionally places available at Years 7, 9 or 12 after the main entry deadlines have passed. Candidates at this stage sit the school's own papers in maths, English, (Years 7 and 9) science and a modern European foreign language (Year 9) or prospective A level subjects (Year 12).

Short Term Enrolments

For students whose parents are looking for a short-term placement (1 academic year or less), we may decide to reduce the number of assessments the student is required to take. Applications for short-term placements will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates whose First Language is not English

St Swithun's has strict English language entry requirements as we wish to ensure that pupils can fully enjoy all aspects of their time with us.

Girls whose first language is not English, and are studying at a school overseas, will be required to take a UKiset test and our own EAL test paper. They may also be asked to meet with our Head of EAL.

If a girl's first language is not English, but she is studying at a UK school, she will take the ISEB Common Pre-test. If she has been studying in the UK for less than 2 full academic years, she will also be required to take our own EAL paper.

It is important that all girls have a sufficient level of written and spoken English to access the curriculum.

Candidates Requiring Child Student Visa Sponsorship to Study in the UK

The school is a Child Student Visa sponsor and is required to report any third party, in the UK or another country, who has helped in the recruitment of international students. The school's policy is to make an annual report to UK Visas and Immigration of any agent to whom it has paid commission in respect of an enrolled international pupil.