



Portsmouth
High School

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Admissions Policy and Procedures

Pre-School, Prep, Senior and Sixth Form

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Part of the Girls' Day School Trust family of schools

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Introduction

Portsmouth High School is a selective independent day school for girls. It is part of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the largest educational charity in the country with twenty-six schools. Since its foundation in 1872, the GDST has been at the forefront of education for girls and a strong voice in promoting opportunities for young women.

Portsmouth High school offers a distinctive educational experience within a broad, inclusive curriculum and a culture of high expectation. We seek to admit girls with the potential to flourish in the educational environment provided and to contribute fully to the life of the school. Our admissions policy supports the 'all through' nature of the school, encouraging progression of our students throughout their educational journey.

We award scholarships to recognise and reward potential regardless of financial situation or background. The Trust's bursaries scheme aims to give girls of all backgrounds the opportunity to benefit from a GDST education.

The school's Admissions Policy and Procedures operate within the framework of the GDST Admissions Policy:

GDST Admissions Policy

The admissions policy of the Council of the Girls' Day School Trust (the "GDST") is that:

- The GDST is committed to equal opportunities in education and does not unlawfully discriminate regarding entry. Admissions to GDST schools will adhere to the GDST's Equal Opportunities Policy
- The GDST is firmly committed to offering a single-sex education for girls. In our experience, students in girls' schools are less constrained in their choice of subjects, show a greater propensity to take risks and innovate, perform better in examinations, have more opportunities to show leadership, and are less likely to conform to gender stereotypes. For these reasons, GDST parents and students choose a predominately single-sex environment over other available options
- GDST schools are broadly selective. Places are offered to prospective pupils on the basis of their potential to thrive in the educational environment provided
- Admission is usually dependent on achieving an acceptable standard in an assessment or examination appropriate to the age group and academic pace of the

school. The assessments and examinations will be accessible to all candidates, with people from all backgrounds able to participate fully.

- Due consideration will be given to prior educational experience in making any decision on the offer of a place. In exceptional circumstances, schools may adjust their established selection processes, provided that there is sufficient justification in doing so and the alternative procedure adheres to principles of equality, fairness and transparency.
- Reasonable adjustments to entrance assessments will be made for applicants with special educational needs and/or disabilities in order that all applicants are assessed fairly. Parents are required to provide full details to the school upon application if their child has external or in-school learning support, an educational psychologist's report, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a disability, allergy or medical condition, to enable the school to make provision, if appropriate. A place will only be offered if the school believes that it can appropriately support a pupil's learning or other needs effectively and that admission is in the best interests of the applicant.
- Special consideration may also be granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. prolonged illness or bereavement).
- The school relies on the integrity of the admissions procedure and therefore the truthfulness of the information provided by the applicant's parents, as well as the requirement to disclose any information to the school which may be relevant to the application process such as any learning difference or disability. Where relevant information is not disclosed or proves to be false or misleading the school reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place which may have been granted, deny the applicant admission, or where a child has already been admitted, request that the child is withdrawn from the school.
- There is no automatic right of transfer from one Trust school to another; however, the transfer of existing Trust pupils between Trust schools, for example as a result of relocation or the need for boarding facilities, may be arranged. Where places are available in the relevant year group, priority over external applicants will be given to pupils transferring from another Trust school, subject to other suitability criteria being met. Trust pupils not initially successful in securing a place may where possible be given priority over other external candidates on the waiting list. A transfer cannot be made to any of the Academies sponsored by the Trust.
- The final decision regarding admissions rests with the Head. There is no right of appeal against their decision.
- The school reserves the right to refuse entry to a pupil whose parents have, in the past, failed to meet in full their fee obligations to the school in relation to another child already enrolled at the school.
- A pupil (other than a boarder) must reside with her parent/s or legal guardian while attending the school, or with someone else approved by her parent/s or legal guardian and the Head. Pupils whose parents are overseas must have an educational guardian in the UK and parents must notify the school of the name and address of the guardian

- A pupil must have the right to study in the UK for the duration of her enrolment at the school. The school will request evidence of this during the admissions process, normally in the form of a British or Irish passport or valid visa documentation. The school reserves the right to rescind an offer where the right to study cannot be evidenced.
- As set out in the Trust's parent contract, continuity of education is anticipated throughout each age range and transfer at key stages will be automatic unless, in the opinion of the Head, the pupil will not benefit from continuing to be educated at the school or has not attained a sufficiently high standard of work or behaviour for continuation or for entry to the next stage.
- Each GDST school sets out in its registration the age range of students it is legally allowed to make provision for. Major age range changes are subject to approval by Council. Admission will last until the student completes year 13 unless the parent contract comes to an end sooner.
- Within these guidelines schools may determine their own admissions policies, which will set out their individual selection criteria.
- Information provided as part of an application will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation. The privacy notice available at www.gdst.net/privacy-notice explains what information is collected and how it is used.
- Applicants should be registered by or with the agreement and understanding of the applicant's parents, including, where parents are separated, each parent with parental responsibility. Each parent with parental responsibility will ordinarily be entitled to information regarding their child's application (unless, for example, there is a court order that suggests otherwise).

This policy shall apply to all GDST schools, save for Academies sponsored by the GDST.

School Admissions Policy

In addition to the above, the following policy provisions apply to admissions to Portsmouth High School:

Entry requirements and assessment

- The order in which applications are made for admission is immaterial in considering the offer of places. Places are offered to external candidates placed in rank order following assessment procedures.
- The school does not publish details of results of admissions tests and, in accordance with data protection legislation, is not obligated to disclose examination scripts. We reserve the right not to disclose candidates' exam marks or their place on the merit order.
- Preparation in advance for admissions assessments is not recommended and the school release sample papers to be downloaded in the middle of the autumn term.
- At certain entry points a reference from the candidate's current school will be requested. However, the application will not be prejudiced if this is not provided.

- Any meetings with prospective parents do not form part of the selection process, but are to enable the school to provide information, answer any questions, and give an opportunity to state any reason why their child may not perform at their best in the selection process.
- Parents are asked to inform us of their ethnic background to help us monitor our admissions processes over time and support us in further ensuring that our systems and procedures are enabling and inclusive to all applicants. This is not part of the selection process, and there is no disadvantage to a girl if her parents decline to provide this information.

Deferred entry, out of age applications, sibling policy and children of staff

- In most cases, we consider that it is within a child's best interests – educationally, socially and emotionally – to be educated within their usual year group, meaning that they would start school in the September following their 4th birthday. Deferred entry may be considered in specific circumstances, for instance being born prematurely or having a diagnosed educational or medical reason for starting school in the following year.
- At other entry points, girls are unlikely to be considered for admission unless they are the normal age of admission on 1st September for their year group. Exceptions are very occasionally made if there are strong reasons for believing this is in the girl's best interests.
- The GDST welcomes applications from siblings of current pupils and a family who enrol their third or any subsequent daughter into any GDST school will be eligible for a fee reduction for the third and all subsequent girls. In terms of entry requirements, if candidates appear to be of broadly similar potential, where all other considerations are equal, priority will be given to the sister of a pupil who will be in the school when the candidate arrives. If sisters apply to the school at the same time, even if they are twins, their applications will be considered separately. If one twin is successful and the other not, the Head will consult the parents before making offers. Twins will generally be placed in different classes.
- Children of staff must follow the same application and selection procedures as all other candidates.

Financial support for younger pupils

Pupils from the age of 3 are entitled to government funded early education which supports either the universal 15 hours per week or up to 30 hours of extended funding for eligible families. Pupils remain eligible for the early years funding, either 15 or 30 hours until the end of the term in which they turn five as long as they remain in the school.

Parents can apply for a Tax-Free Childcare account online to pay for nursery fees (it is not available to use towards reception fees).

School Admissions Procedures

Applications Process

Information about how parents can apply for a place at the school is published on the school website. Applications should be made online through the website. A non-refundable registration fee of £60 is required for Reception to Year 13 applications. We do not require a registration fee for pre-school applications.

Parents and prospective pupils are encouraged to visit the school or attend an open day prior to application. The school also arranges experience/welcome days for pupils due to join, and information meetings for parents. Full details are published on the website.

Key dates relating to the timing of entrance and assessment examinations are available from the Registrars. The offer of a place is conditional on the completion of the online parent contract and the payment of a deposit of £500 through the admissions system. For pre-school applications we require a £60 deposit, refundable at the end of your child's time in pre-school, or deductible from the required £500 deposit when they continue into Reception. The deposit is returned at the end of the child's school career, less any outstanding charges. It is non-refundable if the place is not taken up.

If a pupil is offered a place for entry for the following September but parents ask to defer entry to a later year, the pupil is normally required to re-sit the entrance examination. Places cannot normally be held over.

Further information can be obtained from the registrar via admissions@por.gdst.net
Nursery, Pre-School and Prep School – Mrs Fergie Cox
Senior and Sixth Form - Mrs Charlotte Thomson.

Selection process

Nursery and Pre-School

Entrants into the Pre-School will be invited to attend an experience session in advance of starting where possible. There is no official assessment and each child will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the school is able to meet their needs.

For children registering to attend Pre-School the school is fully compliant with Portsmouth City Council legal requirements that stipulate a need for no entry barrier to the school.

Where a pupil utilises early years funding at either 15 or 30 hours, 4 weeks' notice is required for termination of these services. Where a Pre-School pupil attends over the 30 hours one terms notice is required in accordance with the GDST terms and conditions.

Children attending full time (5 full days) will be eligible to attend wrap around care at no additional charge.

We accept applications throughout the academic year for girls who are three years old or will be three in the term they are enrolled, subject to sessions availability.

Prep School

All girls are informally assessed prior to entry during their experience day. They will perform the same work as other girls in the class and the teachers will observe their progress and interactions. A report will be requested from their current school. The Head of the Prep School or Assistant Head will provide feedback for parents at the end of the experience day. In some cases, further experience days may be required.

Our main entry point is for a September start; however, we are able to accept applications, subject to availability, at other points in the year.

Senior school

11+ entry consists of formal written examinations in English and mathematics, and a report requested from the girl's current school. Current Year 6 students sit the same examinations as external candidates, but it is known as a transfer test into the senior school. The results are used to see where the student sits within their cohort. Academic scholarships are awarded on the entrance examination results. In addition to sitting the entrance examinations, all candidates are invited to the school for an afternoon of activities and team building as part of the admissions process.

Scholarships are normally awarded to those who excel in sport, drama, art and music. A separate audition and interview are arranged on a different day to the entrance examinations. Scholarships are assessed and can be awarded at 11+, 13+ and 16+ entry and is also open to current pupils who have excelled in the subject. It should be noted that at 13+ scholarships are honorary (no monetary value) and for the prestige of having a scholarship.

Bursaries are awarded only to pupils whose performance in the entrance examinations is exceptional. All bursaries are means tested and their value is related to the income and financial resources of the adults who have parental responsibility at 11+, 13+ and 16+ entry. It is possible to hold a bursary and scholarship combined.

For existing prep school pupils, transfer is anticipated unless in the opinion of the Head the pupil has not attained a sufficiently high standard of work to enable her to benefit from continuing her education at the school. If this is the case, then in the case of Year 6 – Year 7 transfer the Parent will be advised in writing before the end of Year 5 of the targets to be attained for entry into Year 7.

If transfer is not considered desirable no less than one term's written notice will be given.

12+, 13+ and 14+ entry is conducted as for 11+ entry with the addition of a short interview with the Head.

Our main entry point is for a September start; however, we are able to accept applications, subject to availability, at other points in the year.

Sixth form

External applicants will be invited for interview and will have the opportunity to sit the scholarship entrance paper in the spring term. The offer of a place will be dependent on predicted grades for GCSE. The expectation is that candidates will obtain at least seven

GCSE grades at grade 5 or above, with most subjects requiring at least grade 6 as a prerequisite for A Level study.

We ask for the candidate's subject choices from our option blocks once they have registered. The school reserves the right to cancel any courses which do not have sufficient numbers of applications at A level.

Occasional places

Usual entry points are at 3+, 4+, 7+, 11+, 13+ and 16+. However, the school occasionally has spaces at non-standard points of entry. Parents may contact the registrar to establish if any places are available. Entry to Year 11 would only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The registrar will contact parents who have registered an interest should a place arise. Pupils will be assessed at the point that a place is available, through assessment similar to that used for entrance at standard points; the exact method of assessment may, however, vary, depending on the point of entry being considered. The standard of comparison will be with the relevant cohort in the school.

Key stage transfers within the school

- It is anticipated that pupils will remain at the school until they complete their sixth form studies. However, transfer from Year 6 to Year 7, and from Year 11 to Year 12, may not always be in a pupil's best interests. In such a case, the situation will be discussed at an early stage (in Year 5, for the prep school pupils). Parents will be notified of targets for achievement in order to remain at the school and given advice about alternative options if requested. Transfer in such cases may be refused by the school even if the family would like the girl to remain, but this will always involve careful discussion with the parents. At least a term's written notice will be given in the case of Year 6 and Year 11 pupils, to allow other arrangements to be made. Fees in lieu of notice will not be charged in such circumstances.
- Within the sixth form, transfer from Year 12 to Year 13 is dependent on satisfactory performance in the end of Year 12 examinations. Usually, a minimum of grade E is required to continue with a subject in Year 13. An opportunity is given to re-sit the end of year examination if a student does not reach an E grade. If a student still does not reach this standard, discussions will be held between the school and the student and her parents to agree on the most appropriate programme of study.
- Although progression from Y6 to Y7 is generally automatic, current Year 6 pupils sit the Year 7 entrance examination, called a transfer test. This is to provide a complete data set for the incoming year group and, because all pupils are considered for academic scholarships based on this assessment.

Arrangements for special educational and other individual needs

- Parents must, as soon as possible in the application process, inform the school in writing via the online application form of any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties, or other circumstances so that the school can assess whether it can meet these needs, and make any relevant arrangements for reasonable adjustments to assessment processes

- Following information being provided by the parent or current school, Portsmouth High School, where needed, will make appropriate adjustments the admissions process e.g. 25% extra time, coloured paper or enlarged font etc.

Arrangements for overseas applicants

- Overseas candidates follow the same entry process as UK residents but may be required to take an additional language proficiency assessment
- Arrangements for taking entrance papers overseas will be made on an individual basis
- The Immigration Compliance Manager can advise on Visa requirements, if required
- Sponsorship can be provided under the Child Student route
- The school may offer a place on condition of a girl receiving extra tuition in English

Transfers between GDST schools

Whilst every effort will be made to support parents wishing for their child to transfer from one GDST school to another, any transfer will be subject to:

- The availability of a place; and
- The professional judgment of the school in which a place is being sought of the ability of the pupil concerned to benefit from such a place, given the overall nature of the intake, as cohorts vary from one school to another and from one year to another.

Arrangements governing transfer will usually vary according to phase. A pupil wishing to enter Year 7 or Year 12 will be expected to follow the normal procedures for admission. For admission at other points or mid-year admissions, arrangements will depend on the circumstances. The Head of the school being asked to accept the pupil will consult the Head of the pupil's existing school to obtain a clear view about their ability and potential. It is not normally a requirement for the pupil being transferred to sit and pass the standard entrance test, although the school may ask the pupil to undertake an assessment if this is considered necessary to give a clear picture of the pupil's ability.

Adjustments to procedures in extraordinary circumstances

During any period when the school is unable to carry out its standard admissions process, entrance assessments will be carried out remotely through telephone interviews with pupils and/or parents depending on the pupil's age. Pupils looking to enter the senior school may also be required to complete online assessment tests. A copy of a pupil's most recent full report sent to parents by the pupil's current school will also be requested from the parent where appropriate.

Scholarships and Bursaries

As a charity, the GDST aims to reach as many girls as possible. There is a central means-tested bursary programme and the school also offer scholarships which are awarded on merit, irrespective of financial means. A scholarship may be combined with a bursary where there is financial need.

Bursaries are available for entry into Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12. They are dependent on academic merit but awarded on a confidential means tested basis which is assessed

independently by the Fees Office of the GDST. Parents will be required to provide financial information with supporting evidence. Awards vary depending on individual circumstances and range from 30% to 100% of school fees. In addition, schools will provide appropriate support to girls in receipt of bursaries of 95% or more for incidental expenses including lunches, uniforms, curriculum trips and travel to and from school.

All bursaries are subject to an annual reassessment and renewal process and may go up or down to reflect changes in family circumstances. The final award of a bursary is at the discretion of the Head and may subsequently be withdrawn if, in the opinion of the Head and the GDST, the pupil or a parent has not complied with the obligations associated with a bursary, or if the pupil has fallen below the required standards of conduct and progress. Parents are sent information of the amount of financial assistance offered (if any) at the same time as a place offer is made to their daughter. A bursary may be transferred to another GDST school with the agreement of the Head.

Scholarships are awarded based on an assessment of pupil merit without reference to family circumstances. They exist to recognise distinctive academic ability or special talents. Please see the Scholarships and Bursaries section on our website:

<https://www.portsmouthhigh.co.uk/admissions/scholarships-and-bursaries>

A scholarship is a responsibility as well as an achievement and recipients should be prepared to make a significant contribution to the life of the school. The award can be withdrawn at the discretion of the Head if progress, behaviour, and/or a girl's attitude to work is unsatisfactory, and if the conditions of the award are not met.

Updated: September 2025

Review Date: As advised by GDST