

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

This policy gives the arrangements for entry to Bristol Grammar School. It sets out the principles that are used in selecting children at all stages and the process of selection.

Bristol Grammar School is a selective coeducational school that caters for students drawn from roughly the top 30% of the academic ability range. The objectives of our admissions procedure are as follows.

1. To make admissions procedures clear, fair and as objective as possible.
2. To collect evidence that gives as comprehensive a picture of each child as possible. The evidence used should:
  - a) results from objective tests or examinations which take account of the student's age;
  - b) reports and references from current school  
and may include:
  - c) information from discussion with the child.
  - d) consideration of work that a child has done recently at his/her present school.
3. To take into account any special educational needs when assessing the potential of a child to benefit from an education at BGS.
4. To offer financial support, as far as possible, to enable those who have the potential to succeed at BGS, but whose families have limited means, to attend the school.

### Admission Numbers

The numbers in year groups will not normally exceed those set out in the table below.

Year	Number of Forms	Number in Year
Reception	2	36
1	2	36
2	2	36
3	2	40
4	2	48
5	2	48
6	2	48
7	5	135
8	5	135
9	6	144
10	6	144
11	6	144
L6	15	160
U6	15	160

### **Acceptance Deposit**

A deposit of £200 is payable on accepting a place at Bristol Grammar School, and is deducted from the fees upon entry to the School. If the student does not take up the place this deposit is not refunded. A minimum of one term's notice of the withdrawal of a student is required, in writing, by recorded delivery, without which a term's fees in lieu of such notice is payable at the rate applicable to the forthcoming term.

### **Terms and Conditions**

All offers are made subject to the School's Terms and Conditions, a copy of which is sent to all successful candidates and can be obtained from the BGS website, from the Recruitment Office, or from the Headmaster's PA.

### **Bursaries**

The School has its own Assisted Places Scheme under which bursaries (discounts from the tuition fee) are awarded according to the parents' ability to pay. Awards are means-tested and a family income in excess of the limit set annually by the governors would not normally qualify for assistance under the Scheme. (Details are available from the Bursar or the Recruitment Office.) In cases where the demand for assistance exceeds the funds available, the order of merit as determined by the entrance procedure is used to assist in the allocation of funds.

#### **1. Selection for Entry to Infants**

Following submission of an application a child is invited in for an informal assessment during the year preceding entry. This may be in any term. The assessment process will involve informal group games and talking with a teacher. A report from any previous school will also be requested.

In the event of the school being oversubscribed, factors such as sibling links within the school and date of application will be taken into account.

#### **2. Selection for Entry to Junior School**

Bristol Grammar Junior School aims to provide an excellent all-round education for girls and boys of average and above average ability, aged 7 – 11 years of age. The admissions policy and procedures are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children to demonstrate academic potential, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or social background. To support this commitment the school is able to offer some financial assistance in cases where parental means would be insufficient to manage full school fees.

### **Process and practice**

- a) The majority of children join Bristol Grammar Junior School in Year 3. There are further admissions into Year 4 and Year 6. Applications to join Year 5 will also be considered, subject to availability of places.
- b) Places are offered subject to satisfactory results in the entrance tests administered by the school and reports from current school where possible.
- c) The entrance tests are taken by most children on one of our termly test mornings, though arrangements can be made for children to be tested at other times during the school year.
- d) The tests for year 3 include reading comprehension, mathematics, general reasoning and a short piece of writing. For admission into Years 4, 5 and 6, there are age-appropriate verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests, along with the reading comprehension and writing. There is no specific mathematics test. The tests used provide standardised scores and take into account each child's age and previous schooling. We do not expect children to have been coached for these tests.
- e) Prospective parents submit a completed Application Form prior to the tests, along with a non-refundable £25 registration fee to cover the costs of the tests and their administration.
- f) The receipt of completed application forms is acknowledged by the school, and prospective parents are informed of the Open Mornings, Year 2 visits and other opportunities to visit the school, along with details of the test mornings. Final details of test arrangements are sent out just prior to the test day.
- g) The child's current school will be asked for a reference to assist in the assessment process. Where a school is unable to provide such a reference, then we ask to see a copy of the child's school report. All offers are subject to a satisfactory report.

- h) In some cases, where there does not appear to be sufficient evidence of a child's ability from the tests for an informed decision to be made, the child may be invited back into school for a second time, for further informal testing.
- i) The school aims to inform parents of the outcome of the tests within ten working days.
- j) When an offer is made parents are requested to respond within ten working days, indicating whether or not they wish to accept the place.
- k) Where no offer is made the Headmaster is willing to provide feedback for the parents, so that the whole testing procedure can have a positive outcome.
- l) Children whose names are on our chance vacancy waiting list will be invited in for testing at the time any vacancy becomes known. The place or places available are awarded on merit. In cases where more than a year has elapsed since previous testing, the children will be invited to re-sit the papers so that the offer of a place is made on current academic ability and potential.
- m) Where parents are requesting financial assistance, and forms giving personal financial details have been submitted to the Bursar, the Headmaster would hope to be able to indicate in the offer letter the extent of any assistance which the school can offer.
- n) Outstanding candidates are awarded Pelouquin Scholarships, which are Honorary if parents do not qualify for financial support.

### **Procedures for Senior School Entry**

For all year groups the application process begins by following the return of a completed application form and the payment for an administration fee. (Applicants who will not sit the Entrance Tests in January also need to send in copies of the last two school reports. These are read by a Deputy Head who will advise on the likelihood that the applicant will be successful. If the application is withdrawn at this point then the administration fee is reimbursed.) The application procedures are described below. Applications for Year 11 or Upper Sixth are only considered in very exceptional circumstances following discussion with a Deputy Head. These will be dealt with using a procedure that adheres to the objectives given above and which seeks to satisfy the school that integration into examination courses would be achieved in most, if not all, subjects.

### **3. Selection for entry to Year 7 (external applicants) or Year 8 prior to the day of the January 13+ entrance tests**

- a) The school requests a reference on academic potential, personality, temperament, involvement in school life and attitude to academic studies and discipline.
  - For a reference up until the November of Year 7 the school only writes to the Headteacher of the child's primary school.
  - For a reference between December of Year 7 through to the end of Year 7 the school writes to both the Headteacher of the child's primary school and the Headteacher of the child's secondary school.
  - For a reference after the start of Year 8 the school only writes to the Headteacher of the child's secondary school.
- b) If the application is made after the child's KS2 SATs results are published then these are requested, otherwise predicted KS2 SATs levels are requested.
- c) If a special educational need is disclosed on application or by the primary or secondary school, the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if special arrangements are needed for the entrance test. In addition, the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if the school can meet the needs of the child. If appropriate the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will meet the child if he/she comes for an interview and discuss the conclusions with parents.
- d) The child takes the entrance test. This comprises a test of academic potential, using VR and NVR papers, and a test of written English.
- e) Based on the VR and NVR scores an order of merit is constructed. Based on the English test students will be identified who would be unlikely to reach NC level 4b by the end of KS2. Each child is placed into of the following categories:
  - i) Able to succeed at BGS and could be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS

- iii) Probably able to succeed at BGS but additional information needed. This will be the case if, for example, the entrance test and the report from the feeder school are at variance.
  - iv) Unlikely to succeed at BGS.
- f) Those in group e)iii will be invited in and required to bring in some of their current school work and discuss it with senior members of staff. Those in e)i will be invited for discussion with the Headmaster and Leader of Honours Students.
  - g) Those requesting substantial assistance who are in category e)i or e)ii will be visited at home. The school reserves the right to visit any applicant for assistance as circumstances dictate.
  - h) Following the discussion described in f), the order of merit is revisited and entrants are placed into one of three groups:
    - i) Able to succeed at BGS and will be a scholar
    - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
    - iii) Unlikely to succeed at BGS.
  - i) Places will be offered to those in groups h)i and h)ii subject to the limits on admission numbers given above. Places will be offered in the order given by the order of merit. (No reserve list will be constructed.)
  - j) Timetable for entry for those sitting the January Entrance Test

Period (in the year prior to entry)	Activity
September to January	Applications received
November to January	References requested from schools
Second and Third Saturday in January	Entrance test (candidates need only sit on one date)
Week following second entrance test	Construct initial order of merit. Arrange interviews
Second week following second entrance test	Finalise order of merit on the basis of entrance test and the results of interviews.  Send offers.

- k) For applicants after the January entrance tests, instead of an actual order or merit a judgement is made based on knowledge of the year group in question as to whether the applicant would integrate academically and socially into the year group or not. The judgement is based upon a reference (as described above), school reports, test results and interviews and possibly upon consideration of work that the child has completed recently. Assistance can only be considered if any money remains following the allocations made after the January tests.

#### **4. Selection for entry to Year 7 (internal applicants )**

- a) The Headmaster of the Junior School will provide the Headmaster with a reference for each year 6 child, commenting on academic potential, personality, temperament, involvement in school life and attitude to academic studies and discipline.
- b) If a special educational need is identified, the Junior School SEN coordinator will liaise with the Senior School Director of Studies for Learning Needs to determine if special arrangements are needed for the entrance test. In addition, the child will be requested to meet with the Director of Studies for Learning Needs to check that the Senior School can meet the needs of the child.
- c) The children take the entrance test. This comprises a test of academic potential, using VR and NVR papers, a test of written English and a mathematics test.
- d) Based on the entrance test each child is placed into one of the following categories:
  - i) Able to succeed at BGS and could be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
  - iii) Concern about the potential to succeed at BGS.
- e) Those in group d)iii the Headmaster of the Junior School will be consulted. The Headmaster will decide whether an offer will be made after considering her evidence and opinion.
- f) Those requesting substantial assistance who are in category d)i or d)ii will be visited at home. The school reserves the right to visit any applicant for assistance as circumstances dictate.
- g) Places will be offered to those in groups d)i and d)ii subject to the admission numbers given above.
- h) Timetable for entry.

Period (in the year prior to entry)	Activity
December	References from the Headmaster of Junior School to Headmaster of Senior School
Friday preceding first external candidate entrance test day	Entrance test
Week following entrance test	Consultation with Headmaster of Junior School as required
Second week following entrance test	Confirm offers of places or advise parents if unsuccessful

**5. Selection for entry to year 9 for applications received up to the day of the January 13+ entrance tests**

- a) The results of KS2 SATs, predicted results for KS3 SATs, and two recent reports from the child's present school (or other most recent school if he/she has received only one report from his/her present school) are requested. The school writes to the Headmaster of the child's present school requesting a reference on academic potential, personality, temperament, involvement in school life and attitude to academic studies and discipline. However, a parent can request that the reference should only be taken up with the school if the rest of the evidence suggests an offer. This request must be made in writing.
- b) If a special educational need is disclosed on application or from the reference from the current school, the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if special arrangements are needed for the entrance test and interviews. In addition, the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if the school can meet the needs of the child. If appropriate the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will meet the child if he/she comes to the school.
- c) The child takes the entrance test. This comprises a test of academic potential (a reasoning paper), a test of written English, a mathematics test, and a French, German or Spanish test. The Maths, English and foreign language papers will target the standard of a typical Year 8 BGS student who would be at about the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile in the school's rank order of attainment.

- d) Based on the entrance test an order of merit is constructed. Each child is placed into one of the following categories:
- i) Able to succeed at BGS and could be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
  - iii) Probably able to succeed at BGS but additional information needed
  - iv) Unlikely to succeed at BGS.
- e) Those in group d)iii will be invited in and required to bring in some of their current school work from a range of subject including some or all of Maths, English, Science and a Modern Foreign Language. They will also have an interview with the Head of Year 9 and a Head of House. Those in d)i will be invited for a discussion with the Headmaster and the Leader of Honours Students.
- f) Those requesting substantial assistance who are in category d)i or d)ii will be visited at home. The school reserves the right to visit any applicant for assistance as circumstances dictate.
- g) Following the discussions described in e) the order of merit is finalised as follows:
- i) Able to succeed at BGS and will be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
  - iii) Unlikely to succeed at BGS.
- h) Places will be offered to those in groups g)i and g)ii subject to the limits on admission numbers given above. Places will be offered in the order given by the order of merit. (No reserve list will be constructed.)
- i) Timetable for entry

Period (in the year prior to entry)	Activity
September to January	Applications received
November to January	References requested from schools
Third Saturday in January	Entrance test
Week following entrance test	Construct order of merit. Arrange interviews
Second week following entrance test	Finalise order of merit on the basis of entrance test, references, school reports and the results of the interviews. Send offers

**6. Selection for entry to year 10 for applications received up to the day of the January 14+ entrance tests**

- a) The predictions for KS3 SATs and two copies of recent reports from the child's present school (or other most recent school if he/she has received only one report from his/her present school) are requested. If the reports, considered by a Deputy Head with any extenuating circumstances, suggest that the student would not integrate into BGS at this stage (eg SATs predictions are lower than for our year group) then the application will be rejected. The school writes to the Headteacher of the child's present school requesting a reference on academic potential, personality, temperament, involvement in school

life and attitude to academic studies and discipline. However, a parent can request that the reference should only be taken up with the school if the rest of the evidence suggests an offer will be made or if more information is needed in order to decide whether to make an offer. This request must be in writing.

- b) If a special educational need is disclosed on application the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if special arrangements are needed for the entrance test and interviews. In addition, the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will determine if the school can meet the needs of the child. If appropriate the Director of Studies for Learning Needs will meet the child if he/she comes to the school.
- c) The child takes the entrance test. This comprises written tests of about 45 minutes in English and one or two Modern Foreign Languages and 30 minutes for Mathematics and Science. These papers will target the standard of a typical BGS Year 9 student who would be about the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile in the school's rank order of attainment.
- d) Based on the entrance test an order of merit is constructed. Each child is placed into one of the following categories:
  - i) Able to succeed at BGS and could be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
  - iii) Probably able to succeed at BGS but additional information is needed
  - iv) Unlikely to succeed at BGS
- e) Those in groups d)iii will be invited in and will be required to bring in some of their current school work and it will be examined by experienced members of staff in some or all of English, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages and Science . They will have an interview with the Head of Year 10 and a Head of House. Those in d)i will be invited for a discussion with the Headmaster and Director of Scholars.
- f) Those requesting substantial assistance who are in category d)j or d)ii will be visited at home. The school reserves the right to visit any applicant for assistance as circumstances dictate.
- g) Following the discussions described in e) the order of merit is finalised as follows
  - i) Able to succeed at BGS and will be a scholar
  - ii) Able to succeed at BGS
  - iii) Unlikely to succeed at BGS.
- h) Places will be offered to those in groups g)i and g)ii subject to the admission numbers given above. Places will be offered in the order given by the order of merit. (No reserve list will be constructed.)
- i) Timetable for entry

Period (in the year prior to entry)	Activity
September to January	Applications received
November to January	References requested from schools
Third Saturday in January	Entrance test
Week following entrance test	Construct order of merit. Arrange interviews
Second week following entrance test	Finalise order of merit on the basis of entrance test, school reports, references and the results of the interviews. Send offers.

## 7. Selection for entry in the Spring or Summer of Year 8 or during Years 9 or 10

Applicants will be invited into the school for tests and interviews as soon as these can be arranged by the Recruitment Officer, taking into account the urgency with which parents would like a decision and school activities.

If an offer is made for a specified date of entry and parents subsequently request earlier entry then the Head of Year into which the student would now be entering is consulted to assess what is in the best interests of the individual student.

Applications to join the School up to the end of the autumn term in Year 9 will follow the procedures for selection for entry into Year 9 via the 13+ entrance tests, except that instead of an actual order of merit, a judgement is made based on knowledge of the year group in question as to whether the applicant would integrate academically and socially into the year group or not. The judgement is based upon a reference from the current school, school reports, test results, recent work that the student brings with him/her and interviews.

Applications to join the school after the start of the spring term in Year 9 will follow the procedures for selection into Year 10. Instead of an actual order of merit, a judgement is made based on knowledge of the year group in question as to whether the applicant would integrate academically and socially into the year group or not. The judgement is based upon a reference from the current school, school reports, test results, recent work that the student brings with him/her and interviews.

Applications to join Year 10 received after the autumn half term holiday will not be considered unless there are extenuating circumstances – bullying, bereavement, parent moving job etc – as integration into the courses is by then very difficult. (Existing BGS students cannot change a single subject after this time). Applications to join Year 10 received after the start of Year 10 will sit the end of Year 9 internal exams in English, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Language and Science (modified as required by each HoS and to make them of appropriate length) together with an interview in all subjects that the applicant would like to study at BGS, subject to space being available in teaching groups for those subjects. (All Science will be covered in just one interview as will Modern Foreign Languages if more than one is to be studied.) Other details are the same as for those applying for the 14+ entrance test except that instead an order of merit judgement is made based on knowledge of the year group in question as to whether the applicant would integrate academically and socially into the year group or not. The judgement is based upon a reference from the current school, school reports, test results and any recent work that the students bring with him/her to the interviews.

#### **8. Applications for students who have previously been offered a place which was declined**

If a new application is made within 6 months then the student will not be retested but will have an interview with the appropriate Head of Year.

Otherwise an applicant will follow the above procedures, as if the previous place had not been offered; unless the Head of Year is convinced by current evidence that re-testing is not needed. An interview with the Head of Year will always take place.

#### **9. Selection for Entry to Lower Sixth**

Unlike applications for Years 7 to 10, the application is made by the student. This normally follows the Sixth Form Open Evening and discussion with Heads of Subject regarding course content.

- a) A reference is sought from the student's current school. If the reference, considered by the Head of Sixth Form with any extenuating circumstances, suggest that the student would not integrate into BGS at this stage (eg GCSE predictions are lower than for our year group) then the application will be rejected.
- b) Applicants are interviewed by Heads of Subject (or their nominee in each subject) in each subject for which the applicant would like to be considered.
  - i) Many students are asked to bring in samples of work to discuss. In Mathematics a short test is administered and discussed at interview.
  - ii) Each interview will last 20-30 minutes. The Head of Subject will provide a written report on the conversation assessing academic potential, extra curricular activities, potential for Oxbridge. HoS

are guided to grade as satisfactory or above candidates who would fit into the top 2/3 of the Year 11 cohort and they also give a judgement on academic potential using the following scale:

Excellent (Oxbridge)	Very Good (A)	Good (B)	Marginal (C)	Weak (D/E)
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- c) All reports and references are then scrutinised by the Head of the Sixth Form – letters offering a provisional place or turning candidates down are written by the end of the second week following the interviews. This letter is signed by the Headmaster.
- d) Any queries over admission are dealt with by the Head of Sixth Form in consultation with Deputy Heads and the Headmaster where appropriate. Heads of Subject may also be canvassed for further explanation of their notes made at interview.
- e) All offers made before the public GCSE results are provisional. It is suggested that students achieve A/A\* in GCSE examinations in the subjects that they wish to continue studying or which are designated by the School as related to their proposed course of study. The absolute minimum entry required is 6 B grades at GCSE including at least a B grade in Mathematics and English Language.
- f) Subject choices are guaranteed subject to timetabling. Changes can usually be accommodated until the start of the Easter holidays preceding the entry term. After this time changes are subject to the new timetable and the availability of places in sets.
- g) If students fail to meet the required grades in the summer examinations they are summoned to attend meetings with the Academic Deputy Head, Head of Sixth Form and relevant Head of Subject to discuss their prospects.

#### **Senior School oversubscription criteria**

All applications to join are conditional upon there being places available. In the event of an application being received for a full year group, it will be held on file until a place becomes available and then assessed following the relevant process above. Should there be more than one applicant for an available place, all candidates will be invited for assessment and the place offered on merit.

#### **10. Entry by applicants from abroad or other distant parts of the UK**

- a) If at all possible the students will follow the procedures above.
- b) If the student cannot attend for interview written tests will be couriered to the student's present school – the cost of such couriering will be billed to the parents. For entry to Lower Sixth, these tests will be modified versions of the Y11 GCSE mock exams in the student's chosen subjects.
- c) If examples of the student's work cannot be brought to the school then these will be sent or faxed.
- d) If there are question marks against the student's ability in English (for students for whom English is an additional language) then a telephone interview will be carried out by the Director of Studies for Learning Needs. As a general rule, BGS require students for whom English is a second or additional language to have attained a score of IELTS 5.5 (or equivalent in a comparable test).
- e) Students who will require a visa to study at BGS must also comply with the 'Process for Overseas Applicants to BGS' (available from the Recruitment Office) and ensure that they apply in sufficient time to complete the visa application process subsequent to the School's assessment process.
- f) An offer will only be made if there are sufficient sources of evidence (test results, reports, references, examples of work, interviews) available for a reliable decision to be made.
- g) Students who will not be living with their own family whilst studying at BGS must ensure that their living arrangements are acceptable to the School, as outlined in the 'Process for Overseas Applicants to BGS' and have these arrangements in place in order for BGS to be able to issue visa paperwork.