ABBOTSHOLME

Fresh thinking since 1889

Admissions Policy

Abbotsholme is an independent co-educational boarding and day school from ages 2 -20 in a rural setting on the border of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, in the United Kingdom.

Abbotsholme School Aims

Abbotsholme aims to prepare its pupils for the whole of life, by giving them a balanced education through a strong academic curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. We give academic, personal and social developments equal standing, recognise the diversity of talent in each pupil and encourage pupils and staff to do their best.

Abbotsholme aims to provide:

- Knowledge to help everyone achieve and succeed to the best of their individual academic ability.
- An understanding of the natural environment and the importance of protecting it.
- Challenges which build strength and test courage, as well as providing a stimulating and enjoyable experience.
- Cultural enrichment to widen perspective and to develop awareness of our responsibilities to others.

Our Vision

It is our firm belief that a good, balanced education is an essential preparation for the whole of life. An education at
Abbotsholme provides not only the starting blocks but also propels each individual through the start of life outside Abbotsholme.

Abbotsholme wants all of our pupils not only to succeed – whatever their individual talents or abilities may be – but also to feel successful. The Abbotsholme ethos encourages a sense of self-worth and of pride in their own achievements, whilst, in equal measure, celebrating the success of others.

Although we are committed to helping all Abbotsholmians fulfil their academic potential, the measure of our success cannot be judged by scholarly achievements alone. Indeed, it is their development as people that must be seen as the ultimate test.

Our vision is that pupils leave Abbotsholme as responsible and socially aware young men and women, able to face an increasingly demanding world with confidence and a zest for life. In years to come, we would wish to know that they were happy with themselves and with their lives; we also would want them to be successful in their personal and professional endeavours whilst remaining sensitive to the needs of others.

The general admissions policy is to admit pupils who are likely to benefit from an education based on the principles set out above.

Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are:

1. To ensure compliance with the School's purpose and general school admissions guidelines. Abbotsholme is open to everyone on the clear understanding that the aims and vision underpin the ethos and life of Abbotsholme. Admission is neither restricted by location (region or worldwide) or by financial circumstances – excepting that overall there has to be a proper balance between income and expenditure such that the continuance of the School will not be financially put at risk.

2. To identify and admit children who are most suited to, and most likely to benefit from, the particular education and opportunities that Abbotsholme offer. Although the school is proudly not academically selective, a child's academic performance is a consideration in the admissions process undertaken by us, involving consultation with key staff, in order that the School can best meet the needs of the children in its care.

Equal Treatment

We welcome children from many different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected but must be balanced with the needs of the law, rules of our school community and the rights and freedoms of others. All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their or their parents' race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, gender, sexual orientation, property, birth or other status.

We expect all of our pupils to attend chapel and assemblies, which are an integral part of school life.

All parents must be in sympathy with the School's aims and policies.

Feeder Schools

Abbotsholme Senior School's main feeder school (at 11+) is Abbotsholme Prep, and Abbotsholme Prep's main feeder school (at 4+) is Abbotsholme Nursery. The School has good relationships with other independent and maintained nursery, pre-school, preparatory and primary schools in the region, whose pupils comprise a significant proportion of the annual intake.

Age of entry

Abbotsholme admits children at Nursery Level from age 2+, at whichever point this occurs in the school year.

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Children then move into full time education at Prep and Primary level (including Abbotsholme Prep School) in the September of the academic year in which they turn five. Places are offered at all age group levels throughout the school, subject to availability.

Abbotsholme admits pupils in all years and throughout the year through a rolling admissions programme.

Very occasionally, we may offer places to pupils one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement that this would be in the best interests of the pupil and the School.

Learning Support Needs

Abbotsholme School is able to support students with specific learning differences where the child is able to cope in a mainstream setting, and where our Learning Skills Department feel that they are able to meet the needs of the individual.
Where a specific learning difference has been diagnosed we require a copy of the Educational Psychologist's report, along with the child's school reports prior to registration and any taster days. We are not able to accept pupils with significant behavioural problems.

Boarding

All boarding at Abbotsholme is in shared or single rooms. Boarding places are allocated according to the School's policy of grouping boarders by gender and age. Currently there are three boarding houses including Barnfield, a cabin complex for Sixth Formers, to which pupils will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Other boarding houses are: Orchard, for girls; and Cedarholme for boys. The school also has Flaxfield house which is currently not in use as a boarding house.

Overseas Applicants

Abbotsholme School encourages boarders from overseas and currently approximately 15% of the School's population is from overseas.

- Abbotsholme welcomes applications from pupils who live overseas.
- Abbotsholme is licensed by the United Kingdom Visa Immigration to sponsor pupils who require visas to study in the United Kingdom. The School will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) reference number to each pupil requiring a visa if he or she has been offered and has accepted a place to study at Abbotsholme.
- A pupil requiring a visa to study at Abbotsholme should apply for a Tier 4 child student visa or a Tier 4 student visa if aged 18 or over at the time of application.

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- It is the responsibility of the pupil requiring a visa and of his or her parents to apply to the United Kingdom Visa Immigration for a visa at the appropriate time and with the correct documentation and to inform Abbotsholme that an application is being made.
- Abbotsholme will at all times comply with the rules and procedures of the United Kingdom Border Agency.
- All enquiries about visa applications should be made to the Admissions Office. Only members of the Senior Leadership Team are authorised to sign a letter supporting a pupil's, or prospective pupil's, application for a visa in the UK. For information on how to ensure your Visa application is successful, please visit the United Kingdom Border Agency website which details information on errors that can be made in the application process that could jeopardise your application.
- All overseas pupils are required to have a guardian resident in mainland UK who is prepared to be responsible for that pupil should an emergency situation occur. That Guardian will be asked to sign a declaration to show that they understand their responsibilities and duties to the pupil. A guardian is needed to act for the pupil in an emergency throughout the whole time the pupil resides at Abbotsholme, even if that pupil turns 18 whilst at the school. Wherever possible, guardians should be AEGIS accredited. If parents appoint a guardian who is not AEGIS accredited, the school will make contact with them by telephone to ensure that the arrangement is legitimate and also to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities. Following any stays with a guardian, boarding staff will meet with the pupil to ensure that the arrangement is working and that the pupil feels comfortable and happy with it.

Former Pupils and Siblings

The School especially welcomes the children of former pupils. In keeping with the School's family ethos, every effort is made to accommodate children from the same family. Where two or more siblings attend Abbotsholme, the proprietor will provide a fee discount.

Staff Discount

Abbotsholme School staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work extremely hard to support the education of the School's pupils and the smooth running of the school. In recognition of this fact, and the fact that the school support a warm and family centred environment, staff members receive a discount on school fees to support sending their children to the schools. Details of this are available on request.

Entrance Procedures

Abbotsholme School operates entrance procedures in accordance with ISA guidelines.

Our UK admissions procedure:

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1. Registration requires a non-refundable fee of £150 along with the completed registration form and £500 deposit.
2. Copies of school reports from the child's current school.
3. Copies of passport and/or birth certificate.
4. An interview with the Headteacher or Deputy Head or Admissions Team. The interview will be as important as the assessment data in assessing whether the pupil will fit in to the expectations and ethos at Abbotsholme.
5. Taster days at the school. All parents/guardians will need to fill in a medical form for the taster day. This will include an interview with the Headteacher/Deputy Head/Admissions Team.
6. If extra learning support is required, an appointment with a member of the Learning Skills Department at Abbotsholme will also need to be made and an assessment will take place.
7. Disability assessments. More detail can be found about these in the Disability and Special Education Needs section.
8. Decision. The Headmistress/ Registrar's decision is final.

Our admissions procedure for overseas pupils:

1. Registration - from enquiry to filling in our registration form. A non-refundable fee of £150 will need to accompany the completed form along with a £1000 or £8000 deposit.
2. School reports from current school.
3. English essay or personal statement, English and Maths test. These help us to comply with UK Visa Immigration requirements.
4. Visit or telephone conversation / Teams interviews with a member of the Admissions team or EAL Department or Headmistress. The interview will be as important as the assessment data in assessing whether the pupil will fit in to the expectations and ethos at Abbotsholme.
5. Disability assessments. More detail can be found about these in the Disability and Special Education Needs section.
6. An immigration form to be completed if required stay is >180 days.
7. A copy of the applicant's passport.
8. A parent's consent letter giving approval for their child to board and study at Abbotsholme.
9. Decision. The Headmistress's/ Registrar's decision is final.

Parents of pupils entering Abbotsholme Nursery will need to fill in a specific Pre-Prep Registration Form before a place is allocated; pupils for Abbotsholme Prep School will need to fill in the Abbotsholme Registration Form to enter the school. From Reception to Year 6, pupils will be informally assessed in core subjects (English, Maths and Science) on a taster day.

In the event of oversubscription of children who meet our admission requirements, then consideration will be given to the following:

- A child who already has a brother / sister in the school; a sibling who was previously at the school, or whose parent is a former pupil of the school.
- A child who is not registered elsewhere;
- A child whose parent is a current member of our staff;
- A child with a particular skill, talent or aptitude;
- In respect of the Pre-Prep, a child whose parents have committed to a place at the school by filling out the PrePrep registration form.

Bursaries and Scholarships

The School aims to reach out to the wider community irrespective of social and/or economic circumstances, and accordingly provides bursary assistance depending on individual and family needs and circumstances. Bursaries are only awarded up to a maximum of 50% (this is an exceptional amount and Abbotsholme tries to share the bursary fund available to ensure that a greater number of pupils can benefit from an education at Abbotsholme) of the fees where applicants provide up to date information about their financial circumstances, including documentary support. Such information is treated in strict confidence and bursaries are awarded on the understanding that parents will respect this confidence. These will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bursary Committee which includes the Headmistress, Director of Finance and Operations and Finance Manager. *Pupils must be registered before any bursary application is made.*

In order to attract and reward pupils of a high academic, musical or all-round ability and potential, the School offers a number of scholarships each year.

Scholarships are given at 11+, 13+ and in the Sixth Form up to a maximum of 50% (this is an exceptional amount and Abbotsholme tries to share the fund to ensure that a greater number of exceptional pupils can benefit from an education at Abbotsholme School) off the school fees. All candidates at all levels will be notified within a month after sitting the Scholarship exams. These awards will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Scholarships and bursaries can both be applied for and both can be given, although some fees must be paid by the parent in the instance that both are awarded. For deadlines for both scholarship and bursary applications, please contact the Admissions Team on 01889 590217.

The award of a scholarship and bursary is entirely at the discretion of the Headmistress. Scholarships and bursaries are awarded on the undertaking that, unless by mutual agreement, the pupil will remain at Abbotsholme School until the end of Year 11 or Sixth Form where relevant. All scholarship (and bursary) monies are repayable in the event of an earlier withdrawal of the pupil by the signatories (parent / guardian).

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Complaints Procedure

Abbotsholme has long prided itself on the quality of the admissions support both to parents and pupils. We welcome suggestions and comments from parents and take seriously any concerns you may have. These will be treated in a professional and appropriate manner in accordance with this procedure.

Stage One

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint about any member of the Admissions teams they should normally contact the Registrar in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means, to the parents' satisfaction. If the Registrar cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for them to consult with the Headmistress before responding to you.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmistress may be referred to the Registrar unless the Headmistress deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.

- The Registrar or Headmistress will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the Registrar and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this Procedure.

Stage Two

- If the complaint cannot be resolved as set out above, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headmistress will respond to the parents within five working days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision. Parents will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaint.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage Three of this Procedure.

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Stage Three

- If parents seek to invoke Stage Three, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to the proprietor who may call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the proprietor. The proprietor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, and the proprietor and, where appropriate, the persons complained about.
- A written record will be kept of all complaints and at what stage they were resolved. These records will be kept for at least three years. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except as when required in the course of a school inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Misbehaviour and Exclusions

Please see our Behaviour and Sanctions Policy, for further information about how the School manages pupil behaviour. The following extract concerns our approach to suspensions and exclusions:

Exceptionally serious breaches of school rules may lead to suspension or expulsion from school. Serious breaches of rules and regulations could include drug abuse, theft, bullying, persistent disruptive behaviour, poor parental behaviour, malicious allegations that are found to be untrue. Persistent minor offences could also accumulate; as these might lead to suspension or expulsion, the pupil could be asked to sign a school agreement which would act as a final warning. Defaulting on a clause of the

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agreement could then result in expulsion. Suspensions are for short periods of time. Suspensions may be accompanied by a final warning of permanent exclusion.

Permanent exclusion is a final option if there is a serious breach of school regulations following a written warning or if the breach is considered serious enough to merit immediate removal. Exclusions are decided by the Headmistress in consultation with the Deputy Head and Head of School. Parents have a right of appeal as outlined in the general Complaints Procedure.