



## **Admissions Policy**

Belhaven Hill School is a co-educational independent boarding and day school for children from the age of 7 to 13. The school has, on average, 125 pupils, approximately two-thirds of whom are full boarders and one third day children. In their final year at Belhaven, it is expected that all pupils will sit for either academic scholarship or Common Entrance to the top senior schools in England and Scotland.

### **Criteria for Admission to Belhaven**

Belhaven is a non-selective school. We are looking for children with a broad range of abilities, who will contribute to the life of the school and who will rise to the challenges of the Belhaven curriculum.

The offer of a place is based upon an informal interview with the Headmaster to discuss the child's interests and achievements. The aim of this process is to identify potential and to determine whether the child will benefit from the broad education which the school provides. We are simply looking for well-rounded children with interests that go beyond the academic curriculum who will contribute to the life of the school and its community. As such, there is no need to do any preparation beforehand.

Where the school has been informed that a child may need additional support for learning or health needs, these may be assessed as part of the interview process to ensure that the school would be able to accommodate their requirements.

At Belhaven, all pupils are expected to sit either Common Entrance or academic scholarship in their final year; in conjunction with this, the school has a wealth of opportunities: a stimulating academic curriculum, wonderful facilities and grounds and a vibrant, constantly evolving extra-curricular programme. We want to ensure that every child accepted into the school has the ability and opportunity to learn and discover from the Belhaven curriculum.

It may be that some children would not benefit from this curriculum and it is the school's responsibility to be honest and transparent, if that is the case. Parents of any child not accepted into the school for this reason will be informed. The school will also advise parents if we feel that an application at a later date might be worthwhile.



## **Waiting List**

We want to encourage children from all backgrounds to apply to Belhaven and we are committed to equal treatment for all applicants, recognising our responsibility to ensure that our policy for admissions allows for no unlawful discrimination.

Where a year group is full, a Waiting List operates, essentially in order of the date of registration. There may be circumstances where the school derogates from the strict order of registration on the basis of the following priorities:

- a) Belhaven Hill is a fully co-educational school and a balance of gender in each year group is desirable to maintain the character and ethos of the school;
- b) We will also generally give priority to those who seek a boarding place to ensure that the strong tradition of the school as a boarding prep school that draws from a wide geographic area is sustained;
- c) The children of staff, siblings of current or past pupils and children of Old Belhavians (OBs) will normally be given precedence. While we are pleased to welcome any siblings of pupils and children of OBs who wish to join us at Belhaven, admission, however, is not 'automatic'. There may be occasions, as with any child, when we feel that a sibling is more likely to succeed in a different educational environment.

## **Religion**

Belhaven has a broadly Christian ethos and whilst we do not select children on the basis of religious belief, parents should be aware that each school day begins with a formal assembly and prayers and our Sunday services follow a Christian structure. We also join the services in Belhaven Church and St. Anne's, Dunbar once a term and all boarding pupils are expected to attend. Every effort will be made to sensibly and sensitively accommodate the religious needs of each child.

## **Special Needs**

We welcome pupils with special welfare and education needs providing that our Learning Support department can offer them the support that they may need to thrive and attain their potential at Belhaven. This is assessed by the Head of LS during the admissions process. We also welcome pupils with physical disability, provided that we are able to meet their welfare needs on site.

Parents of a child who has any known additional learning support must provide the school with all details of this at the start of the Admissions process, including copies of Learning Support, Educational Psychologist, Medical or any other relevant, professional reports to support their child's application. Once a place is offered parents are under obligation to keep the school informed of any change in diagnosis of medical condition or educational need.

If an additional learning support need becomes apparent after admission, the school will consult with parents about any changes that may be required in order to support the child at school.

Belhaven recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and will put in place reasonable adjustments in order to fulfil them.



## **Overseas Pupils**

We welcome overseas pupils and offer a full international student programme. These children come to the school as full boarders, generally for a minimum of one year, provided that they have a relative or legal guardian living in the UK with whom they can stay for weekends out, if necessary. It is very much hoped that overseas pupils will be taken out for these weekends by their friends and that this will further enhance their experience of the holistic education that Belhaven provides. We also hope that this will encourage an informal 'exchange' programme and that their hosts for these weekends may be invited overseas during the holidays.

We do not currently offer formal tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) and therefore it is important that, in order to access the curriculum, any overseas pupil will have a reasonable knowledge of spoken and written English before they arrive. Overseas pupils studying in the top year at Belhaven are expected to sit the Common Entrance exams.

## **Bursaries**

Belhaven was founded as an educational charity. The Board of Governors has determined that, allowing for the School's budgetary constraints, no child should be forced to miss out on a Belhaven education, as a boarder or day pupil, because their family cannot afford the fees. Recognising that no two families are the same, Belhaven welcomes applications in all circumstances, whether from new applicants to the school, where parents are unable to fund the fees in full or in part, or from existing pupils where a change in parents' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting school fees, or where finances might prevent a child from boarding at Belhaven. All bursaries are means-tested and parents are required to provide proof of both their income and assets. All awards are subject to annual review and may vary depending on changing parental circumstance. All bursary applications for the forthcoming academic year must be received prior to 10th January.

## **Complaints**

In the event of a parent having a complaint about the Admissions process, the Complaints Policy (available on the website or by request from the school office) explains how the school will deal with any complaint.



## Admissions Procedure

At Belhaven, we believe that a personal visit before application is invaluable. Whilst we hold a couple of Open Mornings each year (in October and March) which will give a general introduction to the school, we believe that it is also important for prospective parents to meet with the Headmaster and his wife, along with some of the senior staff. To this end, we encourage any prospective parents to make an appointment for an individual visit. These are arranged through the school secretary, Mrs Alex Farquhar either by phone, 01368 862785, or by email - [secretary@belhavenhill.com](mailto:secretary@belhavenhill.com)

Following a visit, parents who have not registered their child and are keen to do so will be able to fill in the Registration form and must pay the Registration fee of £100, which is non-refundable. On receipt of the form and fee, the child's name will be entered on the School List for the relevant year. We will make parents aware if there is a Waiting List for that particular year group, and where they currently stand on that list. (Please see Admissions Policy for further details)

In the year before entry, parents will be contacted in the Autumn term to ascertain if they will be interested in taking up an offer of a place. All children will be invited to a taster day & night (a taster day if they are applying for a day place) so that they can experience Belhaven life. They will have an informal interview with the Headmaster and should they need to be assessed by the Learning Support department, this will also happen during their visit.

In March of the year of entry, the School will make a formal offer of a place and invite parents to return a signed Acceptance, together with a deposit of £750. The offer, acceptance and deposit form a contract between the School and the parents. This deposit will be held by the school and offset against the fees for the pupil's final term at Belhaven. The offer and acceptance form will be contained in a New Pupil Information pack containing the following:

- the School Code of Behaviour
- the School Terms and Conditions
- copies of the School mobile phone/mp3 policy and internet policy (to be signed and returned)
- a Music Tuition form (to be completed and returned)
- a Privacy Consent form (to be signed and returned)
- a Privacy Notice
- a health/new patient questionnaire (to be completed and returned)
- a uniform list and name taping guide
- joining information
- activities (to be completed and returned)

Once a place has been confirmed, a 'Welcome to Belhaven day' will take place in the Summer term before entry to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. At the end of the Summer term, we will send out the invoice for the first term's fees along with any other relevant joining instructions.

We keep in contact with all families who are registered by a variety of means to allow you to get to know us even better. Please notify us of any changes to contact details.

We are only too happy to answer any questions you may have, either by 'phone, email or in person, so please do not hesitate to contact us during normal school hours.