

THE MOUNT SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PARENTAL AGREEMENT

2026–2027

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1. General statement

The Mount School is a well-established independent school for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11 years. The Director is responsible for admissions and for the operation of this policy.

As an independent school, applications are made directly to The Mount. The statutory School Admissions Code governing maintained schools and academies does not govern The Mount's ordinary admissions procedure.

Admissions decisions will nevertheless be made consistently, fairly, transparently and in accordance with the School's contractual arrangements and applicable equality, safeguarding and regulatory duties.

2. Aims

- set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent and fair to applicants;
- identify applicants whose academic, developmental and other needs appear compatible with the education and ethos offered by the School;
- ensure that disability, SEND, medical and safeguarding information is considered lawfully and individually;
- make reasonable adjustments to the admissions process for disabled applicants where required;
- support safe and effective transition from previous settings and into The Mount;
- ensure admissions decisions are not based on unlawful discrimination; and
- ensure the selection process is determined and reviewed by the Director and Headteacher.

3. Admission entry points

Admission to the School normally takes place in the September following the child's third birthday. Admission after this may be possible depending on the availability of places and, where appropriate, an assessment/taster day at the School.

During a visit, assessment or taster day, the prospective pupil will spend time with teaching staff. The purpose is to understand the child's learning, development, communication, social interaction, support needs and likely transition into The Mount. It must not be used as a mechanism for screening out a child because of disability or SEND without proper consideration of reasonable adjustments and the individual circumstances.

The School may adapt the admissions assessment for a disabled applicant or a child with SEND so that the process itself does not place the child at a substantial disadvantage.

4. Special educational needs, disabilities and medical needs

The current principal equality framework is the Equality Act 2010. The School will not discriminate unlawfully against an applicant because of disability or another protected characteristic and will make reasonable adjustments where the legal duty applies.

Parents/carers should provide full and accurate information about any known SEND, disability, medical condition, developmental need, professional involvement, EHC plan or assessment when applying. This enables the School to understand the child's needs, consider reasonable adjustments and plan safely for admission.

Disclosure of SEND or disability does not itself make an applicant unsuitable for The Mount. Decisions will be individual and evidence-based. The School will consider what adjustments, support, staffing, training, environment or professional advice could reasonably enable the child to access the provision before reaching a conclusion about whether the School can meet the child's needs.

Accessibility is considered through the School's actual premises, resources, reasonable-adjustment duties and Accessibility Plan rather than a generalised statement about disabled applicants.

The SEND Code of Practice remains an important reference for good SEND practice. However, its precise statutory application differs across types of independent school; the policy therefore does not inaccurately describe every provision of the Code as directly binding on The Mount.

Where a local authority consults The Mount about a pupil with an EHC plan, the School will respond fully and accurately about the child's needs, the provision available and any reasonable adjustments. The legal consequences of an EHC plan naming an independent setting depend on the status of that setting and the

applicable Children and Families Act provisions; the School will not promise or refuse a place on an inaccurate assumption about those duties.

6. All other admissions

- Parents/carers are encouraged to arrange a visit, including a guided tour and meeting with a senior member of staff.
- A taster/assessment day will normally be arranged where appropriate to the point of entry.
- The taster day is designed to understand the child's educational and pastoral fit, needs and transition. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.
- Following the taster day there will normally be feedback with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Where a place is offered and accepted, parents complete the Registration Form, pay the applicable registration fee and agree a start date.
- A confidential Admissions Record will be completed.
- The School will request information from the previous school/setting to support educational, SEND, medical and safeguarding transition.

7. Admissions criteria

Subject to availability and the individual admissions route, the School will consider:

- the applicant's age and developmental stage in relation to the proposed year group;
- information gathered through the visit, taster/assessment or transition process;
- whether the School's educational provision is suitable for the child;
- any SEND, disability or medical needs and the reasonable adjustments/support that could be made;
- whether any safeguarding or welfare arrangements need to be established before entry;
- availability of the requested place/sessions;
- the parents' willingness to enter into and comply with the School's contractual terms; and
- where relevant, outstanding contractual obligations to a previous school, considered lawfully and without compromising a child's safeguarding or statutory entitlement to education.

The former criterion that an applicant must be of 'sufficient maturity' has been reframed because maturity is developmental and may be affected by SEND or disability. A child will not be rejected merely because their presentation differs from peers where reasonable adjustments could enable access.

No decision will be made because of race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity or another characteristic protected by law, except where a lawful exception applies.

8. Admissions decisions and offers

An offer may be unconditional or may identify practical matters that must be completed before the start date, such as receipt of records, medical plans or agreed reasonable adjustments. Conditions must not be used to circumvent equality duties or to make admission dependent on a disabled child ceasing to need reasonable support.

Where the School decides not to offer a place, the decision will be based on the published admissions criteria and individual evidence. The School will record the principal reasons sufficiently clearly to demonstrate fair decision-making.

Where SEND/disability is material to a decision, the record should identify the needs considered, information obtained, adjustments/support considered, why any proposed adjustment was or was not reasonable, and the educational/safety basis for the final decision.

9. Safeguarding information at admission and transfer

Admission is a safeguarding transition. The School will actively seek relevant information rather than assuming that all concerns will appear on ordinary educational records.

- identify the previous school, nursery or childcare setting;
- identify whether the child has or has had a social worker, is looked after/previously looked after, is in kinship care or is otherwise known to safeguarding services where this information is lawfully available;
- ensure the DSL is informed of safeguarding information before or promptly on admission;
- seek the child-protection file separately from the main pupil file where one exists;
- for school transfers, expect the child-protection file as soon as possible and within KCSIE timescales, with secure transfer and confirmation of receipt;
- where risk information is needed for safety before arrival, arrange DSL-to-DSL discussion and advance sharing as appropriate;
- ensure information is available to staff who need it to put safety/support arrangements in place from the child's first day; and
- record concerns about missing or delayed safeguarding information and follow them up.

Safeguarding information will be handled confidentially and shared only where necessary and lawful. A safeguarding history will not automatically prevent admission; the School will consider the child's needs, risk and support arrangements individually.

10. Children with social workers, looked-after children and other vulnerable applicants

Where an applicant is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker or faces another significant barrier to learning or wellbeing, the School will work with relevant professionals and parents/carers to understand the child's needs and transition.

The School will not treat a child's involvement with social care as an adverse admissions characteristic. Any decision will focus on whether safe, suitable provision can be made and what support is required.

11. Medical needs, allergies and intimate care

Parents must provide accurate information about significant medical conditions, allergies, medication, seizures, dietary risks, intimate-care needs and emergency arrangements. The School may seek professional information/consent to liaise with health professionals where needed to prepare safely.

A medical condition or intimate-care requirement is not, by itself, a reason to refuse admission. The School will consider reasonable adjustments, staff training, risk assessment and healthcare planning.

12. Parent contract and School policies

On accepting a place, parents/carers enter into the School's applicable terms and conditions and are expected to support School policies. These include, as relevant, the School day, attendance, uniform, behaviour, online/social-media expectations, safeguarding, fees and notice provisions.

The admissions policy does not itself replace the formal parent contract/terms and conditions. Where there is a contractual requirement, the controlling wording is the signed/current contractual document.

13. Misbehaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy. Admission decisions and later disciplinary decisions are separate processes.

The School will not retrospectively characterise the termination of a pupil's place as an 'admissions' decision in order to avoid the published behaviour, suspension/permanent exclusion, SEND, equality or complaints procedures.

14. Waiting lists and availability

Where a requested School place is unavailable, the School may maintain a waiting list. Being on a waiting list does not guarantee a place. The School will explain how availability is managed and will keep records sufficient to demonstrate that offers have been made consistently.

A waiting-list decision must not be manipulated to avoid admitting a child because of disability, SEND, medical needs or another protected characteristic.

15. Withdrawal, deferred starts and changes before entry

Parents should tell the School promptly if circumstances change after an offer, including changes to SEND, medical or safeguarding information. New information will normally lead to updated planning rather than automatic withdrawal of the offer.

If information material to safe provision was deliberately withheld or materially misrepresented, the School may review the position under its contractual terms, but will still consider equality, safeguarding and the child's circumstances before taking action.

Any agreed delayed/deferred start or reduced initial attendance must have a clear rationale and must not be used as an informal means of excluding a child whose SEND or disability requires support.

16. Data protection and admissions records

Admissions information is personal data and may include special-category information about health, disability and safeguarding. It will be collected, used, shared, retained and deleted in accordance with the School's privacy notices, UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Access will be limited to staff who need the information. Safeguarding records will be managed separately where appropriate and according to safeguarding retention/transfer requirements.

17. Concerns and complaints about admissions

Parents who believe the admissions process has not been applied fairly should first raise the matter with the Headteacher/Director so that the decision and procedure can be reviewed. The School's Complaints Procedure is available for complaints about the way the School has applied its policy or other applicable obligations.

The statutory school-admission appeal-panel procedure for maintained schools and academies does not apply to ordinary admission decisions by The Mount as an independent school.

Nothing in this policy removes rights a parent or child may have under equality, SEND, contractual or other applicable law.

18. Monitoring and review

The Director and Headteacher will monitor admissions for consistency, fairness, safeguarding readiness and equality. Where an application involving SEND/disability is refused, leaders should be able to demonstrate the individual assessment and reasonable-adjustment consideration that informed the decision.

Admissions records may be sampled as part of safeguarding, SEND or equality quality assurance. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where law, statutory guidance, School registration, EYFS arrangements or inspection expectations change.

Appendix A – Admissions safeguarding and transition checklist

- Application/registration information complete.
- At least two emergency contacts requested where possible.
- Previous school/setting identified.

- SEND/disability/EHC plan information requested.
- Medical/allergy/medication/intimate-care information requested.
- Relevant professional involvement identified.
- Safeguarding/social-care status considered and DSL informed where relevant.
- Child-protection file requested separately where applicable.
- Advance DSL-to-DSL discussion completed where risk/safety requires it.
- Reasonable adjustments identified and recorded.
- Healthcare/risk/SEND/support plans in place before start where necessary.
- Staff who need to know have essential information before first day.
- Receipt of safeguarding records confirmed and missing information chased.
- Transition/home/setting visit information recorded.
- Start date and contractual arrangements confirmed.