

GENERAL

Wells Cathedral School (“Wells”) is a co-educational, independent, day and boarding school for pupils from age 3 to 18. The school currently has around 700 pupils of whom around 250 are boarders. In order for prospective parents and pupils to meet us, we hold a number of open events throughout the year which give a general introduction to the school. Details are published on our web site and in the local press, and are available upon request. We also welcome prospective parents and pupils at other times for individual visits and tours and ask all families to arrange such a visit. Please contact the Admissions Office on +44 (0)1749 834213, or email admissions@wells-cathedral-school.com

ENTRY PROCEDURE

Wells is an academically selective school. With the exception of Nursery, Reception and Year 1-2 entrants, selection is based upon academic merit which is assessed through an entry test, an interview at the school and a reference from the candidate’s previous school(s). Our selection process is designed to identify pupils who are able to benefit from our balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the school.

In the Senior School (Years 7-13) the usual points of entry are at the beginning of the academic year in September into Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+), Year 10 (14+) and Year 12 (16+). Entry is also sometimes possible at other points, both at the beginning of the academic year and once it has commenced. In the Junior School (Nursery to Year 6) pupils join at all age groups, again, normally at the beginning of the academic year, but also sometimes once it has commenced. In the Senior School, we typically admit around 100 new pupils each year across the year group range, with the sixth form (Years 12-13) accounting for around one third of that figure. In the Junior School, we typically admit around 30 new pupils each year across the year group range. Please contact the Director of Admissions for details.

Nursery (age 2+)

Pupils may enter the Nursery in the term following their second birthday. There is no entrance test. Parents can choose the number of sessions (morning or afternoon) they wish to have. Most start with three sessions and then build up to five sessions or even full days.

Reception and Years 1-2 (ages 4 to 6+)

Entry is normally to the Reception Class at the start of the Michaelmas Term in the September after the fourth birthday, although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms and year groups. There is no entrance test. Registrations are placed in order of receipt and parents are informed when a place is available. Parents are advised to visit the school; the Head of the Junior School is available for appointments during the week and on Saturday mornings.

Junior School - Years 3-6 (ages 7+ to 10+)

Entry is normally in the Michaelmas Term although there are sometimes vacancies in other terms. Academic entrance assessment tests are typically taken as part of a taster day for entry in the following September, although these can be sat at other times if entry at a different point is envisaged. The tests are of a standardised type and therefore no specific preparation is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and extra-curricular skills. It is important that, where possible, children should have an opportunity to see the school before coming to sit the tests.

Lower School - Years 7-8 (ages 11 to 12+)

Academic entrance assessment tests are held annually at the school on a Saturday in late January, for entry the following September, although these can be sat at other times if entry at a different point is envisaged. Year 7-8 candidates complete tests in Mathematics, English, and Reasoning. They also meet staff for small group interviews.

No specific preparation for the entrance tests is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and extra-curricular skills.

Upper School - Years 9-11 (ages 13+ to 15+)

Year 9 candidates who are taking the Common Entrance examination may sit this at their preparatory school but this is not an entry requirement of Wells as all Year 9 candidates sit our own internal academic assessment tests: a traditional written English paper and a non-calculator Mathematics paper. A favourable reference from the Head of the candidate's current school will also be required.

It is possible for pupils to enter Year 10 of the Upper School at 14+ to begin the two-year GCSE courses. Candidates will usually be interviewed by the Head Master and will need a favourable reference from the Head of their current school. Written tests of Mathematics and English similar to those sat by Year 9 candidates will also be sat. We do not normally recommend entry to Year 11, being the second year of the two-year GCSE courses.

No specific preparation for the entrance tests is needed; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude and extra-curricular skills.

Sixth Form - Year 12-13 (ages 16+ to 17+)

Pupils enter the Sixth Form at the end of two-year GCSE courses or equivalent. Candidates new to the school will usually be interviewed by the Head and will need a favourable report from the Head of their current school showing a capacity to cope both with the academic demands of studying A-levels, and with the demands of a busy co-educational school. They will normally be expected to secure at least six grade C passes at GCSE level, with B grades or above in the subjects to be studied at AS level, where applicable. All internal candidates will be expected to secure the same GCSE qualifications as external candidates, although individual cases are always considered on their own merits.

Pupils from overseas with limited English skills may join the Wells International Study Centre (WISC) as a precursor to joining mainstream education in the sixth form. An assessment of their English Language skills, alongside normal assessments, will determine if this is appropriate.

Registration

Applicants for admission should usually register by 31 December of the year preceding the desired year of admission. A non-refundable registration fee is payable at the time of registration.

Musicians

If they are successful at the main auditions, which take place three times a year, candidates will then be offered a Specialist or Special Provision Music place subject to gaining satisfactory results in their academic entrance assessments (up to and including Year 10 entrants) or GCSEs or equivalent (sixth form entrants). Some latitude in academic entry requirements may be allowed in the case of exceptionally gifted and talented Specialist Musicians. The main audition programme is typically sent in advance which will include precise details of the timing of the auditions. A non-refundable audition fee is payable upon acceptance of an invitation to the main auditions. The Director of Music is always happy to discuss specialist music entry further.

Choristers: Boys - Years 3-9 (ages 7+ to 13+); and Girls - Years 3-9 (ages 7+ to 13+)

Chorister voice auditions, or trials, for both boys and girls are usually held in mid-January for entry the following September, following a successful pre-audition. The voice trial is held in the morning with academic assessment tests in the afternoon. The results are normally conveyed to parents within five business days and we hope that parents and successful trialists will be sufficiently committed to accept the offer of a place straight away. The chorister trial programme is sent on application, typically following a successful choral pre-audition, and precise details of the timing of the trials are sent a week before the date of the trials. The Head of the Junior School is always happy to discuss chorister entry. There is no charge for pre-auditions but a non-refundable main audition fee is payable upon acceptance of an invitation to the voice trials.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The aim of the assessment process is to identify potential. We are looking for students who will flourish in Wells Cathedral School with an emphasis on the development of confidence, independence, friendships curiosity, creativity and teamwork. The school has strong traditions in choral singing, music, drama, art, debating, community activities and sport. There are many co-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

The dates for the assessment process for the current year are published on our website. Results are posted to families within one month of assessments – and typically much sooner.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Wells is committed to equal treatment for all regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

Our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Means-tested awards and bursaries are offered to endeavour to make it possible for as many as possible who meet our admission criteria to attend the school irrespective of their parents' financial circumstances. Our provision for bursaries is described below.

SPECIAL NEEDS

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our Learning Support Centre can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our complex site can cope with them. However, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with us before they sit the assessment tests so that we can make suitable provision for them. Parents should provide a copy of an educational psychologist's report or a medical report to support their request, for example for extra time or other special arrangements.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably and practicably be made for the child if they become a pupil at the school.

SIBLING POLICY

Most siblings join us at Wells. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Wells offers a number of scholarship awards each year for excellence in:

- Academic subjects
- Mathematics

- Sport
- Creative Arts
- Music
- All-Round ability
- Choristership

PURPOSE OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of their achievement, each awardee is typically offered a small percentage reduction in their fees which can usually be expected (barring a change in circumstances) to endure throughout their time at Wells, although technically all awards are made for one year only and reviewed annually. In addition, a means-tested element to any award may be offered, typically tailored to each candidate's ability and potential, and related to their parents' financial circumstances.

Confidential financial circumstances questionnaires, the means by which the decision making of our Bursary Committee (the school's award-making body) is informed, will be sent to all who express an interest.

We encourage parents of awardees who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the boarding and/or tuition fees, to apply at the same time for one of the school's means-tested bursaries described below, when they register their child.

Details of the various scholarships and awards can be found on the school's website, or by contacting the Admissions Office.

BURSARIES

Our bursary programme is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet Wells' entry criteria to take up a place. However, despite its long history, the school is not well endowed and until we have built up a sizeable endowment, the school is necessarily limited in the amount of bursarial support that it can provide. Notwithstanding this limitation, we offer a number of means-tested bursaries each year to entrants at the usual points of entry. All bursaries are means-tested using a confidential financial circumstances questionnaire in which both parents are required to provide proof of their income and expenditure, assets and liabilities. The level of support varies according to parental need but can, in exceptional cases, extend to full fee remission in cases of proven need.

Bursaries, like all other awards, are offered for the duration of a key stage, and are reviewed at this point. The recipient family is required to provide fresh information about its circumstances for every year that their child attends the school. Levels of support may vary with fluctuations in income.

The school's practice is to allocate the bulk of its available bursary funding on entry subject only to retaining a prudent reserve against genuinely unforeseen circumstances e.g. death of the primary earner. The school's expectation is that parents, who do not choose to apply for a bursary at the time that their child is being assessed, will not require financial support throughout the time that their child attends the school, except in wholly unforeseen circumstances.

OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

Wells has a thriving international community and looks to admit students who will both benefit from, and contribute to, the cultural breadth which the school is seeking to foster. Students from all parts of the world are considered for admission at all ages and increasingly by face-to-face or video-link interview. A workable standard of written and spoken English and mathematical ability is required as is the potential to engage in active learning and living within a student body

predominantly from a UK-based background.

We warmly welcome overseas pupils, who can study at Wells as boarders, provided that they have a guardian living in the UK with whom they can stay for exeat weekends, half terms, etc, and who can act *in loco parentis* in an emergency e.g. hospitalisation. Parents of overseas pupils should note that Wells does not run a short-term study programme, and expects overseas pupils to finish a complete course of study, such as GCSEs or AS/A2 levels, or, exceptionally, study for at least one academic year.

SUPERVISION

All students at Wells Cathedral School are required to be either living with a responsible adult, aged 25 or over, or to board at the school in one of the houses for the duration of their time in the school. This is to enable the school to fulfill its duty of care to the student.

FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Wells, pupils must be good English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English medium to a standard to enable them to thrive in an academic environment where the language of instruction is English before coming to the school. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense but in some cases the school may require candidates to complete an external intensive English course of the type recognised by the British Council. International students will need to have the potential on admission to reach IELTS level 6.5 or equivalent standard for progression into higher education entry in the UK or overseas on leaving the school.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Wells has a Christian foundation dating back over 1,100 years. We do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief: we offer the opportunity of an education for those of all faiths and none. All pupils are expected to regularly attend assemblies in the cathedral. Boarders also attend house chapels and a Sunday evening service in the cathedral. These communal acts of worship in beautiful and historic buildings underpin the spiritual life of the school.

PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS, DIETARY, LANGUAGE OR CULTURAL NEEDS

All reasonable provision will be made for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs by the appropriate departments within the school. In the Junior School and the Lower School the Tutor will coordinate such provision, in the Upper School this will be coordinated by the students House Parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's EAL Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and SEND Policy.

ROUTINES

Wells is both a boarding and day school; the community flourishes for 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Day pupils are at school from at least 8.30 am. to 4.00 pm. Most of them choose to be here for much longer in order to benefit from and contribute to the activities, work and leisure of the school. Parents should be aware that there is compulsory Saturday morning school from Year 9 upwards. Much sport is played on Saturday afternoons including a full list of fixtures against other schools for those in the Junior and Senior School.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Copies of our Parental Contract are on the school's web site and are made available to parents as part of the admissions process. All parents are required to sign the Contract in order formally to accept any of a place at the school, whereupon an acceptance deposit becomes payable. This is held on account and refunded upon payment of the pupil's final bill.

Specialist musicians, and their parents, are also required to sign up to the Specialist Music Charter.

COMPLAINTS

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process, but the Complaints Policy is available on our website.

Head of Senior School

November 2018

Date of Next Review: October 2020