



# THE ORATORY

## THE ORATORY SCHOOL

### ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Type of Policy:	Regulatory
Regulatory Body (if a regulatory policy)	Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant Legislation (if a regulatory policy)	The Independent School Standards Regulations – from April 2021 Part 6 – Provision of Information para 32(3)
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Linked policies (accessible via <a href="http://oratory.co.uk">oratory.co.uk</a> )	Safeguarding and Child Protection SEND EAL Curriculum Privacy Notice – Current, Past and Prospective Pupils and their Parents Data Protection

## **1. Introduction**

The Oratory is a HMC Catholic Co-educational Independent Day and Boarding school for students aged 11 to 18. Approximately a third of our community are boarders, with flexibility to choose flexi, weekly and full boarding options. The Oratory became coeducational in September 2020, and approximately a third of our students are now girls.

Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and we believe that a personal visit is invaluable. We hold several open events throughout the year, which give a general introduction to the school and details of these are published on our website. We are also keen to welcome prospective parents and their children in throughout the year. Please contact the school's Admissions Department on 01491 683522 or email [admissions@oratory.co.uk](mailto:admissions@oratory.co.uk) to arrange a personal tour of the school and meeting with the Head and other key members of staff.

The admissions process at The Oratory is designed to ensure that all students joining the school can be happy, successful and secure within The Oratory's unique academic, pastoral and spiritual community.

## **2. Entry Procedure**

The Oratory School welcomes pupils who will thrive within our academic and pastoral community. The admissions process is designed to ensure that each child joining the School will be happy, successful, and appropriately supported.

Applications are carefully considered to ensure that every pupil admitted has the potential to benefit from, and contribute positively to, the life of the School. Entry assessments, interviews, and references from the applicant's current school help us to understand each child's strengths, learning profile, and individual needs. We do not operate a highly selective academic entry policy; rather, our process ensures that The Oratory is the right environment for each pupil to flourish.

The usual points of entry are 11+ (Year 7), 13+ (Year 9), and 16+ (Year 12, Sixth Form). The School may also have places available in other year groups; please contact the Admissions Department for details.

Applicants should register via the online form on the School's website. There is a £180 UK registration fee and a £300 overseas registration fee.

### **3. Equal Treatment**

Our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We are mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 during the Admissions Process. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School. The School's provision for bursaries is described below and full details are available from our Bursar.

The Oratory is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.

### **4. Information Sharing**

We require parents to inform the School at the outset of the application process about any needs which their child may have or any other significant matters which the School should reasonably be aware of because, for example, it would necessitate tailored provision and/or would materially impact on their child's attendance at School and/or ability to engage in day-to-day School life. The School may wish to discuss these matters with the parents and/or require some further information.

Parents must ensure that information provided is accurate, complete and not misleading and relevant details and information (or changes to them) are shared in a timely and transparent manner.

A failure to disclose relevant information and/or the provision of inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information may - in some cases - lead to the withdrawal of an offer or termination of the School's Parent Contract.

### **5. Special Needs**

The Oratory School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs, provided that we can offer the support they require, make reasonable adjustments, and that our facilities can accommodate their needs. Our aim is to ensure that all pupils are provided with a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.

Our admission criteria apply to all applicants. Parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities, or medical conditions (diagnosed or suspected) are asked to share full details with the School at the earliest stage of the admissions process. This enables us to assess how we can best support the pupil and whether reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure access to the full life of the School.

Parents should provide any relevant professional reports or assessments - for example, educational psychologist reports, medical reports, or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment or plan. This information helps the School understand each child's individual profile and to plan appropriately for their wellbeing, learning, and safety.

Where parents of a prospective pupil believe that their child may require adjustments, either for the admissions process or for participation in school life once enrolled, they should raise this with the School at the outset. Depending on the circumstances, the School may request additional information or further assessments to understand the pupil's needs. The School will then discuss with parents (and, where appropriate, the child's medical or specialist advisers) the adjustments proposed and whether these can reasonably be made if the child were to join the School.

There may be rare occasions where, despite reasonable adjustments, the School concludes that it is not able to meet a pupil's needs. This may occur if a child would be unable to access the education provided in a meaningful way, if their health or safety (or that of others) would be put at risk, or if the level of support required cannot reasonably be provided.

If a pupil's circumstances change between the offer of a place and the start of term - for example, following a new diagnosis or a change in provision - parents must keep the School fully informed. The School will work with families to review any new information and agree next steps in the child's best interests. In exceptional cases, where a child's needs change significantly, the School may need to reconsider the offer of a place.

If a pupil has an EHC needs assessment or plan (whether draft or final), it is important that parents share this documentation promptly, including all supporting reports, and keep the School updated about any decisions from the Local Authority or changes in provision.

An additional charge may apply for one-to-one specialist teaching or additional support.

## **6. The Assessment Process**

The aim of the assessment process is to understand each child's potential and ensure that The Oratory can provide the right environment for them to thrive. We are looking for well-rounded pupils who demonstrate curiosity, kindness, and a genuine interest in learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Our assessments are designed to identify potential rather than prior preparation. There is no need for specific tutoring or training; all applicants are given equal opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and readiness for life at The Oratory.

### 11+ (Year 7/First Form) Entry

Pupils joining the school at 11+ take part in our internal assessment day, which includes a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT), an English and Maths assessment paper, and a collaborative group activity. These assessments help us to understand each child's academic profile and interpersonal skills, from which Academic Scholarships are awarded to successful candidates.

### 13+ (Year 9/Third Form) Entry

Applicants at 13+ may enter through the ISEB Scholarship or the ISEB Common Entrance Examinations. Pupils registered to join at 13+ are required to complete the ISEB Common Pre-Test in Year 6. During this period, candidates are also invited to The Oratory for an interview with a member of the Leadership Team and to take part in a collaborative group activity.

If an applicant has not taken the ISEB Pre-Test, or applies outside of the usual timeline, they may be assessed individually through an online Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) and an interview with a member of the Leadership Team. Offers are made subject to successful completion of Year 8. Scholarships are assessed in Year 8 for applicants who have accepted an offer of a place for Year 9 entry.

### 16+ (Year 12/Lower 6<sup>th</sup>) Entry

Admission at 16+ is based on predicted GCSE results, school reports, and attendance at an Assessment Day, which includes a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) and an interview. It is expected that applicants will achieve at least a grade 6 at GCSE in any subject they wish to study at A Level, along with a minimum of five GCSE passes including English and Mathematics.

### Overseas Applicants

Overseas candidates complete a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT), English (EAL) and other relevant subjects, alongside an interview (where appropriate). Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at A Level will also complete a Maths Pre-Test. English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is available at an additional charge, including one-to-one tuition where required.

Dates for all forthcoming assessment opportunities are published annually on the school's website: [Annual Information Booklet - The Oratory](#)

## **7. Waiting lists**

We encourage early registration and acceptance of a place once offered. If an applicant wishes to apply to The Oratory after the Assessment Day for their point of entry, they may still take the assessment but may be placed on a waiting list until a place becomes available. Applicants will be taken off the waiting list in strictly chronological order.

## **8. Sibling Policy**

Most siblings join us at The Oratory and as a family school we encourage sibling applications. However, siblings are subject to the standard school application procedures and must register for a place within the appropriate time frame. 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. We do like to keep family groups together where possible and offer a 15% fee remission on the fees of third siblings, for the duration that all three siblings are in the school.

## **9. Scholarships**

The Oratory offers scholarships for excellence in:

- Academic (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Music (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Sport (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Art (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Drama (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- All-Round (Year 7 and Year 9 and Year 12)
- Thomas Scholarship (Year 7, Primary School Students)

A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Parent Contract. All pupils are required to reapply for their scholarships into 6<sup>th</sup> Form.

### Purpose of Scholarships

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered a 10% reduction in the fees throughout their time at The Oratory and additional non-financial benefits. We also offer a limited number of exhibitions for those applicants who may not quite reach the standard of a scholarship but show talent in their chosen field. Parents are asked to indicate whether they are interested in applying for a scholarship. Details of the arrangements will be sent to all who express an interest.

We encourage parents of scholars who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the tuition fees to apply (at the same as registration of their child) for one of the School's means-tested bursaries described below.

Full details of the scholarships can be found in the Scholarships Booklet, available on our website and by contacting the Admissions Department who can arrange to send it to you via email or by post.

## **10. Bursaries**

The Oratory's bursary programme is designed to make it possible for as many as possible of those who meet The Oratory's entry criteria to take up a place here. The School offers means-tested awards annually to entrants at the usual points of entry, where the parents have indicated on the Registration Form that they require financial support. Bursaries are means-tested in accordance with the criteria published on the School's website from time to time. Both parents are required to provide proof of their income and assets. The level of support varies according to parental need; but can extend to 40% in cases of proven need.

Bursaries are always offered for 12 months at a time. The 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 or wealth.

Where possible we like to offer a small number of means-tested transformational bursaries where exceptional talent is recognised.

Our Bursaries policy can be obtained from the Bursar at [bursary@oratory.co.uk](mailto:bursary@oratory.co.uk)

A bursary may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or otherwise in accordance with the School's Parent Contract (Terms and Conditions).

## 11. Financial Information

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary or scholarship is granted).

## 12. Overseas Applicants

The Oratory School welcomes applications from overseas pupils and values the international diversity they bring to our community.

Each overseas pupil must have appropriate guardianship arrangements in place before joining the School. **A guardian must be based in the United Kingdom, be over 25 years of age, and be either a British citizen or have settled status in the UK.** The guardian may be a relative, a nominated family friend, or a professional guardian appointed through an accredited guardianship agency. They must live within a two hour commute of the School.

The guardian acts in loco parentis and must be available to accommodate the pupil during school holidays, exeats, or in the event of illness or emergency. All guardianship arrangements must meet the School's safeguarding requirements and be approved by the School prior to admission.

Admission decisions for overseas applicants are based on recent school reports, online assessments in Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning, English language proficiency tests (where appropriate), and a video interview. Pupils wishing to study Mathematics at A Level also complete a Mathematics Pre-Test.

Before entry, pupils are expected to demonstrate a sufficient level of English to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life. English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is available at an additional charge, including one-to-one tuition where required.

The Oratory School holds a Sponsor Licence with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for both Child Student and Student Visas. Once a place has been confirmed by receipt of the deposit

and all required documentation under UKVI regulations, the School will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

Further details regarding overseas students, guardianship requirements, and immigration matters can be found in the School's Terms and Conditions and on our website.

### **13. Religious Beliefs**

Although The Oratory is a Roman Catholic school, we do not select for entry based on religious belief, and we seek to offer the opportunity for those of other faiths to practise their own beliefs. However, it is a requirement that all students study Religious Studies up to and including Year 11, whilst in Years 12 and 13 every student receives one lesson per week of non-examined Religious Education. We do expect all students to attend whole school acts of worship, even if they choose not to actively participate.

### **14. School's Contractual Terms & Conditions**

Copies of the school's Terms and Conditions are sent to all parents as part of the admissions process. Additional and subsequent copies are available on request. They are also available on the school's website.

### **15. Complaints**

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our admissions process; however, if you are unsatisfied with any aspect of the process you should contact the Bursar to share your views. The School's Complaints Procedure applies to current parents and students only.

### **16. Records and Review**

Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation. Please see the School's 'Privacy Notice - Current, Past and Prospective Pupils and their Parents' on the School's website for further information about how the School collects, uses and processes personal data.

The School will not hold the personal data of you or your child for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose and in accordance with our Data Retention Guidelines. This will generally be no more than 12 months following an unsuccessful application, but reasons to retain personal data for longer might include: if the parents express an interest in the candidate re-applying for any reason at a later date; or to deal with any ongoing matters or queries arising from the application.