Policy: Criteria and Procedures for Entry to West Buckland School

"The highest reward for your toil is not what you get for it but what you become by it."
John Ruskin

Introduction

At West Buckland School, we place strong emphasis on nurturing values that shape pupils into well-rounded individuals. Our aim is to support their development not only through academic achievement but through a holistic educational journey where the process of learning is valued as much as the outcome.

We aspire to prepare students to become thoughtful, capable people who can make a meaningful difference in the world. While we recognise the importance of results, our education extends far beyond the classroom. At the heart of our approach are the five values which underpin and guide our holistic vision. We strive to cultivate young people who are: Honest, Kind, Resilient, Curious and Respectful. We welcome applications from pupils of all backgrounds

West Buckland School is proud of its strong track record for value added. Regardless of their starting point, many pupils significantly exceed expectations when compared to national averages. Our supportive and enriching environment empowers students to achieve more than they thought possible both academically and personally. Being part of West Buckland School makes a measurable and meaningful difference to their performance and growth.

We work hard to create a stimulating, caring environment for our pupils, one where they can fulfil their personal bests. We are looking for young people who will get the most out of, and enjoy, the opportunities that West Buckland School provides – academic, sport, cultural, social – and who will make their own contribution to school life.

To achieve this, we have developed an admissions process which does not just look at a pupil's academic ability, but also their potential and whether they will be happy here. We believe the process is fair and sensitive to individual needs. We warmly invite you to visit West Buckland either by attending one of our open mornings or by booking a personal tour.

All enquiries, visits, registrations, and admissions to West Buckland School at all levels are communicated and managed via the Admissions Office.

Contact Details

Mr. Tim Leveridge 01598 760179 or e-mail: admissions@westbuckland.com
Further details are available on the school website: https://www.westbuckland.com/admissions/

Admission Procedure

Whilst we are proud to operate a broad and inclusive entry policy, it is nevertheless selective. Entry criteria are fair, applied to all external applicants and designed to ensure that all pupils joining us are able to access and thrive within our curriculum. We accept applications at all stages of entry and are committed to supporting each pupil's potential from the moment they arrive.

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1. Registration

Parents can register their child for entry at any time by completing the online Registration Form*, uploading the required supporting documents, and paying a non-refundable registration fee. The online registration form can be accessed here **www.westbuckland.com/register**. Once registered, parents can create an account and submit the form directly through the link.

Registration does not guarantee admission, nor does it constitute an offer of a place. It is also not binding for parents.

Prospective parents should clearly identify any relevant information, such as SEND, medical, pastoral, behavioural, or other considerations on the admissions form. This helps ensure we can provide the best possible support for prospective pupils from the outset.

Once the form is submitted, parents should receive an email from the Admissions Team within 24 hours.

*Nursery applications are completed on a separate form, shared by admissions as part of the enrolment process.

School Visit and Personal Tour

Prospective parents and pupils are warmly invited to visit the school. Each visit includes:

- A personal tour of the school
- A meeting with the Head *(should the prospective family wish to meet the Head)*
- An opportunity to speak with our Admissions team
- Conversations with key members of staff

Visits are available on weekdays by appointment and offer an excellent opportunity to experience the school in action during a typical working day.

Open Days

Open Days happen regularly throughout the year as well as a bespoke Sixth Form introduction and information evening in October. Details of exact dates and times are available on our website and notified to agents. Virtual Open Days are also offered to enable families outside of the UK to discover the school.

International Admissions:

Students applying for a place at West Buckland School for less than one academic year are assessed through a streamlined admissions process. Offers are made based on:

- A recommendation from the student's educational agent
- A recent school report

- A short introductory piece of writing by the student
- An online interview with a senior member of staff

This process ensures that each short-term student is well suited to benefit from their time at West Buckland School.

Students wishing to enrol as full-time pupils at West Buckland School will be invited to complete the admissions process, which includes:

- An interview, either during a recruitment event or conducted online via Microsoft Teams
- Completion of appropriate online entrance assessments

2. **Securing a place at West Buckland School:**

Entry into the Nursery

Children and parents should visit and arrange to spend a day or a half-day at the school, including time with the Head of Prep and the Nursery manager, before a place is offered. The number of sessions and availability on certain days may vary, but we try to accommodate the needs of the child and parents when offering a place.

Entry into Prep School (Reception to Prep 6)

Parents interested in enrolling their child at West Buckland Preparatory School are invited to visit the school on a normal school day. The visit includes a meeting with the Head of Prep and a taster day for the child, allowing them to experience life at the school first-hand. Before the taster day is arranged, the Admissions Team will request a recent school or nursery report(s). During the visit the child will take part in regular timetabled lessons where teachers will observe and informally assess:

- Their attitude to learning
- Ability to engage with the academic pace
- Behaviour and social skills.

Where there is a known SEND need, or if concerns arise during the taster day, the child may spend some time with the SENDCo or be invited back for a separate assessment. If a taster day is not possible, a standardised assessment will be conducted online via Teams. Any subsequent offer of a place is conditional on a successful taster day at a later date where feasible.

For pupils applying to join Year 4 and above, we may require a standardised assessment in addition to the taster day. This helps ensure that each child is well placed to succeed at the school.

For children currently attending our Nursery and transitioning into reception, students will be assessed against the Prep School's entry criteria to confirm readiness for the next stage of learning.

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Entry to the Senior School (Years 7 to 11)

Students studying at West Buckland School are expected to continue through the natural transition points: into Senior School (Year 7) and later into Sixth Form (Year 12). However, if the Head of the Preparatory School has concerns about a student's suitability for entry into the Senior School this will be discussed with parent. In such cases, progression into the Senior School cannot be guaranteed, and may be subject to further review.

External prospective students are required to complete an entrance assessment comprised of computer-based standardised tests. The Admissions Team will request a school report(s) from the student's current school prior to making the arrangements to meet a Senior member of the teaching team for a formal interview.

For students whose first language is not English, there is no expectation to study the full range of GCSE subjects. The curriculum is adapted to support their language development and academic success.

Entrance assessments for overseas applicants are arranged through their supporting educational agent, ensuring a smooth and tailored admissions process.

Entry to the Sixth Form (Years 12 – 13)

The Sixth Form at West Buckland is designed to prepare young people for life beyond school, recognising that each pathway, whether academic, vocational, or personal, will be different. We aim to support all aspirations, but students are expected to take guidance on the most suitable subjects and courses for their goals.

Course suitability is determined through collaboration between the student, parents, and relevant staff. Full entry requirements and course details are outlined in our *Sixth Form Brochure*.

Students currently at West Buckland School will receive advice during Years 10 and 11. If there are concerns about a student's readiness for Sixth Form study, these will typically be discussed with the student and their parents by the Spring Term of Year 11.

To be accepted onto the standard A-level programme at West Buckland School, students are expected to have achieved a minimum of five GCSE passes at grade 5 or above. However, individual circumstances are always considered, and personalised advice is provided.

Subject-specific entry requirements are as follows:

- **A-level subjects**: A minimum of grade 5 in the relevant GCSE subject is expected.
- **Business**: No prior GCSE qualification is required. Please make an enquiry through the Admissions Manager.
- **Modern Languages**: At least a grade 6 at GCSE is expected.
- **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics**: A minimum of grade 7 at GCSE is required.
- **Further Mathematics**: A minimum of grade 8 at GCSE Mathematics is required.

- **Psychology**: Students should have achieved grade 5 or higher in English Language, Mathematics, and at least one science subject.

Full details are available in the *Sixth Form Brochure*, and guidance is provided to current students during Years 10 and 11.

Entry to the Boarding Community at West Buckland School

Boarding at West Buckland is highly popular, offering pupils the time, space, and support to fully immerse themselves in the richness of school life. The school offers full and weekly boarding packages. More details can be found on the website. Boarding is available to those who have a confirmed place in the school.

West Buckland School offers both Flexi and Ad-Hoc boarding options for day pupils, providing added flexibility for families. These options are particularly helpful for parents who may need boarding support due to work commitments or other personal reasons.

They are also ideal for pupils attending late evening school events or early morning training sessions, allowing them to stay on site and make the most of school life without added travel stress.

Entry for Children with Specific Learning Requirements

West Buckland School aims to provide the right learning environment for every child. We continually develop our provision to meet the learning needs through a suitable curriculum. The schools Disability Policy provides further details.

Decisions to offer a place at West Buckland School are based on a careful assessment of:

- The individual needs of the child
- The school's ability to provide appropriate support
- Available resources within the school

As a general guide, the school is equipped to support pupils with mild to moderate learning needs. Our priority is to ensure that each pupil is matched with the right course and environment to help them thrive. Any offer of a place will be contingent on this agreement.

If specialised one-to-one support is identified as beneficial, either during the admissions process or at any point during the pupil's time at the school, this can be arranged at the parent's expense, in line with our support policy.

Summary Table of Entry Criteria

Entry Stage	Criteria	Process
Nursery	Ability to access the: • Nursery provision	• Visit • Tour with Admissions Team

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	Curriculum	• Meeting with the Head of Nursery
Years R-6	• Attitudes to learning • Potential to cope with the academic pace • A level of independence relevant to the year group • Good behaviour and social skills	• Visit • Tour with Head • Taster Day • Current school reports and any other assessments • Entrance assessment where applicable
Year 7-11	• Potential to achieve at least 5 GCSE passes at grade 5 or above. • Determination to work hard and improve	• Standardised assessment • Meet with Head of Middle School/Head Current school reports and any other assessments
Sixth Form	• Five GCSE passes at grade 5 or above for the A-level programme and the necessary grades in chosen subjects.	• Offer based on current performance and potential • Meet with Head of Sixth Form • Current school reports and any other assessments, e.g. subject specific

Assessment for Entry:

All prospective pupils, except those applying for Year 7, are assessed upon application, unless they are attending a scholarship interview

Due to limited availability of places in Year 7, West Buckland School hosts three dedicated assessment days, each accommodating approximately16 - 18 candidates:

- **First**: Summer Term of Year 5
- **Second**: Autumn Term of Year 6 (usually in November)
- **Third**: January of Year 6

More details can be found on our Admissions page on the website:
www.westbuckland.com/admissions/.

If a prospective student is unable to attend one of the scheduled assessment dates, parents should contact admissions directly. The admissions team are happy to arrange an individual assessment where needed.

3. **Financial Assistance**

West Buckland School is committed to making its education accessible to as many children as possible, so they can benefit from the opportunities and values it offers. In addition to armed forces

CEA, and sibling discounts, there are three other routes to secure financial assistance with the tuition fees. All awards are reviewed annually and are tenable until the end of Year 11, or Year 13 for 16+.

More information can be found about our fees and discounts here:
https://westbuckland.com/admissions/fees//

1. **Scholarships**
   These are available at point of entry at the discretion of the Head. The most usual assessment points are into Year 7, 9 and 12.
2. **Foundation Bursaries**
   A limited number of bursaries are available through the Foundation
   https://www.westbuckland.com/about/foundation/
3. **Siblings**
   Where siblings are on roll at the school at the same time, siblings are entitled to the following remission:
   - second sibling,10%
   - third sibling, 15%
   - fourth sibling and subsequent children 20%.
4. **Means Tested Bursaries**
   Awards are based on financial need, are available at all entry levels. Means tested bursaries are designed to support pupils who would not otherwise be able to access a West Buckland education. They are not dependent on the award of any type of Scholarship, but may be awarded in conjunction with this.; they are made subject to the student meeting the appropriate entry requirement and on completion of a confidential statement, and assessment, of means balanced against the school's available funding.

Scholarships

All scholars are enrolled on our scholarship programme, which is designed to support and develop their talents in their chosen area. Full details of the programme, including criteria and expectations, are available on the school website.

Scholarships may include fee remission, but it is important to note that not all awards carry financial benefit. In addition to any remission, the school invests further resources to provide scholars with enhanced opportunities and experiences.

Scholarships are awarded in the following areas:

- Academic
- Music
- Sport
- Drama
- Art

Awards are based on both excellence and attitude. The assessment process includes school reports, relevant data, and performance during interviews or on designated assessment days. Dates and

application details are published on the website, and applications should be made directly to the Admissions Team.

Scholarship	Requirements	Process
Academic	Letter of application, latest attainment and predicted grades, and school reports	Interviews and written tasks
Art	Letter of application, references, assessment/portfolio review and interview	Assessment Day
Drama	Letter of application, references, assessment/audition and interview	Assessment Day
Music	Letter of application, references, assessment/audition and interview	Assessment Day
Sport	Letter of application, references, assessment and interview	Assessment Day

Please see the scholarship section of our website for further information on criteria and expectations. https://www.westbuckland.com/admissions/scholarships

4. **Confirmation**

In most cases, following the entry procedure, a formal offer of a place will be made. However, if the Head has any concerns, whether academic, behavioural, or related to additional needs, the prospective student may be invited back for further observation or more formal assessments.

Based on the outcome, one of the following decisions will be made:

- A formal offer of a place
- A conditional offer (e.g. subject to SEND support or other arrangements)
- No offer of a place

This ensures that each child is placed in an environment where they can thrive and receive the appropriate level of support.

Acceptance of a place at West Buckland School is confirmed through a refundable deposit and subject to them satisfying the relevant entrance requirements.

Progression through the school

Once a child joins West Buckland, they are expected to progress through the year groups automatically.

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The criteria in the Summary of Entry Criteria table above applies equally to current and prospective pupils. In addition, transition between educational key stages provides further opportunities to assess progress. Where the Head has concerns about the suitability of a pupil transitioning, the matter will be discussed with the parents in advance.

Author/Updated by: Director of Marketing & Communications, Admissions Officer
Reviewed: September 2025
Amended: April 2026
Next Reviewed: September 2026