STATUTORY SCHOOL POLICY • 2026–27

Admissions Policy

Fair, transparent and safeguarding-led admissions for day, boarding and international students at Earlscliffe.

Role	Name / detail
Headteacher	Dr N Robinson
Admissions lead	Mrs Julie Fish
Deputy Headteacher & DSL	Mr L Connolly
Effective	1 September 2026

Document control

Control	Record
Policy title	Admissions Policy
School	Earlscliffe
Policy owner	Mrs Julie Fish, Co-founder and Director of Marketing & Admissions
Accountable leader	Dr N Robinson, Headteacher
Approval authority	Governing Body
Version	2026.1
Prepared	September 2026
Effective from	1 September 2026
Next formal review	Before 1 September 2027, or earlier following statutory or operational change
Applies to	All applicants, parents, guardians, agents, students, staff and governors

Approval and review record

Control	Record
Approved by	Dr N Robinson
Approval date	To be completed
Review completed by	Mrs Julie Fish / Mr L Connolly
Date of next review	Before 1 September 2027

Changes in this edition

- Rewritten using the National College admissions-policy structure while adapting it for an independent, fee-paying day and boarding school.
- Clarifies entry routes, academic and English-language requirements, assessment, SEND and medical information, international applicants, guardians, boarding suitability, offers, deposits, late arrival and complaints.
- Updates terminology, leadership responsibilities and safeguarding expectations for the 2026–27 academic year.

Contents

1. Statement of intent
2. Legal framework and scope
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. School capacity and admissions principles
5. Entry routes and programme suitability
6. Entry requirements
7. Applications and supporting information
8. Assessment and decision-making
9. SEND, disability, medical and wellbeing needs
10. International applicants, guardians and immigration
11. Offers, acceptance and fees
12. Late arrival and changes before enrolment
13. In-year admissions, waiting lists and reapplication
14. Admissions decisions, complaints and review
15. Monitoring and review
16. Related policies and documents

1. Statement of intent

Earlscliffe welcomes applications from students who can benefit from, contribute to and participate safely in the education and boarding or day provision offered by the School. Admissions decisions are made fairly, consistently and transparently, with regard to academic suitability, English-language readiness, age and maturity, wellbeing, safeguarding, available support and the capacity of the chosen programme.

Earlscliffe is a co-educational, non-denominational, day and boarding independent school serving students on GCSE, pre-A-level, A-level, Business and Management Diploma and University Foundation Year programmes. The School is registered to enrol up to a maximum of 160 students. The admissions process is intended to help applicants and their parents, guardians and agents make an informed decision about whether Earlscliffe is the right setting.

CORE PRINCIPLE Admission is a partnership. The School must understand the applicant's needs and circumstances, and families must provide complete and accurate information so that Earlscliffe can make a safe, lawful and properly informed decision.

2. Legal framework and scope

This policy has regard to the following legislation, statutory requirements and guidance, as applicable to an independent school in England:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the requirement to publish particulars of the school's admissions policy and arrangements.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, where relevant to safeguarding and welfare.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- The SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years.
- Department for Education guidance on applications from overseas children and UK Visas and Immigration requirements, where relevant.
- Consumer protection and contract law as applicable to the School's published terms and conditions.

The DfE School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code apply to maintained schools and academies rather than fee-paying independent schools. Earlscliffe nevertheless adopts the principles of fair, clear, objective and non-discriminatory admissions practice. This policy does not create a statutory right of appeal. Concerns about the process may be raised through the School's Complaints Policy.

This policy operates alongside the following Earlscliffe policies and documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Boarding Principles and Practice
- Student Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Terms and Conditions
- Admissions and Enrolment Procedures

3. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Governing Body	Approves the policy, provides strategic oversight and assures itself that admissions arrangements are fair, lawful, transparent and compatible with the School's registered capacity and safeguarding duties.
Headteacher	Has final responsibility for admission decisions, including decisions involving suitability, exceptional circumstances, late arrival, health or safeguarding risk, and withdrawal of an offer.
Co-founder and Director of Marketing & Admissions	Leads the operational admissions process, ensures applicants receive accurate information and coordinates admissions, agents, guardians, finance and senior staff.
Deputy Headteacher and DSL	Advises on safeguarding, welfare, boarding suitability, medical or mental-health risk and information that may need to be shared before an admission decision.
SENCo / Faculty Lead for Inclusion and Student Development	Assesses disclosed or identified SEND, advises on reasonable adjustments and confirms whether needs can be supported within the School's provision.
Admissions team	Maintains application records, checks required documentation, coordinates assessments and interviews, issues offers under delegated authority and keeps a clear audit trail.
House Managers and pastoral staff	Contribute to boarding suitability and risk assessment, including accommodation, supervision, guardianship, health, medication, travel and out-of-hours support.
Parents, guardians and agents	Provide complete and accurate information, respond promptly to requests, disclose relevant needs and comply with the School's terms, deadlines and safeguarding requirements.
Applicants and students	Participate honestly and respectfully in the admissions process and engage with assessments, interviews and pre-arrival requirements.

4. School capacity and admissions principles

The School's admissions capacity is determined by its registration, available accommodation, staffing, programme capacity, health and safety arrangements and ability to provide effective education and safeguarding. The School may decline an application where admitting the student would exceed registered capacity, compromise safe boarding or day provision, or prejudice the effective education, welfare or progress of the applicant or other students.

The School's admissions principles are:

- Applications are considered individually and against published requirements.
- Decisions are based on relevant evidence and not on race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, social background or area of residence.
- The School does not select students on the basis of religious belief. Students are expected to respect the School's non-denominational ethos and the ACE values of Ambition, Connection and Excellence.
- The School will make reasonable adjustments where required by law and where it can do so safely and effectively.
- The School will not knowingly admit a student whose needs it cannot meet safely or whose programme cannot be completed successfully within the available provision.
- Admissions decisions will be recorded with sufficient reasons and evidence to support consistency, accountability and review.

5. Entry routes and programme suitability

The principal entry points are 15+ and 16+ at the beginning of the academic year. Earlscliffe may also offer January entry for the five-term A-level programme and the Pre-A programme. Admission at other times or into another year may be considered where there is a place and the student can access, progress through and complete the proposed programme.

Programme	Typical entry point	Key suitability considerations
A-level	Lower Sixth / Year 12; selected January entry	Academic profile, subject prerequisites, English-language readiness, interview and assessment.
GCSE One Year Programme	Year 11 equivalent	Academic readiness, English-language development, maturity and capacity to complete the programme.
Business and Management Diploma / University Foundation Year	Post-16	Academic profile, English-language readiness, mathematics where required and progression objectives.
Pre-A	Preparation for A-level study	English-language development, readiness for the academic demands of the programme and pastoral support needs.

Entrants will normally be placed on a programme appropriate to their age, prior attainment, maturity and intended progression. A programme at variance with age may be considered where the School is satisfied that it is educationally appropriate and in the student's best interests.

Progression from the One Year GCSE or Pre-A programme into Lower Sixth is not automatic. Internal students may be given preference if there is oversubscription, but progression remains subject to satisfactory performance, predicted or achieved grades, English-language readiness, subject requirements, conduct and available capacity.

6. Entry requirements

Programme	English-language expectation	Academic expectation
A-level	IELTS Academic 5.5 or equivalent	Evidence of academic ability at five IGCSEs/GCSEs grade 6 or equivalent, subject to the chosen subjects.
GCSE One Year Programme	IELTS Academic 4.5 or equivalent	Evidence of academic ability to cope with the demands of the course.
Business and Management Diploma / University Foundation Year	IELTS Academic 5.5 or equivalent	IGCSE/GCSE Mathematics grade 4 or equivalent where required, plus evidence of academic readiness.
Pre-A	IELTS Academic 4.5 or equivalent	Evidence of readiness for the programme and capacity to benefit from English-language preparation.

Evidence may include current or previous school reports, translated academic transcripts, examination results, predicted grades, a reference from a current or previous school, recognised English-language qualifications, an admissions assessment and interview.

- Students wishing to study A-level Mathematics or Physics will normally require a minimum grade 6 at IGCSE/GCSE level or equivalent. The School may require an entry test.
- Students wishing to study A-level Further Mathematics will normally require a minimum grade 7 at IGCSE/GCSE level or equivalent. The School may require an entry test.
- Students who do not meet a published requirement may be considered individually where there are credible extenuating circumstances and the Headteacher is satisfied that the student can access, progress and complete the programme.
- Entry requirements may be reviewed where examination specifications, university expectations, immigration requirements or programme design change.

7. Applications and supporting information

An application is considered complete when the School has received the application form and the information reasonably required to assess academic, pastoral, health, safeguarding, boarding and contractual suitability. The School may ask for additional information where the available evidence is incomplete or inconsistent.

- Applicant's full legal name, date of birth, nationality and current address.
- Passport or other identity document, where applicable.
- Current and previous school reports, transcripts, predicted grades and references.
- English-language evidence and relevant assessment results.
- Information about SEND, disability, medical needs, mental health, medication, allergies, dietary requirements and access arrangements.
- Safeguarding or welfare information that may affect safe attendance, boarding or the School's ability to provide appropriate support.
- Parent, guardian and agent details, including who holds parental responsibility and who may make decisions for the student.
- For boarders, proposed UK guardian arrangements, emergency contacts, travel and leave information and any relevant accommodation or supervision requirements.

FULL AND ACCURATE DISCLOSURE Parents, guardians and agents must provide complete and accurate information. Failure to disclose relevant medical, SEND, safeguarding, behavioural, legal, guardianship or financial information may affect the School's ability to make a safe decision and may result in an offer being reviewed or withdrawn.

8. Assessment and decision-making

Applicants will normally complete an admissions interview and a CAT4, Quest or other appropriate assessment. The purpose is to understand the applicant's readiness, aspirations, learning profile, English-language needs, maturity and suitability for the chosen programme. Interviews may be conducted by the Headteacher, an Admissions Manager, a senior member of staff or the SENCo where appropriate.

The interview is intended to be informative and supportive. It gives the applicant and family an opportunity to understand Earlscliffe and allows the School to explore:

- Whether the applicant is of appropriate age and maturity for the proposed course and day or boarding arrangement.
- Whether the applicant's academic profile and assessment evidence indicate that success in the chosen programme is achievable.
- Whether the applicant can participate safely and positively in the School community.
- Whether identified learning, medical, mental-health or pastoral needs can be supported within the School's normal provision or through clearly agreed additional arrangements.
- Whether the applicant understands and can comply with the Student Code of Conduct, boarding expectations and safeguarding arrangements.
- Whether the family can meet the financial and contractual commitments associated with the programme.

The School will keep a written record of the assessment, interview, evidence considered, decision, any conditions attached to an offer and the name of the person authorising the decision. The School may decline an application where evidence is insufficient to support a safe and informed decision.

9. SEND, disability, medical and wellbeing needs

Earlscliffe welcomes applications from students with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions and mental-health needs where the School can make reasonable adjustments and provide safe and effective support. The School will consider the applicant's needs, the physical environment, staffing, specialist advice, boarding arrangements, medical provision and the impact on the student and the wider community.

- Applicants and parents should provide relevant reports and advice, including educational psychologist, medical, occupational therapy, speech and language, mental-health or other professional reports where available.
- The School may request an up-to-date assessment or further information before confirming an offer or before a student starts.
- The SENCo, School Nurse, Mental Health Lead, DSL, House Manager and relevant senior staff may contribute to the assessment with appropriate consent or lawful information-sharing arrangements.
- Reasonable adjustments will be discussed and recorded. Additional support funded by parents may be considered where it is proportionate, appropriate and agreed in advance.
- The School will not automatically refuse an application because a student has SEND or a disability. It will assess whether the requested support can be provided without compromising safety, effective education or the welfare of the student and others.
- The School cannot guarantee provision that it was not told about or did not have a reasonable opportunity to assess before admission.

10. International applicants, guardians and immigration

Earlscliffe welcomes international applicants and recognises the additional responsibilities involved in admitting students who may be living away from their parents. The School will work with parents, guardians and reputable agents to establish clear responsibility, communication and safeguarding arrangements before enrolment.

- The School will verify identity and request documentation required for enrolment and, where applicable, UKVI compliance.
- Parents must identify an appropriate UK guardian where required by the School's boarding and safeguarding arrangements. The guardian's identity, address, relationship to the student and availability may be checked. All international boarding students whose parents reside outside the United Kingdom, irrespective of their age, are required to have appropriate UK-based guardianship or emergency support arrangements in place throughout their enrolment at Earlscliffe. For students aged 18 and over, this may take the form of a nominated responsible adult or professional educational guardianship service. Such arrangements must provide appropriate practical support, emergency assistance and access to alternative accommodation where necessary, whilst respecting the student's legal status and autonomy as an adult.
- Parents, guardians and agents must provide reliable emergency contact details and agree how urgent decisions will be made.
- Boarding applicants must provide complete medical, medication, travel, leave and accommodation information before arrival.
- The School may delay or decline enrolment where the proposed guardianship or accommodation arrangements are not sufficiently clear or safe.

- The School does not provide immigration advice and families remain responsible for obtaining the correct visa or immigration permission. The School will provide relevant information and documentation within its responsibilities.
- No applicant will be rejected solely because of nationality, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief or country of residence.

International students will receive information about UK law, safeguarding, equality, the Student Code of Conduct, mobile-phone arrangements, boarding expectations, attendance, medical support, leave and how to report a concern.

11. Offers, acceptance and fees

Following assessment, the School may issue a conditional or unconditional offer. An offer may be subject to specified academic results, English-language evidence, satisfactory references, receipt of required medical or safeguarding information, confirmation of guardianship, visa documentation, availability of a suitable programme or other stated conditions.

- Parents, guardians or agents who wish to proceed must confirm acceptance by the deadline stated in the offer.
- The Acceptance Form, Terms and Conditions, Registration Fee and Deposit are part of the enrolment process. The contract with Earlscliffe is formed in accordance with the accepted Terms and Conditions.
- A student is placed on the Entry List only when the required acceptance documentation and payments have been received, unless the Headteacher authorises an alternative arrangement in writing.
- The School may withdraw or review an offer if information is materially incomplete or inaccurate, conditions are not met, fees or deposits are not paid, the student's circumstances change, or the School concludes that it cannot safely provide the proposed education or boarding arrangement.
- Scholarships may be available in accordance with the School's published arrangements. A scholarship does not remove the contractual responsibility to pay fees and other charges unless expressly stated in writing.
- The School will provide parents with the relevant Terms and Conditions and expects families to retain them for their records.

12. Late arrival and changes before enrolment

If a student cannot arrive and start the course on time, the School may undertake an Academic and Pastoral Review. This review will normally take place if the student has not started within three weeks of the published course start date, but may take place earlier where appropriate.

The review may consider attendance, academic access, English-language development, programme completion, safeguarding, health, boarding, immigration, guardianship, finances and the effect of delay on the student and the wider community. Following review, the School may:

- Keep the offer in place, subject to further review.
- Keep the offer in place with additional agreed support or conditions.
- Change the proposed programme or start date where this is educationally appropriate and available.
- Withdraw the offer where the student cannot reasonably access, progress through or complete the course or where safe provision cannot be assured.

Families must notify the School promptly of any change in health, safeguarding, family, guardianship, immigration, financial or educational circumstances between application, offer, acceptance and arrival.

13. In-year admissions, waiting lists and reapplication

Applications outside the main entry points may be considered where there is a suitable place, the student can join the programme without unreasonable disadvantage and the School can provide safe and effective support. The School will normally seek to agree a start date that allows the student to settle, receive induction and access the curriculum properly.

Where there are more suitable applicants than available places, the School may maintain an internal waiting list. Placement on a waiting list does not guarantee an offer and may be reviewed if the applicant's circumstances, programme availability or entry requirements change. The School may prioritise continuity of education, programme suitability, internal progression and safeguarding considerations, provided that decisions remain lawful and non-discriminatory.

An applicant who is not offered a place may reapply where circumstances or evidence have materially changed. A new application will be considered on the evidence available at that time.

14. Admissions decisions, complaints and review

The School will communicate admissions decisions to the applicant, parent, guardian or agent as appropriate. Where an application is declined, the School will normally provide a clear explanation of the principal reason or reasons, subject to confidentiality, safeguarding, data-protection and legal considerations.

Because Earlscliffe is an independent school, this policy does not provide a statutory admissions appeal route. A parent, guardian or applicant who believes that the admissions process was not followed, was discriminatory or was handled unfairly may raise the matter in writing through the Complaints Policy. The Headteacher or Governing Body may review the process and evidence; this review does not require the School to offer a place where the admissions decision was lawful and reasonable.

The School will keep admissions records securely and retain them in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and records-management arrangements. Information will be shared only where there is a lawful basis and where sharing is necessary and proportionate.

15. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Admissions Lead will monitor the effectiveness, fairness and consistency of the admissions process through application and conversion data, feedback from applicants and families, agent feedback, complaints, safeguarding reviews, SEND and medical admission reviews, boarding readiness checks and quality-assurance activity.

- The Governing Body will receive appropriate assurance about admissions capacity, fairness, safeguarding and compliance.
- The School will review the policy at least annually and sooner where legislation, inspection requirements, registration, programme design, boarding arrangements or operational experience changes.
- Changes will be communicated to staff, relevant agents, parents and guardians, and published where appropriate.
- Operational contacts, forms, fees, programme details and entry requirements may be updated during the year without changing the principles of this policy, provided that changes are approved and communicated appropriately.

16. Related policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026–27
- Prevent Duty Policy 2026–27
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Boarding Principles and Practice
- Student Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy 2026–27
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Terms and Conditions
- Admissions and Enrolment Procedures
- Student and Parent Handbook