

THE ISLAND FREE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2015

The Island Free School is a new, state funded and OfSTED regulated school offering a fully academic curriculum for Island pupils in Years 7 to 11. The Island Free School has admitted its first cohort of 125 Year 7 pupils this September and is based in Ventnor. It is an academic, smaller secondary school with strong pastoral care. The school has 125 pupils in each year group and tutor groups have two staff allocated to each of them. The school has a music specialism and offers ten per cent of places based on musical aptitude. All students are encouraged to play at least one musical instrument.

The Island Free School offers a fully academic curriculum to all students, taught by fully qualified staff. All students begin their GCSE programme in Year 9 and study subjects included in the English Baccalaureate. Students also have the opportunity to choose a minimum of two further option subjects. The Island Free School has a longer than average day with a compulsory extra-curricular hour for all students offering a wide range of enrichment activities including sports, dance, drama and music. The extra-curricular hour is also used to offer academic intervention when needed to support students.

How to apply

To apply for the Island Free School you must complete the local authority application form (CAF) naming the school plus also complete the schools online application form on the schools website www.theislandfreeschool.org.

There will be more information at the open day and evening events from the 1 September 2014.

Deadlines for applying

The deadline for returning your application form to The Island Free School is 31st October by 4.30pm.

The policy for admission to the school

The governors' admissions panel will admit 125 pupils to Year 7 in September 2015. If the number of applications to The Island Free School is less than the admission number then all children will be offered places, no matter where they live. Should there be more applications than the 125 places available, each application will be considered equally and in accordance with the school's admission policy.

How are places allocated?

In establishing The Island Free School, we wanted all parents on the island to feel as though their child has the opportunity of attending the school, regardless of their position or address on the Isle of Wight. We will admit pupils in one of three categories:

- Assisted music programme (10%).
- By distance from school (45%).
- Island wide area (45%).

More detail about these categories will be found below.

Oversubscribed admissions policy

If there are more applicants than places available, the criteria listed below will apply, after the admission of children with a statement of special education needs which names The Island Free School, the oversubscription criteria will be:

A Looked after children or previously looked after children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or given a residence or special guardianship order.

B Siblings: Children with a sibling attending the school at the time they would be admitted. We define siblings as children who live together as brother or sister in the same residence, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or stepsisters and foster brothers or sisters, but not cousins.

C Assisted music programme: Up to 12 pupils each year will be selected on their musical aptitude and this will be determined by an assessment taken by the pupil. Details of the assessment can be

obtained from the school's website. Assessments will be conducted in the January before the September of entry. If children apply for a place based on musical aptitude but are not successful in obtaining a place, their application will still be considered according to sections G and H below.

D Children of staff: There are two criteria we will use in admitting the children of staff to our school:

(i) Where a member of staff has been working for the school for a period of two years or more they may enrol their children.

(ii) Where a member of staff fills a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable shortage they may enrol their children.

E Founders children: These are the children of founders who have helped set up the school from the very beginning. (We are currently seeking approval for this from the Secretary of State).

F Distance from school: Half of the remaining intake will be taken from the local area around the school. Places will be offered to those pupils who live closest to the school as measured from the school gates to the child's front door. This will be a straight line measured by the local authority's geographical information system (GIS). The address for a child must be the address of the parent/carer with whom the child lives for the majority of the time and who has parental responsibility (we may require documentary evidence). If a child regularly lives at more than one address, the governing body reserves the right to reach a conclusion about which should be counted as the main address when allocating places. This will normally be the address where child benefit is paid and where the child is registered with a doctor.

G Island area – The remaining places will be allocated by random selection from all other applicants who fall outside the distance from school area. This process will be overseen by an independent adjudicator from the local authority.

Tiebreaker

In the event of two or more applications tying when the above admission criteria is applied, the positions will be determined by random allocation and as above will be overseen by someone independent of the school. However, if the tiebreaker for a place at our school is between two siblings living at the same address we will admit both children as we believe strongly that siblings should be kept together.

Offer of a place

Offers of a place at the school will be made by the governor's admissions panel on 2 March 2014 (national offer day). For those who are unsuccessful there will be the opportunity to go on the school's waiting list and if parents wish to appeal the decision by the school there will be information in the letter outlining their right to appeal and details of the appeals process. The governor's admissions panel reserve the right to withdraw an offer of a place before September 2015 where it is found that it has been made on the basis of a false or misleading application from a parent.

Right to appeal

If the governors are unable to offer a place at the school, parents have the right of appeal to the independent appeal panel. They have 20 days from the date the letter of refusal was posted to prepare and lodge their written appeal.

How do I apply at other times?

Applications for a place at other times of the year will be considered. Information and application forms may be obtained directly from the school, and then returned to the school once completed.

Waiting list

All pupils who applied to the school but were not given an offer of a place will be placed on our waiting list, unless parents tell us otherwise. If a space becomes available at the school we will allocate pupils from our waiting list in the following way:

- Distance – If a space becomes available from this category then we will admit the next pupil on our waiting list that lives the closest to the school geographically.
- Island-wide area – If a space becomes available from this category then they will be allocated a place by random allocation and for each child to be allocated a place from this category a new round of random allocation must be carried out.

The waiting lists will be maintained by the office manager at the Island Free School. Towards the end of each academic year parents whose children are on the waiting list will be contacted and asked if they wish to remain on the waiting list for the next academic year.