



Admissions Policy

Policy owner: Headteacher

Applies to: Pre-School, Reception and Years 1–6

Status: Statutory / Regulatory Policy

Effective from: 1 September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Approved by: The Board of Governors

Policy Statement

SteePhill School is committed to providing a fair, transparent, inclusive and consistent admissions process for children seeking a place at the School.

As an independent school, Steephill School determines its own admission arrangements and admission criteria. Parents and carers apply directly to the School.

SteePhill School does not operate under the statutory school admissions framework applicable to maintained schools and academies. However, the School is committed to ensuring that its admission arrangements are fair, objective, transparent and compliant with all applicable legislation and the regulatory requirements applying to independent schools.

SteePhill School will not unlawfully discriminate against a child or prospective pupil, or their parent or carer, in its admission arrangements or decisions.

SteePhill School welcomes applications from children from all backgrounds and seeks to provide an inclusive educational environment in which pupils can flourish.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been reviewed against the legal and regulatory framework applying from September 2026.

SteePhill School will comply with, and where appropriate have regard to, the following:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended;
- current Department for Education Independent School Standards guidance;
- Equality Act 2010 and Part 6 provisions concerning education;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Consumer Rights Act 2015, where applicable to contractual arrangements with parents;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- current Children Missing Education statutory guidance;
- current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, where applicable;
- current DfE guidance relating to independent schools;
- relevant Kent County Council procedures where these apply to the School;
- the School's published Terms and Conditions;
- the School's Complaints Policy;
- the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- the School's SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The statutory EYFS framework applicable from 1 September 2026 must be followed for Steephill School's early years provision.

Steephill School will review this policy whenever there is a material change in legislation, regulation or DfE guidance.

3. Scope

This policy applies to applications for:

- Pre-School;
- Reception;
- Years 1–6;
- places requested during the academic year;
- transfers between year groups;
- applications for children joining from another school;
- applications for children joining from another country;
- applications involving children with SEND or disabilities;
- applications for children requiring reasonable adjustments;
- applications for children transferring from another educational setting.

It should be read alongside the School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;

- Behaviour Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Terms and Conditions;
- Fees Policy;
- Equalities / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Early Years policies and procedures.

Steepphill School's safeguarding policy applies to all pupils, including children in the School's early years provision.

4. Admissions Principles

Steepphill School's admissions process is based on the following principles:

1. **Fairness** – applications will be considered consistently and fairly.
2. **Transparency** – parents will be given clear information about the admissions process.
3. **Objectivity** – admission decisions will be based on relevant and lawful criteria.
4. **Inclusivity** – the School welcomes applications from children from diverse backgrounds.
5. **Safeguarding** – safeguarding and welfare considerations will be appropriately incorporated into the admissions process.
6. **Accessibility** – reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants.
7. **Confidentiality** – personal information will be handled lawfully and securely.
8. **Best interests of the child** – the School will consider the child's welfare, needs and ability to access the education offered.
9. **Consistency** – decisions will be recorded and capable of being explained.
10. **Proportionality** – the School will not impose requirements that are unnecessary or disproportionate.

5. Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination

Steepphill School is committed to equality of opportunity.

Steepphill School will not unlawfully discriminate against a prospective pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010:

- disability;
- race;
- sex;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity.

SteePhill School will also seek to ensure that its admission procedures do not indirectly disadvantage children or families without lawful justification.

SteePhill School recognises that equality legislation applies to independent schools.

Admission decisions will therefore not be based on assumptions, stereotypes or generalisations concerning a child's:

- disability;
- SEND;
- race or ethnicity;
- nationality;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- family structure;
- language;
- cultural background.

Where a child has a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required to the admissions process.

6. Admissions Criteria

SteePhill School is a non-selective independent primary school.

SteePhill School does not operate an entrance examination as a general condition of admission.

Where applications exceed the number of places available, we will use the following principles when determining whether a place can be offered:

1. availability of a place in the relevant year group;
2. the School's ability to provide the education and provision described in its published information;
3. the child's age and year group;
4. whether the child can reasonably access the School's curriculum and provision, taking account of reasonable adjustments and SEND considerations;
5. the date and completeness of the application;
6. continuity for children already attending Steephill School;
7. sibling connections may be taken into account where appropriate;
8. other relevant and objective circumstances identified by the Headteacher.

These criteria will be applied consistently and will not be used to discriminate unlawfully.

Steephill School reserves the right to determine whether it has sufficient capacity and appropriate provision to admit a particular pupil, including where specialist or additional provision would be required.

However, a decision concerning a child with SEND or a disability will not be based simply on the fact that the child has SEND or a disability.

Steephill School will consider the child's individual needs, the reasonable adjustments that could be made and whether we can lawfully and reasonably provide the education and support required.

7. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Steephill School welcomes applications from children with SEND and disabilities.

The School recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Parents are encouraged to provide full and accurate information about:

- identified SEND;
- disabilities;
- medical conditions;
- communication needs;
- sensory needs;

- physical needs;
- learning needs;
- emotional or mental health needs;
- behavioural or social needs;
- existing support plans;
- professional assessments;
- EHCPs;
- other relevant educational or therapeutic information.

This information is requested so that the School can assess how best to support the child and whether reasonable adjustments or additional provision may be required.

It is not intended to exclude children because they have additional needs.

Where appropriate, we may request further information from parents or relevant professionals before making an admissions decision.

SteePhill School will consider whether it can meet a child's needs safely, effectively and within the provision that it is lawfully and reasonably able to provide.

Where a child has an EHCP, the School will consider the contents of the plan and Steephill School's ability to deliver the specified provision.

SteePhill School will not represent that it can provide provision which it cannot reasonably deliver.

8. Pre-School Admissions

SteePhill School provides early years provision through its Pre-School.

Applications for Pre-School are made directly to the School.

Places are subject to:

- availability;
- the child's age;
- the sessions offered by the School;
- the School's ability to provide an appropriate and safe early years environment;

- completion of the required registration and admission documentation.

Steephill School will comply with the current EYFS statutory framework applicable from September 2026.

The EYFS framework sets mandatory standards for learning, development, care and safeguarding for children from birth to five.

Admission to Pre-School does not automatically guarantee a place in Reception.

Parents must make a separate application for a Reception place.

9. Reception Admissions

Parents wishing to apply for a Reception place must complete the School's admissions process.

Admission to Pre-School does not create an automatic entitlement to a Reception place.

Steephill School will provide parents with information about:

- the admissions process;
- the availability of places;
- the expected age of entry;
- the School's curriculum and provision;
- fees and contractual arrangements;
- relevant policies;
- any assessment or transition arrangements.

Where a child is offered a Reception place, parents will be given information concerning the proposed start date and arrangements for transition.

Where a child is below compulsory school age, Steephill School will take account of the parents' statutory rights concerning deferred admission where those rights apply to the particular admission arrangement.

10. Applications for Years 1–6

Applications for Years 1–6 are made directly to the School.

We may request information from the child's current or previous educational setting, with appropriate parental consent or where another lawful basis applies.

Information may include:

- current year group;
- academic progress;
- SEND information;
- attendance information;
- safeguarding information where lawfully appropriate;
- behaviour information where relevant;
- medical information;
- relevant professional reports.

The purpose of requesting such information is to support a safe and appropriate transition and to enable Steephill School to understand the child's educational needs.

Safeguarding information will be shared and handled in accordance with safeguarding legislation and the School's safeguarding procedures.

11. School Visits and Meetings

Where practicable, prospective families may be invited to:

- visit the School;
- meet members of the leadership team;
- meet relevant teaching staff;
- discuss the child's needs;
- view the School's facilities;
- discuss curriculum and pastoral provision.

A visit or meeting does not constitute an offer of a place.

Where appropriate, we may invite a child to attend an age-appropriate familiarisation or assessment activity.

Such activities will be proportionate to the purpose for which they are undertaken.

12. Assessment and Information Gathering

Steephill School may undertake an assessment of a prospective pupil's current attainment where this is relevant to determining:

- the appropriate year group;
- the child's educational starting point;
- appropriate curriculum provision;
- whether the School can meet the child's educational needs.

Assessment will not be used as a discriminatory barrier to admission.

For children with SEND or disabilities, reasonable adjustments will be considered.

Steephill School may request information from a child's previous school or setting where this is necessary and lawful.

13. Safeguarding and Admissions

Safeguarding is a fundamental consideration throughout the admissions process.

Steephill School may request information necessary to safeguard a child or other pupils.

Where a child transfers from another school, we will seek to ensure that relevant safeguarding information is transferred securely and promptly.

Steephill School will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026.

Steephill School's safeguarding framework specifically includes procedures relating to admission, transfer, attendance, children missing from education and information sharing.

SteePhill School will not knowingly admit a child where doing so would create an unacceptable safeguarding risk that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

Where safeguarding concerns arise during the admissions process, the Headteacher and/or DSL will determine the appropriate action.

14. Information Required from Parents

Parents will normally be required to provide sufficient information to enable the School to establish the child's identity, contact the child's parents/carers and safeguard the child.

This may include:

- child's full legal name;
- date of birth;
- current address;
- parent/carer names;
- contact details;
- emergency contacts;
- previous/current school or educational setting;
- relevant medical information;
- SEND information;
- relevant professional reports;
- nationality and immigration information where legally relevant;
- appropriate evidence of identity and/or address.

SteePhill School will only request information that is reasonably necessary for lawful admissions, safeguarding, administration or contractual purposes.

SteePhill School will not require parents to provide documents that are unnecessary or disproportionate to the purpose for which the information is being requested.

15. Proof of Identity and Address

Steepphill School may request reasonable evidence of identity and/or address where this is necessary to establish the child's identity, parental responsibility, contact information or eligibility for a particular arrangement.

Examples may include:

- passport;
- birth certificate;
- driving licence;
- utility bill;
- tenancy agreement;
- other appropriate official documentation.

Steepphill School will consider alternative evidence where a family cannot reasonably provide a particular document.

Steepphill School will not refuse an application solely because a parent cannot provide one specific form of documentation where satisfactory alternative evidence can reasonably be provided.

16. Offers of Places

An offer of a place will normally be made in writing.

An offer will specify:

- the pupil's proposed year group;
- proposed start date;
- any conditions attached to the offer;
- relevant registration requirements;
- fees and payment arrangements;
- documentation required before admission;
- arrangements for transition where applicable.

An offer does not become unconditional until any clearly stated conditions have been satisfied.

Steepphill School may withdraw an offer where:

- it was made on the basis of materially false or misleading information;
- relevant information was deliberately withheld;
- the child cannot safely access the School's provision despite reasonable adjustments;
- required contractual or registration conditions are not met;
- the School is unable to provide the required provision;
- a place was offered in error.

Any withdrawal of an offer will be considered carefully and proportionately by the Headteacher.

17. Waiting Lists

Where there are more applicants than available places, we may maintain a waiting list.

The waiting list will be maintained according to objective and consistently applied criteria.

Parents will be informed:

- that their child has been placed on the waiting list;
- where practicable, their position on the waiting list;
- that the position may change;
- that inclusion on the waiting list does not guarantee a place.

Steepphill School will review waiting lists when places become available.

Waiting lists will not be used in a discriminatory manner.

18. Applications During the Academic Year

Applications for places during the school year will be considered subject to availability.

Steepphill School will consider:

- availability within the relevant year group;
- the child's educational needs;

- the child's current educational placement;
- transition arrangements;
- safeguarding;
- SEND and reasonable adjustments;
- whether the School can provide an appropriate education and safe environment.

We aim to process applications promptly.

19. Children Joining from Overseas

Applications from families moving to the United Kingdom from overseas will be considered on the same fair and non-discriminatory basis as other applications.

SteePhill School may request appropriate evidence concerning:

- identity;
- address;
- previous education;
- parental responsibility;
- immigration status where relevant to our legal obligations;
- SEND or medical needs;
- safeguarding information.

SteePhill School will not discriminate unlawfully on grounds of nationality or race.

20. Children Who Are Looked After or Previously Looked After

SteePhill School welcomes applications for children who are:

- looked after by a local authority;
- previously looked after;
- subject to special guardianship arrangements;
- otherwise living in alternative family arrangements.

SteePhill School will consider the child's individual circumstances and any relevant information provided by the local authority or other professionals.

Safeguarding and welfare considerations will be appropriately incorporated into the admissions process.

21. Bursaries and Financial Assistance

Steephill School may offer bursary assistance to eligible families.

Bursaries are subject to the School's separate bursary/financial assistance arrangements and the availability of funding.

The availability or award of a bursary does not alter the School's admissions criteria.

Admission and financial assistance decisions will be handled fairly and confidentially.

Where a bursary is awarded, parents will be provided with the relevant terms and conditions.

The School reserves the right to review bursary awards where circumstances change or where information supplied in support of an application is materially inaccurate.

22. Fees and Contractual Arrangements

A place at Steephill School is subject to the School's current Terms and Conditions and Fees Policy.

Parents will be provided with clear information about:

- tuition fees;
- registration fees where applicable;
- deposits where applicable;
- additional charges;
- payment arrangements;
- notice requirements;
- cancellation arrangements;
- financial assistance where applicable.

Steephill School's contractual terms will be fair, transparent and consistent with applicable consumer protection legislation.

This Admissions Policy should therefore be read alongside the School's Terms and Conditions.

23. Admission Does Not Guarantee Continued Enrolment

Admission to Steephill School does not create an unconditional entitlement to remain at the School indefinitely.

Once admitted, pupils and parents are subject to the School's:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Terms and Conditions;
- Complaints Policy;
- other relevant school policies.

Any decision concerning suspension, exclusion or termination of the parent contract will be taken under the relevant policy and contractual arrangements.

Such decisions will not be used as an indirect means of operating unlawful admissions criteria.

24. Behaviour and Previous School History

Steephill School may request relevant information concerning a prospective pupil's previous educational history where this is necessary to understand the child's needs or to establish whether the School can provide a safe and appropriate educational environment.

Steephill School will not refuse admission simply because a child has previously experienced behavioural difficulties, SEND, disability or other additional needs.

Where relevant information indicates that a child may require additional support, we will consider:

- the child's needs;
- the available support;
- reasonable adjustments;

- safeguarding;
- the impact on the child;
- the impact on other pupils;
- whether the School can reasonably meet the child's needs.

The decision will be based on the individual circumstances rather than a generalised assumption about a particular diagnosis, disability or behaviour.

25. Admissions and Safeguarding Records

Steepphill School will maintain appropriate admissions records.

Records may include:

- application forms;
- correspondence;
- assessment information;
- admissions decisions;
- offers;
- waiting-list information;
- relevant SEND information;
- safeguarding information;
- transition information;
- contractual documentation.

Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the School's Data Protection and Records Retention arrangements.

Safeguarding records will be maintained separately and securely where appropriate.

26. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Steepphill School will process personal data in accordance with:

- UK GDPR;
- Data Protection Act 2018;

- the School's Data Protection Policy;
- applicable information-sharing requirements.

Information will only be accessed and shared where there is an appropriate lawful basis.

Safeguarding information will be shared where necessary to protect a child, even where parental consent is not required.

Steephill School's safeguarding framework requires information to be shared lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis.

27. Children Transferring to Steephill

Where a child is transferring from another school, Steephill will seek appropriate information to support a safe and effective transition.

Where a child is already on roll at another school, we will establish the intended transfer arrangements and ensure that relevant safeguarding and educational information is transferred securely.

Steephill School will not knowingly facilitate the inappropriate removal of a child from another school's roll.

Where there are concerns about a child's whereabouts, education or safeguarding, we will follow the relevant Children Missing Education and safeguarding procedures.

28. Children Leaving Steephill

When a pupil leaves Steephill School, the School will obtain appropriate information concerning:

- the pupil's destination;
- new school or educational setting;
- proposed start date;
- parent/carer contact details;
- relevant safeguarding information.

Steephill School will make appropriate notifications and transfer information in accordance with legal requirements.

Where a child leaves unexpectedly or we are unable to establish the child's destination, we will follow our safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures.

29. Complaints and Review of Admissions Decisions

Steephill School does not operate the statutory admission appeal system applicable to maintained schools and academies.

Parents who are dissatisfied with an admissions decision may request that the Headteacher review the decision where there is evidence that:

- the admissions process was not followed;
- relevant information was not considered;
- new material information has become available;
- the decision may have been discriminatory or otherwise unlawful;
- an administrative error may have occurred.

Requests should be made in writing within **10 working days** of the decision where practicable.

The Headteacher will review the matter and respond within a reasonable timeframe.

Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher personally, the matter will be referred to The Board of Governors.

The School's Complaints Policy provides the formal route for complaints about the administration of the School.

A review of an admissions decision does not guarantee that the original decision will be changed.

30. Reasonable Adjustments to the Admissions Process

Steephill School will consider reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and parents/carers.

Examples may include:

- accessible meeting arrangements;
- additional time;
- alternative communication methods;
- assistance with completing forms;
- adjustments to assessment arrangements;
- accessible visits;
- additional information in an appropriate format.

Steephill School will consider each request individually.

Steephill School will not assume that a particular adjustment is required solely because a child has a particular diagnosis or disability.

31. Safeguarding and Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

Steephill School recognises that children with SEND, disabilities, communication difficulties or other vulnerabilities may face additional safeguarding risks.

Admissions information will therefore be considered alongside safeguarding information where appropriate.

Steephill School's safeguarding policy specifically recognises additional safeguarding risks and communication barriers for children with SEND and disabilities and requires reasonable adjustments to enable children to participate in safeguarding processes.

32. Transition

Steephill School seeks to make transitions for children into our school as smooth as possible.

Transition may include:

- visits;
- meetings with parents;
- meetings with previous settings;

- information sharing;
- pupil familiarisation;
- additional transition visits;
- SEND transition planning;
- communication with external professionals where appropriate.

For children joining Pre-School or Reception, transition arrangements will reflect the requirements of the EYFS framework.

For children with SEND, we may agree an individual transition plan.

33. Admission Capacity

SteePhill School will manage admissions having regard to:

- its registered capacity;
- physical accommodation;
- staffing;
- curriculum provision;
- safeguarding;
- SEND provision;
- health and safety;
- appropriate supervision;
- the School's ability to provide an effective education.

SteePhill School will not admit pupils beyond its lawful registered capacity.

Any proposed material change to the School's registered capacity, age range or SEN admissions arrangements will be dealt with through the DfE's independent-school material-change process where required. DfE guidance confirms that changes to registered age range, capacity and special educational needs admissions can constitute material changes requiring prior approval.

34. Admission Arrangements and the Independent School Standards

SteePhill School recognises that its admissions arrangements form part of the wider regulatory framework governing an independent school.

The April 2026 Independent School Standards guidance confirms that schools must not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010 and highlights the requirement to consider reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

SteePhill School will therefore ensure that admission arrangements are consistent with:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- safeguarding;
- SEND;
- accessibility;
- welfare;
- the School's registered provision;
- the Independent School Standards.

35. Publication

SteePhill School will make this Admissions Policy available to prospective parents and carers.

SteePhill School will ensure that information concerning:

- how to apply;
- available provision;
- relevant admissions criteria;
- fees;
- SEND arrangements;
- how to contact the School;

is readily accessible to prospective families.

GOV.UK confirms that parents seeking a place at an independent school apply directly to the school.

36. Review and Monitoring

The Headteacher will review this policy annually and whenever there is a significant change to:

- legislation;
- DfE guidance;
- Independent School Standards;
- Equality Act requirements;
- SEND requirements;
- EYFS requirements;
- safeguarding requirements;
- the School's registered provision;
- the School's admissions arrangements.

The Board of Governors will ensure that the policy remains appropriate and is implemented effectively.

Steepphill School will monitor admissions decisions to identify any evidence of:

- inconsistent decision-making;
- discriminatory outcomes;
- barriers to admission;
- complaints or recurring concerns;
- inappropriate use of admissions criteria.

37. Key Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Fees Policy;

- Terms and Conditions;
- Early Years Foundation Stage policies;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Records Retention Policy;
- Exclusions/Suspension Policy.

Appendix 1 – Admissions Process

Stage 1 – Initial Enquiry

Parent/carer contacts Steephill School.

The School provides:

- admissions information;
- prospectus/website information;
- fee information;
- relevant policies;
- opportunity to visit where appropriate.

Stage 2 – Application

Parent/carer completes the School's application documentation.

Relevant information concerning the child is provided.

Stage 3 – Assessment / Meeting

Where appropriate, the School may:

- meet the family;
- meet the child;
- undertake age-appropriate assessment;
- request information from the child's current setting;
- discuss SEND or medical requirements.

Stage 4 – Consideration

The School considers:

- availability;
- year group;
- educational provision;
- SEND/disability;
- reasonable adjustments;
- safeguarding;

- capacity;
- relevant objective admissions criteria.

Stage 5 – Decision

The School:

- offers a place;
- places the child on the waiting list; or
- declines the application.

The decision is recorded.

Stage 6 – Offer

Parents receive:

- written offer;
- start-date information;
- contractual documentation;
- fee information;
- transition information;
- required admission documentation.

Stage 7 – Admission

The child joins the School following completion of the required arrangements.

Stage 8 – Transition and Review

The School monitors the child's transition and provides additional support where appropriate.

Appendix 2 – Principles for Admissions Decision-Making

Every admissions decision should be capable of answering **yes** to the following questions:

1. Was the decision based on relevant and objective information?
2. Was the process applied consistently?
3. Has unlawful discrimination been avoided?
4. Were SEND and disability considerations properly considered?
5. Were reasonable adjustments considered?
6. Were safeguarding considerations appropriately addressed?
7. Was the child's welfare considered?
8. Was the School's actual capacity and provision considered?
9. Is the decision properly recorded?
10. Could the School explain the decision to the parent, proprietor or inspector?

Appendix 3 – Compliance Statement

This policy has been prepared for implementation from **1 September 2026** and is intended to reflect the legal and regulatory framework applicable to an independent school in England at that date.

The School recognises that legal compliance depends not only on the wording of this policy but also on its implementation, staff practice, decision-making, records, contractual documentation and the operation of associated policies.

The School will therefore review this policy against subsequent changes to legislation and statutory guidance and will amend its arrangements where necessary.

Policy review date: September 2027