

JOHN GRAHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS POLICY

1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 In terms of section 5 (5) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Governing Body of a public school must determine the admission policy of that school.
- 1.2 The Governing Body of JOHN GRAHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL has accordingly constituted the following as the admissions policy of the school, in the belief that its provisions are consistent with:
 - 1.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/ 1996.)
 - 1.2.2 The National Education Policy Act (Act 27/1996) and any applicable policies determined in terms of this Act, including the Regulations for Admissions to Schools.
 - 1.2.3 The South African Schools' Act (Act 84/1996) and subsequent amendments.
 - 1.2.4 The Western Cape Provincial School Education Act (Act 12/1997.)
 - 1.2.5 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3/2000.)
 - 1.2.6 The Health and Safety Act.
 - 1.2.7 Judgments of the Constitutional Court on the rights, powers and obligations of school governing bodies.
- 1.3 Whereas JOHN GRAHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL is a public school, the governing body:
 - 1.3.1 acknowledges that it has been entrusted with a public resource which must be managed not only in the interests of those who are learners and parents at the time, but also in the interests of the broader community in which the school is located, and in the light of the values of our Constitution;
 - 1.3.2 defers to the relevant legal provisions and enactments to the extent that they are valid and binding upon them and take precedence over the right of the governing body to determine the admissions policy of the School;

- 1.3.3 commits to working in partnership with the Head of Department to find workable solutions to matters of disagreement, and to engage meaningfully and in good faith on any disputes, including disputes over this policy and any decision taken on the basis thereof; and
 - 1.3.4 agrees thereto that any such engagement will be directed towards furthering the interests of learners, taking account of the best interests of the child insofar as this does not impinge upon the rights or best interests of other children.
- 1.4 At the same time it requires of the Principal, the Head of Department and their delegates that they will at all times during any admissions process take the provisions of this policy into account, demonstrably, fairly and in accordance with the law.

2 POLICY

2.1 It is the aim of the school to:

- 2.1.1 Provide an environment where the race, culture, religion and economic standing of the individual are in no instances an impediment to his/her access to, or progress in, any aspect of school life.
- 2.1.2 Make provision during the enrolment process for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.2 It is the policy of the school that:

- 2.2.1 No pupil will be refused admission on grounds of race, gender, culture, language, religious belief or financial circumstance. This aspect of the admissions policy will be applied with due cognizance of the following:
 - 2.2.1.1 Whereas it is determined that the medium of instruction is English, learners applying to be admitted to the school in preference to a school where the LOLT matches the home language of the learner, need to be sufficiently proficient in English so as not to prejudice their ability to progress academically.
- 2.2.2 It is also the policy of the school that applicants will not benefit from an 'inherited advantage' during the admissions process. This aspect of the policy will, however, be applied with due cognizance of the following:
 - 2.2.2.1 It is regarded as unreasonable to disrupt family relationships by arbitrarily splitting the schooling of siblings. In the absence of telling and objective reasons related to the applicant why this should not happen, an applicant who, at the time of making application, has a sibling enrolled in the school will receive preferential consideration when it comes to placement.
 - 2.2.2.2 It is regarded as similarly unreasonable that a learner should arbitrarily be forced by the school's admission policy to travel to an institution which is not the closest suitable school to where he/she lives with his/her parents. Consequently, in the absence of telling and objective reasons why this should not be so, primary preference will be given to those applicants who live with their parent(s) in closer proximity to this school than any other suitable school. At the same time, this preference will be tempered by a

conscious attempt to make provision during the enrolment process for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.2.3 Any pupil admitted to the school is admitted to the total school programme, and will not be suspended from classes, denied access to cultural, sporting or social activities of the formal school programme on the grounds of an **inability** by his/her parents to meet the required school fees. This aspect of the policy will, however, be applied with due cognizance of the following:

2.2.3.1 The annual budget meeting provides parents with the option to decide democratically whether they want the camp fees to be part of the annual school fees on the understanding that where the camp fees are not part of the school fees, participation in the camp is dependent on payment.

2.2.4 The admission of pupils will be so managed that the school's intake aims to include representation of the major demographic segments (i.e. cultural, religious, ethnic and economic) broadly reflective of the composition of the community it serves, without prescribing or accepting any predetermined quotas, numbers or proportions in respect of such representivity.

2.2.5 It is specifically noted that enrolment at the Plumstead Preparatory School does not provide automatic progression to this school. This aspect of the policy will, however, be applied with due cognizance of the following:

2.2.5.1 John Graham Primary is an intermediate school and as such will receive the majority of learners from preparatory schools.

3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADMISSIONS POLICY

In order to achieve the foregoing, but also to ensure a just and equitable selection process ***should the school be oversubscribed***, the measures listed below will be implemented during the management of the enrolment process.

3.1 The opening and closing dates of admissions will be determined by the WCED.

3.2 Applications received by the cut-off date will be processed before those received after the cut-off date.

3.3 Applications received by the closing date will be given preference over late applications provided that the application meets the requirements of proximity and siblings at the school. This does not preclude the acceptance of late applications as timeous application is one of a many criteria.

3.4 It is specifically noted that the parent/legal guardian of a minor learner has the exclusive right to take an initial decision concerning which school they wish to apply to for their child/ward to be enrolled. Consequently, no application will be accepted or regarded as being valid unless it is made by the parent, legal guardian, person entrusted with the care of the minor learner by order of a competent court, or by a person authorised thereto, in writing, by one of the foregoing.

3.5 Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places in the **school or grade** for which application is made, applicants will be placed on the following basis, bearing in mind the school's policy on non discrimination:

- 3.5.1 Whether placement in the School is considered by the school to be in the best interests of the learner concerned.
- NB The ability of the school to provide adequately for the educational needs of the applicant (including but not limited to the language needs and other special needs) will be regarded as part of the best interests of the child, and will be considered before offering a place to a learner.
- 3.5.2 In accordance with the criteria listed in 4 below.
- 3.6 All applicants and their parents will be expected to attend a meeting/interview with the Principal and/or his/her representative in order to create awareness of the nature and ethos of the school to which application for admission is made.
- 3.7 Only after all applications received by closing date have been dealt with, will the school consider late applications, and then only if there are still places available in the school (For capacity, see Appendix 1).
- 3.8 A written response to every application received will be forwarded to parents by the beginning of the third term.

4 ADMISSION DECISIONS

4.1 **General expectations**

In considering applications, a potential learner will, in the first instance, be expected to:

- 4.1.1 Convince the school in that s/he will be able to cope academically with the specific expectations of the school academic programme.
- 4.1.2 Be supportive of the ethos of the School to the extent that it is evident that there is a clear desire to be educated in a school environment such as the one provided by the school.
- 4.1.3 Be willing to contribute in the critical areas of school life: i.e. **academically** as well as **sport, culture and service**, and to participate in activities offered by the school.
- 4.1.4 Abide by the administering of medication system of the school where the learner is on prescribed medication.
- 4.1.5 Be amenable to school discipline as applied in this school, and display levels of behaviour and self-discipline, such that s/he is likely help create, maintain and enhance rather than to disrupt an orderly and disciplined school environment, the teaching process of the school, or the learning of the other learners.
- 4.2 **Factors and circumstances to be borne in mind during the admissions decision processes**

The precise application of the admissions criteria shall remain within the discretion of the School Governing Body. The criteria are as follows:

- 4.2.1 The transformational aims and imperatives relevant to the school.
- 4.2.2 Balancing of genders in the intake
- 4.3 **General criteria binding on all applicants**

- 4.3.1 The successful completion of or promotion out of the grade immediately below the grade in which the admission is sought.
- 4.3.2 The age of the applicant (i.e. learner to be admitted.) Please note that an applicant whose age varies by two years or more relative to the statistical age norm of the grade cohort will not **normally** be accepted into the school. (Statistical age norm = grade to which admission is sought + 6: e.g. statistical age norm for grade 4 is 4 + 6 = 10: applicant aged 12 may therefore not be admitted to Grade 4.)

4.4 Further criteria for the admission of those for whom this is not the closest school

- 4.4.1 Other than upon first entry to schooling, a sound record by the applicant in fields such as behaviour/discipline, leadership, academics, sport, arts, culture and community service. This will be balanced by also enrolling learners who, according to the professional judgement of the principal and members of the school management team, demonstrate the **potential to benefit** from the educational opportunities on offer and/or to **contribute meaningfully** to the school in any aspect, including in extra-curricular participation.
- 4.4.2 The applicant's understanding of and ability to converse in the medium of instruction at the school at such level that language will not be an unreasonable impediment to his/her academic progress, with the proviso that, in the case of a learner excluded on these grounds, a school offering a more appropriate medium of instruction is available in reasonable proximity to the learner's normal abode, or his/her parents place of work.
- 4.4.3 The applicant's unique ability and/or potential to benefit from and contribute to the school in all forms of school life and in extra-curricular participation.
- 4.4.4 Unique personal circumstances, interests or capabilities pertaining to the applicant which suggest that his/her admission would be in the particular interests of the child or the school.

4.5 Foreign learners and the regulation of the Department of Home Affairs

The following stance is based on the formal opinion from the then Director: Legal Services in the Department of Education

- 4.5.1 ("the rights of children [learners] are paramount and must supersede the provisions of the Immigration Act"; and "a parent of the foreign learner must be afforded the same opportunity as a South African to apply for exemption, notwithstanding the fact that the Immigration Act requires them to show cause that they will be able to pay the fees");
- 4.5.2 The draft admission policy for ordinary public schools ("the South African Schools Act and this policy apply equally to learners who are not citizens of the Republic of South Africa");
- 4.5.3 The regulations on the exemption of parents from the payment of school fees (in these regulations the concept "exemption" is NOT linked to the [nationality or other] status of the learner or parent);
- 4.5.4 The South African Schools Act (nowhere does it distinguish between South African learners and parents, and those of any other nationality);

- 4.6 Section 28 (2) of the Constitution (“a child’s best interests are paramount ...”); and of particular relevance to those whose application for a study visa includes an declaration that the fees are affordable, one needs to understand that circumstances, both of people and within schools, can change significantly over the term of the visa, which could well be a period of up to 7 years: circumstances and consequent indications of affordability at the start of a period should thus not unreasonably be held to be binding for up to 7 years.

5 READMISSION AFTER REMOVAL FROM THE ROLL

It may happen that a learner has been removed from the roll following poor attendance and in accordance with the procedures enumerated in the national or provincial attendance policies. Should such a learner apply for re-admission to the school, the application will be considered and the admissions policy and its various criteria applied only after:

- 5.1 It has been ascertained that there is a vacant place in the school;
- 5.2 The pupil and his/her parents have convinced the school that his/her re-enrolment will be in the best interests of the pupil and the school; and
- 5.3 The pupil and parents have convinced the school that the learner’s future attendance is likely to accord with expectations.

6 FINAL TOTAL NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS

It is accepted that *the school governing body’s powers in respect of admissions are not unfettered, that this policy is not immune to intervention, and that the policy does not inflexibly bind other decision-makers in all circumstances.* Thus, the final number of learners accepted into the school at any one time may vary from the above on the basis of specific enrolments and the subject choices of individual learners in a particular year, or upon the intervention of the Head of Department, with the understanding that any *decision to overturn an admission decision of the principal, or depart from this admissions policy, must be exercised reasonably and in a procedurally fair manner.* The class, grade and school enrolment shall in any event not exceed the calculated capacity by more than 5% in any one grade or two learners in any one class where the maximum per class is 32 learners, without the ratification by the School Governing Body of a motivated explanation from the School Management Team or Head of Education for such excess. In Grade 4 the maximum learners per class is 28 x 4 classes, plus 15 learners x 1 class.

APPENDIX

DEFINING AND CAPACITY

1 CAPACITY

The capacity of the school is **512** learners, distributed **128** per grade and 32 per class, except for Grade 4 which is explained above.

The capacity of the school is based on:

- 1.1 The number and size of classrooms in the school.
- 1.2 The need to provide space for class teaching which is not less favourable than that laid down in the norms and standards legally enacted in respect of public schools.
- 1.3 The need to provide an educational milieu which includes a subject choice based on educationally valid principles.
- 1.4 The creation and maintenance of a stimulating and sustainable educational environment. This is in part dependent on having designated, exclusive and appropriately-developed space for the following broad educational facilities, at least to the levels envisaged in the state's norms and standards for school infrastructure
 - 1.4.1 A Library.
 - 1.4.2 Science, Biology, Geography and Computer laboratories.
 - 1.4.3 Art Room
 - 1.4.4 Technology workshops/classrooms.
 - 1.4.5 Music rooms (for individual music instruction as well as large-group music productions/practices).
 - 1.4.6 A School Hall.
 - 1.4.7 A Learner Facility e.g. Tuckshop and After Care Room
 - 1.4.8 A Resource classroom
 - 1.4.9 A physical fitness centre (sports field and facilities such as basketball/netball courts)
 - 1.4.10 The need to support the educational process administratively by providing designated, appropriately furnished, relevantly equipped and exclusive space for:
 - 1.4.10.1 A Staff common room and staff workroom.
 - 1.4.10.2 Offices and working spaces for management, administrative and support staff.
 - 1.4.10.3 A social work/counselling centre.
 - 1.4.10.4 A first aid centre as per WCED requirements

2 PROXIMITY

The area identified below is regarded as being in such close proximity to the school that the exclusion of a learner living within its bounds would be so unreasonable as to be indefensible, save in the instance of specific disqualifying factors, including but not limited to: not meeting the age norm or academic requirements for entry, late submission of an application or identified behavioural disruptiveness. The area concerned will include all dwellings and work places which are closer to this school than to any other, following the shortest practicable and reasonable route from that place to an entry point to the school, and in approximate terms is bounded as such:

- To the North as far as Kromboom Road.
- To the South as far as Retreat Road.
- To the West as far as the M3.
- To the East as far as Olieboom Road.

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CHAIRPERSON OF SGB

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DATE

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PRINCIPAL

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DATE