SHERBORNE
SCHOOLS GROUP

3 – 18 Pathway: Admissions Policy

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Executive Summary

This policy establishes the 3-18 Sherborne Pathway, supporting progression from Sherborne Prep or Hanford Prep to Sherborne Girls or Sherborne Boys. It sets expectations for registration, review, communication, transition, and family support.

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Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the principles, processes and responsibilities governing the 3-18 Sherborne Pathway ("the Pathway") operated by Sherborne Schools Group ("the Group"). The Pathway provides an expected route of progression for pupils enrolled at Sherborne Prep or Hanford Prep (together "the Prep Schools") to Sherborne Boys or Sherborne Girls (together "the Senior Schools"), without the requirement to sit the external entrance assessments applicable to applicants who have not attended one of the Prep Schools.

This policy applies to all four schools within the Group, their Heads, Admissions teams, and all staff involved in the pupil review and transition process. It should be read in conjunction with the individual Admissions Policies of each school and the Group's Data Protection Policy.

Principles

The Pathway is underpinned by the following principles:

Continuity: to provide a coherent and joined-up educational experience from age 3 to 18 within the Group.

Support: to ensure that any concerns about a pupil's fit for the Senior School curriculum are identified and communicated to parents early, with sufficient time for families to make informed decisions.

Child-centred: to put the interests and wellbeing of the child at the centre of all decisions made under this policy. It is our hope and expectation that the great majority of Prep School pupils will progress to become Senior School pupils within the Group, and we want families to

feel confident about that journey. In the rare circumstance that a concern is raised, it will always be because we believe it is in the child's best interests to be in an environment where they can truly flourish.

Transparency: to be open with families about how information is used, what the Pathway entails, and what is expected at each stage.

Fairness: to ensure that all pupils, whether progressing internally or joining from outside, are treated with consistency and care.

Inclusion and reasonable adjustments: to consider each pupil's needs fairly and individually, including any special educational needs, disabilities, medical needs or pastoral considerations, and to make reasonable adjustments where required and practicable.

Registration

Upon registration at a Prep School, parents and guardians will be invited to indicate their interest in the 3-18 Sherborne Pathway. A single registration form covers the pupil's enrolment at the Prep School and their expression of interest in progressing to a Senior School. This does not constitute a binding commitment by either party at the point of registration.

Parents who do not express an interest at registration may do so at any later point, subject to availability of places in the relevant year group.

The Pathway applies automatically to all pupils currently enrolled in Year 5 or below at the time of this policy's introduction. Transitional arrangements apply to pupils currently in Year 6 or Year 7 (see 'Transitional Arrangements for Current Families', below).

Academic Profiling

All pupils at the Prep Schools participate in Cognitive Ability Tests as part of the schools' standard assessment programmes. The results of these assessments will be shared with the Senior Schools for the purpose of building an understanding of each pupil's cognitive profile and learning needs.

Save for the transitional arrangements below, internal assessment scores shared under this policy are not used as an entrance assessment. They form one part of the broader picture that Prep School staff build of each child over time, and are used to:

- support early identification of any pupil who may benefit from additional academic support on arrival at a Senior School;
- inform, in conjunction with wider academic and pastoral evidence, any professional concerns a Prep School may have about a pupil's ability to access the Senior School curriculum; and
- enable the Senior Schools to plan appropriately for the needs of their incoming cohort.

The sharing of internal assessment data is governed by the Group's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices and will be conducted in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Parents will be informed of this data sharing at the point of registration. The lawful basis for sharing pupil data within the Group is legitimate interests.

Internal assessment data shared with the Senior Schools will be accessed only by the Head, Senior Leadership Team, and relevant staff involved in admissions and transition planning, and will be stored and handled in accordance with the Group's data governance procedures.

Academic Review and Early Concern Process

The Prep Schools have primary responsibility for monitoring each pupil's academic progress and overall readiness for the Senior School curriculum. This is conducted as part of the normal pastoral and academic review processes and does not constitute a separate assessment.

It is expected that the great majority of Prep School pupils will progress through the Pathway without concern. In the rare circumstance that Prep School staff identify a concern that a pupil may find the Senior School curriculum inaccessible, that reasonable adjustments or support may not meet the pupil's needs, or that the Senior School environment may not be the right fit for the pupil's needs, the following process will apply:

(a) The Head or appropriate member of SLT of the relevant Prep School will discuss the concern internally and, where appropriate, with the relevant Senior School Head(s) or Deputy Head Academic, Senior School SENCO and Group Head of Admissions.
(b) The concern will be raised with the parents/guardians in a structured meeting, before place confirmation in Lent Term Year 6. Any such conversation will be handled with care and sensitivity, with the child's best interests at the centre. For pupils joining a Prep School in Year 7 or Year 8, and for international pupils, additional assessments may be used to understand the pupil's academic profile and, where relevant, whether their English language skills will enable them to access the curriculum confidently and successfully. For pupils joining in Year 7 or Year 8, any concern will be raised with parents/guardians as soon as it is identified.
(c) The school will document the discussion and any agreed actions, including any agreed support to be put in place, or any decision to explore alternative senior schools.
(d) Where a concern is raised, the school will offer full support to the family in identifying and applying to alternative senior schools, including the provision of references and any required documentation.

A concern raised under this process does not automatically mean a pupil will not progress via the Pathway. The decision will be taken by the Head of the relevant Senior School, following full consultation with the family and taking into account all available evidence. Such decisions will always be made with the child's long-term wellbeing as the primary consideration.

Any decision that a pupil will not progress via the Pathway will be communicated to parents in writing, setting out the reasons and the support available.

Parental Communication and Intention to Progress

The Admissions team will communicate with all Prep School families at the following key stages (exact timing confirmed each year), inviting them to confirm their intentions:

- **Initial Registration (Prep School entry)**: 3-18 Sherborne Pathway explained; expression of interest recorded. Parents complete registration form, which includes the Pathway consent section.
- **Year 3 check-in**: Parents who have not already done so are asked to return the Pathway consent form.
- **Early Academic Review (End of Year 5)**: Deputy Head Academic provides academic update; any concerns raised informally with parents at this stage.
- **Formal Check-in (Michaelmas Term Year 6)**: Intention to Progress communication sent to all families. Parents confirm whether they intend to progress via the Pathway or are considering external senior schools.

- **Profile Sharing (Years 6-8)**: Cognitive Ability Test results and academic profile shared with Senior Schools, with regular and open communication between the Prep and Senior Schools throughout, so that the Senior Schools build up a full picture of each pupil; any concerns addressed with families.
- **Place Confirmation (Lent Term Year 6)**: Written confirmation of Senior School place issued by the relevant Senior School.
- **Final Acceptance (Lent Term Year 6)**: Parents confirm acceptance of Senior School place in writing and return the parent contract.
- **Experience Days (Year 6-8)**: Invitations issued to all internal pupils to attend Senior School experience days and touch points.
- **Scholarship Applications (Michaelmas Term Year 8)**: Information shared with families; applications submitted by parents in the usual way.
- **Scholarship Assessments (Lent Term Year 8)**.

Where a family indicates that they do not intend to progress to a Senior School in the Group, the Admissions team will record this, and the pupil's internal pathway place will be released. The Prep School will continue to support the pupil and family fully until the end of their time at the school.

A family may change their intention at any point, subject to availability of places in the relevant year group. Once a place has been formally accepted, the notice requirements set out under 'Deposits' (below) apply.

Experience Days

All internal pupils who have indicated an intention to progress via the Pathway will be invited to attend the relevant Senior School's experience days and touch points throughout the admissions process. These events are a core part of the transition process and are designed to:

- allow pupils to meet their future cohort, including both internal and external applicants;
- familiarise pupils with the Senior School campus, staff and daily life; and
- support a smooth and confident transition to Year 9.

Scholarships

The 3-18 Sherborne Pathway does not confer any advantage or disadvantage in the scholarship process. Scholarship applications are assessed solely on merit, in accordance with each Senior School's Scholarship Policy.

Internal pupils wishing to apply for a scholarship must do so in the usual way and to the timescales set out by the relevant Senior School. The Admissions team and Prep School staff will provide appropriate encouragement and information to families of pupils who may be scholarship candidates.

Bursary Awards & Other Remissions

Families whose child is in receipt of a bursary award at a Prep School will not normally be required to make a separate application for bursarial support solely as a result of progressing to a Senior School through the 3-18 Sherborne Pathway.

Existing bursary awards will be subject to the Group's usual annual bursary review process, in accordance with the Group's Bursary Award Policy. This includes a review of the family's

financial circumstances and any other relevant factors, and the level of support for the following academic year may be adjusted following that review. Progression through the Pathway does not therefore, of itself, guarantee that an existing bursary award will continue at the same level.

Families with questions about bursarial support, the annual review process or how an existing award will operate on progression to a Senior School should contact bursaries@sherborneschools.group.

Families with questions about how any other remissions will operate on progression to a Senior School should contact billing@sherborneschools.group.

Deposits

The deposit paid by a family upon enrolling their child at Sherborne Prep or Hanford Prep will be carried forward and applied to the pupil's Senior School place upon progression via the Pathway. Subject to the arrangements for international families (below), no additional deposit will normally be required at the point of Senior School entry.

Where a pupil does not progress to a Senior School via the Pathway, the deposit will be treated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the relevant Prep School's standard enrolment contract.

Once a family has formally accepted a Senior School place in writing, the relevant Senior School's standard terms and conditions apply in full, including provisions relating to notice periods and fees in lieu of notice. The deposit carried through from the Prep School becomes non-refundable from January of Year 7, following acceptance of the place. Families will receive the terms and conditions with their formal offer of a place and are strongly encouraged to read these carefully before confirming acceptance.

International Families

International families will be required to pay an additional deposit of one term's fees less the Acceptance Deposit already paid at the Prep School. Please note that international families whose child requires a Child Student Visa to attend the Senior School will normally need to apply for a new Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and visa when their child transfers from the Prep School to the senior school. This is because the Prep and Senior Schools operate under separate UKVI licences. The Admissions team will guide international families through this requirement well in advance of the transition.

Transitional Arrangements for Current Families

The Pathway applies automatically to all pupils currently enrolled in Year 5 or below at Sherborne Prep or Hanford (Year 9 entry from September 2030). Families will be sent a Pathway consent form, on which they may confirm their interest or notify the Prep School that they are considering other schools. They will receive an Intention to Progress form in Michaelmas Term of Year 6.

Pupils currently in Year 6 or Year 7 (2026-27) will, in most cases, already be engaged in senior school admissions processes, and some will have completed them. The Pathway does not apply automatically to these year groups. Transitional arrangements apply to these year groups and may include review of existing assessment data in place of entrance assessments. Families should contact the Admissions team for further information.

Safeguarding, Welfare, SEND and Reasonable Adjustments

Decisions and communications under this policy will take account of the pupil's safeguarding, welfare, pastoral, medical, SEND and learning support needs. The Group will consider each pupil individually and will make reasonable adjustments where required and practicable.

Where there are questions about whether a Senior School can appropriately meet a pupil's needs, the relevant schools will consult parents and consider relevant professional, educational, pastoral and safeguarding information before any decision is made.

Compliance and Record Keeping

The Group will retain appropriate records of communications, decisions and supporting information relating to the Pathway in accordance with its data retention, safeguarding and admissions procedures.

The policy is intended to support compliance with the Independent School Standards, the schools' safeguarding and welfare obligations, UK data protection law, equality duties and the Group's published admissions and complaints arrangements.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Group Head of Admissions in consultation with the Heads of all four schools, or sooner in the event of a significant change in circumstances. Any amendments will be approved by Executive Committee before taking effect.

Appendix 1: Summary of Changes in Issue 1.1

- Section on Bursary Awards & Other Remissions added.