



DOHA ENGLISH SPEAKING SCHOOL

Learning Together • High Expectations • Celebrating Success

FOUNDATION STAGE 1 ADMISSION POLICY

PURPOSE

To provide consistency of approach for admissions to Foundation Stage 1 at DESS and a fair and equitable process in view of the demand for places in the school.

This Policy is separate to the school's Foundation Stage 2 to Year 6 Admission Policy. Should any inconsistencies between the two policies arise, this Foundation Stage 1 Policy will take precedence for Foundation Stage 1 applications only.

DEFINITIONS

Learning/Behavioural Difficulty means a child who would require additional adult support, beyond that available within the normal classroom environment.

Sibling means one of two or more individuals having one or both parents in common; a brother or sister.

POLICY STATEMENT

DESS is committed to ensuring that all children who are admitted to the school will thrive in an environment of high academic expectation, will benefit from the rounded education provided and be happy within the nurturing school community.

DESS is aware of the high demand for Foundation Stage 1 places in Doha and is consistently over-subscribed with applications for Foundation Stage 1 and all other year groups. As a consequence, and in order to be in a position to manage the volumes of applications and maintain its close ties to the British Community, British passport holders will be given priority for places at DESS. For the avoidance of doubt, it is the child who must hold the British passport, not the parent.

As DESS is aware of the importance of family members attending the same school wherever possible, siblings of current DESS children, regardless of nationality, will also be given priority.

Due to the rising costs of operating the school, DESS is pursuing a new Sponsorship scheme which provides corporate sponsors the ability to gain priority on the Waiting List over a five year period depending on the scheme they choose. We have currently capped the number of sponsored Waiting List priority spots to 47 across all years.

Due to demand, applications for places in Foundation Stage 1 from children who do not have siblings at DESS and do not hold a British Passport cannot be accepted unless the Waiting List can accommodate such an application, or unless the discretion of the Board of Governors is exercised.

Applications for placements at DESS must meet eligibility, assessment and weighting criteria before a child is offered a place.

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Ministry of Education
Qatar



THE PROCESS

1. Eligibility

1.1 In order to be eligible to apply for a Foundation Stage 1 place a child must meet one of the following criteria:

1.1.1 Turn 4 years of age between 1 September and 31 August during the academic year they will be admitted; and

1.1.2 Have a sibling attending DESS

1.1.3 Hold a British passport

1.1.4 Hold a Qatari passport

1.1.5 One or both parents are DESS Alumni

1.2 Eligibility does not guarantee a place being offered to the child, but is the threshold test prior to placement on the Waiting List/assessment.

2 Application

2.1 Applications for children who have a sibling at DESS (regardless of nationality) will open in or around October/November each year to enable the school to process the volume of applications. All siblings will be offered an assessment interview to take place in and around January/February. Siblings must meet the assessment eligibility criteria and are not guaranteed admission to DESS.

2.2 Applications for non-sibling British passport holders will open in or around November /December, where applications may be lodged within a designated 2 day timeframe as set by the school. Applications will be reviewed and assessments will be carried out at the school's discretion.

2.3 Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria, the children whose applications were lodged in accordance with 2.1 and 2.2 above will be offered an assessment interview to take place at the school in or around February.

3 Assessment

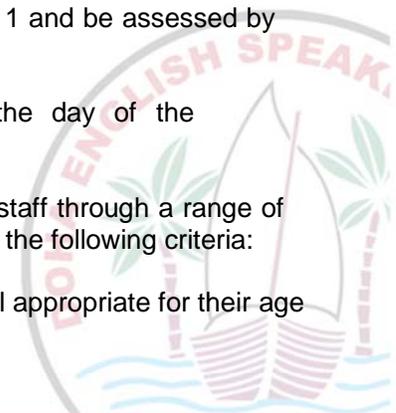
3.1 In accordance with a timetable set by the school, the children offered an assessment in accordance with 2.3 above will visit the Foundation Stage 1 and be assessed by the Foundation Stage 1 staff.

3.2 A non-refundable assessment fee will be payable on the day of the assessment.

3.3 Observations will be carried out by the Foundation Stage 1 staff through a range of play based activities and the child will be assessed based on the following criteria:

3.3.1 The child's ability to communicate in English at a level appropriate for their age

3.3.2 An interest and curiosity in the environment



3.3.3 Social skills appropriate for their age

3.4 A further assessment may be offered to a child at the discretion of the Head Teacher where special circumstances exist.

3.5 Foundation Stage 1 staff will rank applications following assessments, and after taking into consideration the application and any supporting documentation.

4 Following an Assessment

4.1 Children will be selected for available Foundation Stage 1 places based firstly on the weighting criteria detailed below, and thereafter on the assessment ranking. The selection will take place by the Head Teacher in conjunction with, the Phase Leader and the Registrar.

4.2 Where a child is offered a place in Foundation Stage 1, the Registrar will contact parents by email informing them of the offer of a placement and the starting date and seek acceptance of the placement within a particular timeframe on conditions noted in the offer. Where the date specified for acceptance lapses, then the offer and the application is withdrawn and the place will then be offered to the next child on the Waiting List.

4.3 Where a place is not available for a child who has met the eligibility and assessment criteria, their application will be placed on the Waiting List in order of assessment ranking and parents will be informed of this by email.

4.4 In circumstances where a child has not met the expected level following assessment, their application will be withdrawn and the parents contacted by the Registrar.

5 Parent Interview

5.1 At DESS we value the contribution that a collaborative approach to learning between home and school can provide. In order to ensure that any prospective parents are aware of our expectations a Parent Interview will take place, where possible, prior to the child starting school. If this is not possible a meeting will be scheduled within the first half term of entry to DESS. The following areas will be covered:

- An opportunity for parents to ask questions about DESS
- Parental use of Social Media (specifically when making reference to Doha English Speaking School, the Students, Staff and other Parents)
- Complaints Procedure
- Homework Expectations and Policies
- Supporting the school through the PTA, attending school events and ensuring documentation from the school is read and, where necessary, responded to
- How the school supports parents and how the parents can be involved in developing a positive parent-teacher working relationship
- The role of the SMT, SLT and Governors within the school
- Participation in DESS cultural traditions, musical productions and lessons and all physical



education lessons including mixed gender swimming

- Parents will be provided with a Parental Support Agreement to review and return to the school the following day

5.2 Should any major concerns be highlighted as a result of the Parent Interview, and only following a careful review by SLT and Board of Governors, DESS reserves the right to remove their children from DESS with immediate effect.

6 Attendance

6.1 At DESS we pride ourselves on ensuring all children can achieve their full learning potential. By missing out on lessons, children are vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, therefore in order to access the full curriculum, and give children the best chance of success, DESS requests that all pupils attend school every day, barring legitimate illness.

When children are absent from school, or arrive late, gaps are created in their education which often results in them finding it difficult to 'catch up' with the learning they have missed. Whilst DESS endeavours to support absent children once they return to school, this cannot be to the detriment of other students within the class, therefore lesson materials will not be provided following an absence unless under exceptional circumstances.

The teacher will monitor any continued absences. The school will not tolerate any prolonged absenteeism unless there is a legitimate reason. Time out for travel must be taken during the holidays set by the school and not during term time.

Following phone calls, meetings with the teacher and an official letter, there will be a meeting with the Head Teacher who will reinforce the School's expectations. If these expectations are not followed then the child will lose their placement at DESS.

7 Punctuality

7.1 Parents should ensure that their child arrives promptly to school, in full uniform and ready to learn, arrival should be between 7.10am and 7.30am to ensure a prompt start to the school day. Any child arriving after the register closes at 7.40am must collect a late slip from the office and take it with them to their class teacher.

Punctuality is closely monitored by all members of staff at DESS, if children are persistently late the school will contact parents.

7.2 When a child is absent from school, the following process should be followed:

7.2.1 The parent can either telephone the School Office, speak to the class teacher or send in a letter with the child on their return

7.2.2 If a child is absent for longer than two days and the School Office or teachers haven't been notified, then parents will be contacted by the School

WEIGHTINGS

The following weightings are applied to applications for Foundation Stage 1:

1. Children of diplomatic staff at the British Embassy and children of DESS full-time teaching staff.



2. Corporate sponsored children.
3. British passport holders with siblings in the school.
4. Qatari passport holders with siblings in the school.
5. Non-British passport holders with siblings in the school.
6. One or both parents are DESS Alumni.
7. British passport holders with no siblings in the school.
8. Non-British passport holders, transferring from a compatible British curriculum school.
9. Non-British passport holders, transferring from a non-British curriculum school.

WAITING LIST

The Waiting List is confidential and a parent will not be informed of their child's specific place on the Waiting List, or a likely timeframe to be offered a place.

When the Waiting List for Foundation Stage 1 is 20 children or less, the school will accept applications from children who do not meet the eligibility criteria at 1.1 above. The Waiting List will remain open at all times for Qatari applicants.

DISCRETION OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The above eligibility criteria, weightings and processes may only be varied in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Board of Governors.

In accordance with DESS' commitment to establishing closer links with the Qatari community, applications are welcomed from Qatari passport holders who meet the academic entry requirements and who can participate fully in the enriched British curriculum which the school offers. The Waiting List will remain open for Qatari applicants at all times.

Recommendations for admission for those Qatari applicants (in accordance to clause 1.1.4) and who meet the necessary entrance requirements shall be referred to the Board of Governors for approval.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

Complaints Policy
School Fee Policy
Refundable Deposit Policy
Attendance Policy

