



## WESTERFORD HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

### 1. Introduction and Legal Framework

#### 1.1 Purpose of the Policy

Westerford High School is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and legally compliant admissions process that upholds the right to basic education for all applicants. This policy ensures that all admissions decisions are made in alignment with national and provincial education laws, prioritizing equity, inclusivity, and the best interests of the child.

This policy outlines the application process, selection criteria, and legal framework governing admissions to Westerford High School, ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly, consistently, and without discrimination.

#### 1.2 Legal and Policy References

This Admissions Policy is developed in accordance with the following legislation and regulations:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)
  - Section 29 guarantees the right to basic education for all children.
  - Section 9 prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, religion, or socio-economic status.
- The South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996
  - Governs admissions processes and school governance.
  - Requires public schools to develop and apply fair and equitable admission policies.
  - Ensures that no applicant is unfairly denied access to education.
- The Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill, Act 32 of 2024
  - Grants the Head of the WCED (HOD) final authority over admissions.
  - Requires schools to consider broader community needs when setting admissions criteria.
  - Allows parents to appeal admission rejections to the MEC for Education.
- The National Education Policy Act (1996)
  - Provides national guidelines for school admissions.
  - Ensures compliance with equity and non-discrimination principles in admissions policies.
- Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Admissions Policy
  - Establishes application deadlines, procedures, and documentation requirements.
  - Mandates that schools use the WCED online admissions system for Grade 8 applications.
- Immigration Act (2002, as amended in 2014)



- Governs the admission of foreign learners, requiring valid study visas or residence permits for non-citizen applicants.
- Schools are required to verify the legal residency status of foreign applicants and ensure compliance with Department of Home Affairs regulations.
- Refugees Act (1998, Act No. 130 of 1998)
  - Provides that refugee and asylum-seeker children have the same right to basic education as South African citizens.
  - Schools must accept valid refugee or asylum permits and cannot discriminate against learners on the basis of their refugee or asylum status.

### **1.3 Authority over Admissions**

- 1.3.1 The School Governing Body (SGB) determines and approves the Admissions Policy, ensuring compliance with WCED and national education policies.
- 1.3.2 The Principal and admissions committee manage the selection process based on this policy's criteria.
- 1.3.3 The WCED Head of Department (HOD) has the final authority over admissions.
- 1.3.4 In cases of admission disputes, the MEC for Education serves as the final appeal authority.

### **1.4 Westerford as a Fee-Paying School**

- 1.4.1 Westerford High School is a fee-paying public school as determined by the School Governing Body (SGB) in accordance with the South African Schools Act.
- 1.4.2 Parents who accept placement at Westerford undertake to pay school fees as approved annually by the SGB.
- 1.4.3 Non-payment of school fees does not exclude a learner from academic activities, but legal action may be taken against parents who fail to meet their obligations in accordance with Section 41 of the SA Schools Act.
- 1.4.4 The school provides financial assistance in the form of partial fee remissions or full fee exemptions for qualifying families, following the guidelines set out in the WCED Fee Exemption Policy and the SA Schools Act (Section 39–41).

### **1.5 Non-Discrimination and Equal Access Commitment**

- 1.5.1 Westerford High School is a transforming school committed to fostering diversity, inclusivity, and equal access.
- 1.5.2 No applicant may be denied admission on the basis of race, sex, religion, language, disability, sexuality, or financial status.



1.5.3 The School will make reasonable accommodations for learners with special educational needs, where resources allow.

1.5.4 Westerford does not have specific feeder primary schools but rather accepts pupils from many different primary schools. No preference will be given to pupils from any specific primary school.

## **2. Application Process**

### **2.1 Application Submission**

2.1.1 The application and admission process follows the timeline as governed by the WCED.

2.1.2 All applications for Grade 8 admission, including the relevant documentation as indicated on their website, must be submitted via the WCED's online admissions portal, following the official WCED application timeline.

2.1.3 In addition to the WCED application, parents/guardians must complete an Expression of Interest Form, available on the Westerford website under the Admissions tab: <https://www.westerford.co.za>. The Expression of Interest Form is a required supplementary step but does not replace the official WCED online application. This Expression of Interest Form does not guarantee placement but allows the school to assess the applicant's suitability and interest in attending Westerford.

2.1.4 Transfer applications for Grades 9–11 must be submitted directly via the WCED online admissions portal and will be considered only if space allows. Applicants in Grades 9 - 11 must, in addition, complete the Expression of Interest Form available on the School's website.

2.1.5 Westerford does not accept new pupils into Grade 12, except in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal.

### **2.2 Admissions Timeline and Deadlines**

2.2.1 The application period opens and closes in line with WCED regulations, typically in March/April for Grade 8.

2.1.2 The Expression of Interest Form must be submitted before the WCED application closing date.

2.1.3 Parents must adhere to these deadlines as late applications will not be prioritised over on-time submissions.

2.1.4 The WCED's official placement and acceptance notifications will be followed.

### **2.3 Handling of Late Applications**

2.3.1 Late applications are placed on a waiting list and will only be considered if spaces remain after all on-time applicants have been placed.



- 2.3.2 Late applications do not receive priority over on-time applications unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### 3. Admission Criteria and Selection Process

Westerford has over the past few years received in excess of 2000 applications annually. The school and SGB appreciate that the school cannot accommodate all applicants and some process of selection is inevitable. To prevent unfair discrimination, it has become necessary to apply certain admission criteria in selecting new pupils. Therefore it is the school's policy that preference be afforded to pupils that meet the admission criteria listed in this policy.

#### 3.1 General Admission Principles

- 3.1.1 Admissions are governed by the principles of fairness, equity, and non-discrimination as outlined in the South African Schools Act, the WCED Admissions Policy, and the BELA Bill (2024).
- 3.1.2 No applicant shall be denied admission based on race, sex, language, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, disability, or nationality.
- 3.1.3 Westerford is a transforming school committed to diversity and inclusivity, using the demographics of the Western Cape as a guideline in its admissions process.
- 3.1.4 Meeting the admission criteria does not guarantee placement, as spaces are limited.
- 3.1.5 The school reserves the right to assess whether placement at Westerford is in the best interest of the applicant.
- 3.1.6 As a co-educational school, Westerford strives to maintain a balanced ratio of boys and girls in each grade, where possible, while adhering to the principles of fairness and inclusivity.
- 3.1.7 Applicants who are foreign nationals or non-South African citizens must provide the relevant legal documentation, or proof thereof, to be considered for admission.

#### 3.2 Selection Committee

The selection of applicants is conducted by a diverse and inclusive committee. The admissions committee consists of:

- The Senior Management Team (SMT), including the Principal as the official Admissions Coordinator
- Teachers from the Music, Drama, Art, and Sports Departments
- Other interested staff members who bring varied perspectives

This committee ensures that all selections are fair, transparent, and aligned with the school's transformation objectives.



### 3.3 Admission Criteria for Grade 8 Applicants

When applications exceed available spaces, the below selection criteria will be applied with the understanding that even meeting all criteria will not guarantee admission:

#### *Priority 1: Learners with Proficiency in English*

- As Westerford is an English-medium school, applicants must be able to cope with instruction in English.
- Evidence of English proficiency is required through school reports.

#### *Priority 2: Age*

- The age of the applicant must be within two years of the statistical norm for the grade.

#### *Priority 3: Diversity and Transformation Considerations*

- In line with Westerford's transformation process, the school considers demographic representation.
- The school aims, where possible, to ensure that its pupil population reflects the demographics of the Western Cape.

#### *Priority 4: Academic Potential and Extracurricular Excellence*

- Westerford is a school that prepares pupils for further education, and has a strong ethos of academic excellence. The pupil must, therefore, be able to cope academically with the specific pressures and unique demands of the school. Applicants who demonstrate strong academic performance (particularly in English and Mathematics) will be considered favourably.
- Pupils who excel in sports, cultural activities, leadership, or community service will also receive preference.
- The school takes into account that there are primary schools that do not offer these kinds of opportunities.
- Academic and extracurricular performance are considered but do not guarantee admission.

#### *Priority 5: Geographical Considerations*

- While the School does not have a specific feeder zone, applicants should live within a reasonable commuting distance of the school.
- No primary school guarantees automatic admission to Westerford.

#### *Priority 6: Siblings of Current Pupils*

- Applicants who have a sibling currently enrolled at Westerford are given preference if it is in the best interest of the child.
- Sibling preference does not override transformation and diversity goals and does not guarantee automatic admission.

#### *Priority 7: Capacity and Infrastructure Constraints*

- Admissions are subject to space availability.
- Westerford will not exceed an absolute maximum of 190 pupils per grade, as this is the limit of our teaching staff and facilities.



- The final decision on class size is at the discretion of the Principal and the School Governing Body (SGB).

#### *Priority 8: Children of past pupils*

- Applicants with parents who have matriculated from Westerford will be given due consideration but this does not guarantee automatic admission.

### **3.4 Admission Criteria for Transfer Applicants (Grades 9–11)**

- 3.4.1 Transfers will only be considered if space allows, and all transfer applicants are placed on a waiting list.
- 3.4.2 When space is available, priority for transfers is given to applicants who:
- Have a sibling at the School
  - Have a clean discipline record from their current school. Any prior disciplinary incidents must be disclosed, and failure to do so may result in rejection or revocation of admission
  - Provide a compelling reason for transfer, such as relocation or when the transfer is in the best interest of the child
  - Have strong academic performance and a positive attitude toward learning
  - Have exceptional extracurricular achievements in sports, music, arts, or leadership
- 3.4.3 Grade 12 admissions will not be accepted, except under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

### **3.5 Admission of Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Westerford is committed to inclusivity and will make reasonable accommodations for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). However, as a mainstream academic school, Westerford may not be able to meet all specialised learning support needs.

### **3.6 Selection and Placement Process**

#### **Step 1: Screening and Shortlisting**

- Applications are reviewed based on the admissions criteria and transformation considerations.

#### **Step 2: Verification of Information**

- Proof of residence, school reports, and supporting documents are verified.
- Any falsified information will result in immediate disqualification.

#### **Step 3: Final Selection and Placement**

- The final selection is made based on merit, space availability, and transformation goals.

#### **Step 4: Notification**

- Parents of unsuccessful applicants will receive official notification from the WCED.
- Successful applicants receive formal notification via the WCED admissions system and an acceptance letter from the School.



## 3.7 Fraud Prevention and Consequences

- 3.7.1 Any false or misleading information (such as fraudulent proof of residence or falsified school reports) will result in disqualification of the application.
- 3.7.2 If fraud is detected after admission, the learner's placement may be revoked.
- 3.7.3 Westerford reserves the right to report fraudulent applications to the WCED.

## 4. Appeals Process

### 4.1 Right to Appeal

- 4.1.1 Parents/guardians have the right to appeal if their child is unsuccessful in gaining admission to Westerford High School.
- 4.1.2 Appeals must be submitted directly to the School: [applications@westerford.co.za](mailto:applications@westerford.co.za)
- 4.1.3 Unsuccessful appeals to the School may then be directed to the MEC for Education.
- 4.1.4 The appeal process is governed by the South African Schools Act (SASA), the BELA Bill (2024), and WCED regulations.

### 4.2 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may only be lodged on the following valid grounds:

- Procedural irregularities in the admissions process (e.g. incorrect application handling, missing documents due to administrative error).
- Failure to apply admission criteria fairly (e.g. incorrect rejection despite meeting eligibility requirements).
- Exceptional personal circumstances that warrant reconsideration.

### 4.3 Appeal Submission Process

- 4.3.1 Parents/Guardians may appeal to the School, followed by the MEC for Education should the appeal to the School be unsuccessful.
- 4.3.2 The MEC must make a final decision within 14 days.
- 4.3.3 If an appeal is upheld, the applicant will be offered placement at Westerford, provided space is available.

### 4.4 Important Notes


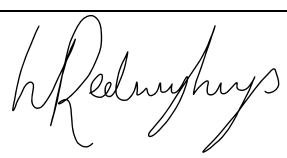
- 4.4.1 Appeals do not guarantee placement.
- 4.4.2 All appeals must be submitted via email and within the advertised timeframes.
- 4.4.3 Once an appeal is rejected by the MEC, no further appeals will be considered.



## 5. Policy Review and Amendments

This Admissions Policy is a living document that will be periodically reviewed and amended, if necessary, to ensure that it is in compliance with WCED regulations, national legislation, and relevant court rulings.

### Approval:

<b>Recommended by: (Principal) (Print name)</b>	<i>Mark Smith</i>	<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	29 July 2025		
<b>Approved by: (SGB Chairperson) (Print name)</b>	<i>Miki Redelinghuys</i>	<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	29 July 2025		
<b>Verification by WCED: (District Director) (Print Name)</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date</b>			