



Admissions Policy

For entry in academic year 2026/27

Staff reviewer:	Scrutinised by link Governor:	Date signed off at Committee:	Date approved at Board:	Next review date:
Kerry Burnham	Liene Penny October 2024	12.11.24	10.12.24	October 2025

Key Changes Since Last Version

Change	Details
Change of dates	Added one year to each date throughout the policy to reflect the new academic year
Table of changes	Added this table to changes to provide clear information about how the admissions policy has changed.
Definitions (2)	Added PAN
Catchment area (3.1)	Added Bristol, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire to the catchment area to encapsulate the whole of the South West. Applicants cannot be received from out of the catchment area (in the previous policy they would be in a waiting pool); as an oversubscribed school, only those in the catchment area can be considered. Updated the census data to be based on 11-year olds in 2021 and to include the expanded region.
Increased PAN (3.2)	New intake is increased from 64 to 75 leading to a total capacity of 139.
Application Process (3.5)	Increased the number of applicants selected for interview from 90 to 100.
Oversubscription (3.6)	Increased the figure from 90 to 100
Equality and Diversity (3.7)	Amended wording from “disadvantaged” to “underserved”
Dates (4.2)	Updated the table with the appropriate months
Late applicants (4.4)	Removed reference to those from outside the catchment area
Equality (7.5)	Added a sentence about support for FSM students to attend admissions events

1 Purpose

This policy exists to ensure openness and fairness regarding admissions to the school and to ensure that the process is based entirely upon selecting the right students from a range of backgrounds and locations.

2 Definitions

DfE Department for Education

PAN Planned Admissions Number

SEND Special Education Needs and Disabilities

3 Policy

3.1 Student Catchment Area

Places will be allocated to students living in the South West of England: this includes the geographic counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire and the city of Bristol. Students

from outside the catchment area are not able to apply and should instead consider the nearest maths school to their home.

2021 census data indicates that the proportion of potential students from each county is approximately: Devon 30%, Wiltshire 16%, Somerset 15%, Bristol 9%, Gloucestershire 11%, Cornwall 11% and Dorset 8%. We will aim for the allocation of places to reflect these proportions as closely as possible, by promoting the school across the whole catchment area.

Students will not, however, be selected based upon their distance from the school. To encourage an appropriate spread throughout the region, we subsidise travel and make accommodation available to those who live too far away for a daily commute. A bursary fund is available to subsidise the cost of boarding for those that are unable to afford it.

3.2 Planned Admissions Number and Capacity

Our planned admissions number for 2026/27 is 75 students in year 12.

Our capacity is 139 students (75 in year 12 and 64 in year 13).

We normally accept new admissions for year 12 only and students will not be able to access the year 13 curriculum without having completed year 12 at EMS.

3.3 Boarding Places

There is provision, Monday to Thursday night, of boarding for students who have to travel for more than 1 hour to get to the school. Students who may like to be considered for a boarding place should indicate this on their application form to the school.

Boarders pay for their accommodation. The boarding element is non-profitmaking for the school. Fees for boarding are published on the school's website prior to admission. **A bursary scheme is used to enable students from all backgrounds to attend the school.**

A bursary application form, together with guidance notes for applications, is published each year.

3.4 Minimum Entry Criteria

Over 50% of the curriculum will include Mathematics and at least 75% will need mathematical principles to underpin students' learning so the entry criteria will reflect this.

Students will be expected to have as a minimum:

- 8 or 9 in GCSE Mathematics
- 8 or 9 in double or triple sciences or Computer Science (if not taking Physics) or a 7 or above in single science Physics
- 5 or above in GCSE English Language or Literature
- A total of at least six GCSEs at grade 5 or above (including those listed above)

Students will also be selected based upon the following:

- An online application form

- A satisfactory academic reference
- A face to face interview
- A mathematics-based entry examination

3.5 Application Process

Students complete an online application form during the autumn term. Within this form, they will include details of a suitable academic referee. This should be a teacher from their current school (usually their maths teacher, tutor, Head of Maths or Head of Year); home-educated students should choose a tutor or other individual who can confirm academic suitability as their referee. The application form and tutor references will be used to check that students meet the academic criteria and to test reliability and dedication by looking at attendance and effort.

All applicants are invited to take the written aptitude test, the date of which is advertised on the school website. The aptitude test will be used to ensure that there is a basic, standard, minimum level of problem solving and mathematical ability. Sample questions are published on the School's website.

EMS will short-list at least 100 applicants for interview. This will take the form of a mathematics lesson and a pastoral conversation. The interview will be used for further exploration of mathematical and problem-solving ability and to ensure that the student has realistic expectations in terms of workload and expected commitment as well as passion for the topic.

Conditional offers will then be made and applicants are asked to either accept or decline their place by a given date. Those who do not hold offers will either be placed in the waiting pool or have their application declined at this stage. All offers are conditional on meeting minimum entry requirements and on proof that applicants are eligible for ESFA funding.

Following GCSE results day, offer-holders who successfully meet their conditional offer enrol at EMS. Enrolment takes on the first working day after GCSE results day and students are expected to enrol in person to secure their place.

3.6 Oversubscription Criteria

If more than 100 applicants sit the aptitude test, shortlisting will take place to select for interview. Shortlisting will be based on the pre-interview score which is a combination of the aptitude test score and widening participation score, based on the data provided at the application stage.

Following the interview, places will be determined based on a combined total of the pre-interview and post-interview score. The post-interview score will be determined by performance in the maths lesson and the answers given in interview. Thresholds will be set for selection: scores above the high threshold will result in conditional offers and scores below the low threshold will result in applicants being declined a place.

Applicants with scores which fall between the high and low threshold will have their application reviewed, taking into account the teacher reference, personal statement, pre and post interview scores and any other mitigating circumstances. Following this review, they will either be offered a place, added to the waiting pool, or declined a place.

3.7 Equality and Diversity

The School, in operating admission arrangements, will do everything it reasonably can to enable every student to perform at their best, and in making acceptance decisions, will not discriminate between students on grounds of gender, disability, faith, ethnicity, or sexual preference, provided they meet the criteria for entry. EMS will encourage applications from female students through targeted marketing and recruitment, however there is no positive discrimination for girls in the admissions criteria.

EMS will admit any pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who meet the criteria and higher threshold in the application process. We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that no applicant with Special Education Needs or Disabilities (SEND) is dissuaded from applying to the school. Applicants should make EMS aware of SEND at the time of applying so that access arrangements can be put in place for the aptitude test or interview.

Students may face other barriers to taking part in the admissions process (such as high anxiety). The school will make reasonable adjustments to support such students and will make this clear on the school website. Students withdrawing from the process will be asked to share their reasons and will be offered support, if appropriate, to remain in the process, before confirming their decision.

EMS is committed to widening participation and broadening access to high quality mathematics education. As such, we will target our recruitment in areas which are underserved and in schools for which provision is currently limited, such as those without 6th forms. Our pre and post interview scores take contextual information into account to enable us to identify those with the most potential to benefit from EMS.

4 Implementation

4.1 Publication of Admissions Policy

The policy is accessible, published on the School’s website and with paper copies available on request. It will be presented in such a way that stakeholders can interpret it easily. It will state explicit entry criteria, the number of places available and the application process.

The policy will be reviewed annually and will detail how many places are available for the following September’s intake, the entry criteria and how to apply.

4.2 Dates for Entry September 2026

Applications for entry in Sept 2026 will be accepted for consideration from September 2025.

Students must have been born between 1st September 2009 and the 31st August 2010, or born between 1st September 2010 and the 31st August 2011 and in their final year of GCSEs at their current school. In exceptional circumstances, applications will be considered from students born between 1st September 2008 and the 31st August 2009.

Time line	Application process
September	Admissions information and application form published on the school website.

December	Application deadline.
January	Admissions test.
February/March	Admissions interviews.
March	Conditional offers made.
March	Acceptance of place deadline.
August	Enrolment on the first working day after GCSE results day.
September	Lessons begin.

4.3 Waiting Pool

We will keep a waiting pool of candidates and allocate places prioritised by the over-subscription criteria.

Places may still be offered up to the end of September, though it is recognised that additional pastoral care and academic support will be needed to help these students settle in and catch up.

4.4 Late Applications

Applications received after application deadline for the main admissions cycle will be considered alongside other applicants only if places remain at that stage of the process. They will otherwise be added to the school's waiting pool.

4.5 Appeals

Students will be offered places by March 2026. Those not offered a place will have the right to appeal.

Appeals should be made in writing by the end of April 2026 and will be heard by an Appeals Committee drawn from the school's governing body.

5 Associated Documentation

- Means-tested Bursary for Boarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

6 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing body.

7 Equality analysis

Please use the 'equality analysis procedure' to guide you to complete the text boxes below, expanding them as you wish. If this is a review - please add date and make any amendments if required.

10/10/24

7.1. Is your policy equality- relevant? If yes, please list which groups of people will be affected by this policy.

YES – the policy must ensure that all groups are able to access the school without discrimination.

7.2. How have you involved people from minority groups who may be affected by this policy?

In the autumn term of 2020 we conducted a thorough review of our admission process and policy, seeking feedback from staff of schools within our catchment area, our current students and parents and potential future applicants and their parents. We included students with SEND and those from all backgrounds (but did not separate out the responses according to protected characteristics).

7.3. What evidence have you considered? List any sources of data and research you have used. This can include college or national monitoring data, surveys, reports, consultations, focus groups, pilots, evaluations. Describe any ongoing data collection or plans for future research. The responses in questionnaires and interviews from the process outlined in 7.2 were used to inform our practice. We particularly asked if there was anything about the process or how we present it that might put off applicants and whether EMS was considered to be a school which is suitable for those of all backgrounds (who love maths). We also received feedback from home-schoolers. As a result of this we have improved the information on our website. We track our admissions data yearly to look for patterns and use census data to ~~to~~ benchmark our own.

7.4. How will your policy fulfil the public sector duty by helping fight discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?

Characteristic	How does your policy help fulfil the public sector duty? What Equality issues have you addressed?
Age	Age: this is a 16-19 provider and so must have age related criteria.
Disability	Disability: admissions staff are aware of our equality and diversity policy and make considerable efforts to ensure that no students are disadvantaged. We ask both applicants and their referees to identify particular needs that should be accounted for to enable students to be fairly assessed.
Gender	Gender: we do not select based on gender. The proportion of female students at EMS (30%) is lower than that of males but is much higher than expected given all students take Physics and/or Computer Science: both subjects for which there is a low proportion of female students (20% and 11% respectively).
Pregnancy & maternity	Pregnancy & Maternity: we have no specific provision for this. In the rare instance of a parent applying for a place at EMS we will take all reasonable measures to accommodate him/her.
Race	Race: we do not select based on race. Students that are refugees or have English as an additional language may receive a lower offer for English than their peers, depending on level of fluency and their ability to cope with our course.
Religion and belief	Religion and Belief: we do not select based on these. Prior to enrolment, students are asked to identify any spiritual needs to ensure we are able to make appropriate provision.
Sexual orientation	Sexual orientation: we do not select based on sexual orientation nor would we expect staff to be aware of students' orientation. All staff are trained in E&D and should respect all students (and parents) regardless of orientation.
Transgender	Transgender: we have support available in school for transgender students and do not select according to gender identity

7. 5. Describe any potential adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the policy. If any are identified, you should also state what actions will be taken to mitigate that negative impact. If yes, say if you have an action plan to carry this out?

Students from low income households may be deterred from applying due to the cost of accommodation and travel. We have a bursary scheme in place to ensure equality of access that is highlighted within this policy. Support is given to students in receipt of Free School Meals, to enable them to engage with the admissions process (financial travel bursaries and interview preparation resources).

The perception of an elite organisation may put-off those who do not consider themselves to fit this image. We have added information about current students to break-down incorrect stereotypes about maths school students and to demonstrate that this is a school in which a diverse population of students will thrive.

Students with high anxiety or other physical, learning or mental-health needs may not flourish under examination and assessment conditions. We have provision in the admission cycle to enable exam-access arrangements and to adapt in other ways to enable students to fully participate, for example visiting the school prior to taking the test or meeting with a member of our pastoral team. We contact the SENCO of feeder schools to ensure we have accurately understood the needs of our applicants.