



The Charter School

# Frequently asked questions

22.09.2017

# Contents

## Admissions

When do I need to apply for a place? .....	3
How do I complete the common application form? .....	3
Where do I return the common application form to? .....	3
Do you have a catchment area? .....	4
What happens after I have submitted my application form? .....	4
What if I am given a place at The Charter School, but decide to accept a place at another school? .....	4
What happens when The Charter School is over-subscribed? .....	4
Fraudulent Applications .....	6

## The School

It is such a large school, do the new pupils not feel intimidated mixed in with the older students? .....	6
Can we see the school on a normal working day with all the pupils in lessons? .....	7
What is your homework policy? .....	7
What are the class sizes? .....	8
What about setting? .....	8
How do you work with The Charter School East Dulwich? .....	9

## Curriculum

What about exam results? .....	9
Can you explain your Key Stage 4 curriculum? .....	10
Can I take three sciences at GCSE? .....	11
Can I take more than one language at GCSE? .....	11
Do you allow students to take GCSE qualifications early? .....	11

## More Able and Talented (MAT)

What do you do for more able children? .....	12
----------------------------------------------	----

## Extra-Curricular

Where do you play your sport – I cannot see any playing fields? .....	12
Do you run any school trips? .....	13
What about drama productions? .....	15
What about music and am I required to buy my own instrument? .....	16
My child loves art: what support do you offer? .....	17
I often see a police officer outside school and sometimes officers on bikes and in cars, why is this? .....	18

# Admissions

## When do I need to apply for a place?

If your child is due to start secondary school in September 2018 you must apply by completing the common application form online. This is available now. Applications must be submitted before the closing date of 31 October 2017. However, we would encourage you to submit your application by Friday, 20 October 2017 to your home borough.

## How do I complete the common application form?

If you are a Southwark resident you must apply online by visiting [www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions). If you live in another borough, you must complete the admission application for the borough in which you live, even if you would like to apply for a school in Southwark. If you need help with completing your application, please call Southwark Admissions on 020 7525 5337.

## Where do I return the common application form to?

All applications must be submitted to your local admissions authority, no later than 31 October 2017. The online application will not be valid unless it is submitted by 23.59 hours on 31 October 2017. You will then receive an application reference number by email confirming that your application has been submitted successfully. If you do not receive this email, please submit your application again as it will not have been received. There is no supplementary application form required for The Charter School.

Do you have a catchment area?

The Charter School DOES NOT have a catchment area. Places are offered to the pupils who live closest to the school and this is different each year. The furthest distance offered for our September 2017 intake was 1,031 metres from school measured by the shortest straight line measurement. This may not be the case for our September 2018 intake.

What happens after I have submitted my application form?

On 1 March 2018 Southwark Admissions will send an email to all applicants who applied by the closing date of 31 October 2017. This email will let you know which school can offer your child a place.

What if I am given a place at The Charter School, but decide to accept a place at another school?

Every year more than 1,000 families apply for a place at The Charter School. For those who are not offered a place initially it can be an extremely stressful time. Therefore, to allow us to offer places from the waiting list as soon as possible, please can you let us and Southwark Admissions know as soon as possible that you **do not want to take up your child's place at The Charter School** by emailing – [admissions@charter.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:admissions@charter.southwark.sch.uk)

What happens when The Charter School is over-subscribed?

When there are more applications for the available places, the following admissions criteria apply, which is published by the Local Authority in their booklet *“Starting Secondary School”*. This stipulates that if there are more applications than places to The

Charter School, the school will allocate places in the following order of priority:

1. Looked after children. Looked after children, or children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or become subject to a child arrangement/residence/special guardianship order).
2. Children with siblings who are already on roll at The Charter School (North Dulwich) and will still be on roll at their date of entry.
3. Children with exceptional medical, psychological or social needs which mean that The Charter School (North Dulwich) is the most suitable school to best address their needs.

*The evidence should come from at least two registered health or social care professionals and should set out the particular reasons why The Charter School (North Dulwich) is the most suitable provision.*

*Supporting evidence to substantiate that the child has an exceptional medical, psychological or social need must be provided at the time of application in a written format. This evidence must be less than 6 months old at the time of application and include letters from two registered doctors, psychologists or social workers, who are currently providing direct care/ support/ treatment to the child on an ongoing basis in their professional capacity, according to the stated medical, psychological or social need. Families need to explain difficulties that would be caused if their child had to attend another school. Any such applications will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Admissions Committee of the school.*

4. Children of permanent staff who work at The Charter School (North Dulwich) where:
  - a) either the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

b) or the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made.

5. Other children living closest to the school by the shortest straight line measurement.

*Please see the schools' website for the full Admissions Policy.*

## Fraudulent Applications

If the Admissions Authority has reason to suspect that a family does not live at the address stated, it will carry out an investigation. Should it be discovered that a parent is making a fraudulent claim the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

## The School

It is such a large school, do the new pupils not feel intimidated mixed in with the older students?

We work very hard at offering our new pupils a positive experience on starting the school. We call ourselves a family school because every year around a third of the year group have older siblings at school. This greatly helps the settling in processes for our new Year 7s. **However, we don't just rely on that. We work very hard to ensure all our new Year 7s settle as quickly as possible.** Our embedded practice over time has been adopted by Southwark as a borough exemplar model of good practice.

We hold Induction Days for our new pupils BEFORE they join in September, to make their step to secondary school as seamless as

possible. We are particularly conscious of the young people that may come with just a few friends from their primary school and take account of that in our planning. Our older pupils are very considerate of younger cohorts. A number of schemes in the school – such as peer mentoring and tutoring, cross-year sports teams, the House System, a team building day, music ensembles and trips – all help this integration. We are a small school by national standards.

This year we are very proud of how well our new Year 7s have settled in.

Can we see the school on a normal working day with all the pupils in lessons?

Yes you can! If you would like to see the school on a normal day you can book a slot for a morning tour, on selected dates in October, that start at 9.00am . Prior booking is essential as spaces are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please send an email to [admissions@charter.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:admissions@charter.southwark.sch.uk) **putting ‘school tour’ in the subject field. We will need to know your child’s name, date of birth, your address and phone number.**

However, on our Open Days you will get a chance to speak, at length, to a wide range of staff and pupils – something that is not possible on a normal school day.

What is your homework policy?

All subjects give homework from Year 7. All homework is posted on our VLE (Virtual Learning Environment), so parents and pupils can see what homework has been set.

## What are the class sizes?

Generally, in Years 7, 8 and 9 we have 6 classes of 30 students, but this depends on the subject and internal setting arrangements. Class sizes at GCSE and A Level are smaller. In all years, students with Special Educational Needs have the opportunity to work in smaller groups. Interestingly, there is no evidence that links class size to exam success – what is important is the quality of the teaching.

## What about setting?

Key Stage 3 students are only set in Maths. English, Science, MFL and Humanities are taught in mixed ability classes (apart from a small nurture group) and we have found this model very successful for all pupils.

The issue of streaming and setting is a topic that is continually debated in educational circles. There is some misunderstanding



about streaming and setting. Streaming is where pupils are assessed and placed in a specific group and then attend ALL subjects with those peers, whether they have an aptitude for that subject or not. Setting, however, is more targeted. Children are placed in groupings according to their abilities in specific subject areas. We operate the latter in some subjects, more so at Key Stage 4.

How do you work with The Charter School East Dulwich?



**The Charter School  
East Dulwich**

The Charter School East Dulwich opened to Year 7 students in September 2016. Each school has its own Headteacher, pupils and site. We collaborate to offer additional possibilities for pupils in sport and music. Equally, staff collaborate to share and develop expertise.

## Curriculum

What about exam results?

Our 2017 GCSE and A Level exam results continued to demonstrate excellent achievement.

### Year 11 — GCSE results

- 76% of all students in Year 11 gained a standard pass or above in both English and Maths (grade 4 to 9)
- 61% gaining a strong pass in both English and Maths (grade 5 to 9)
- 35% of pupils achieved 5A\*/A (or 7–9) grades in their GCSEs
- 46% of pupils gained the English Baccalaureate
- 74% of pupils gained at least one A\*/A grade or equivalent

## Year 13 — A Levels/BTEC results

- 46% of all A Level grades achieved at The Charter School this year were A\*/A
- 74% of all A Level grades were A\*/B
- 90% of all A Level grades were A\*/C
- 100% of BTEC grades achieved were Distinction\*/Distinction.
- 50% of all students gained at least 3 A Levels with A\* to B grades

This year 81% of our Year 13 students are going to University or Art College; and 14% are taking a gap year, starting an apprenticeship or are in employment. Four students are heading to Oxford or Cambridge University.

## Can you explain your Key Stage 4 curriculum?

Our Key Stage 4 curriculum is implemented in Years 10 and 11, in line with government directives to provide more personalised learning opportunities and choice for our pupils. We have devised different offers to better suit the interests and talents of the students in the school. We no longer operate the pathway system.

Each offer plays to the strengths and interests of the pupils selected and will allow each child to be more confident of achieving the right qualifications at the right level. Every pupil will complete Key Stage 4 with qualifications that offer them the best opportunities for post-16 provision.

Can I take three sciences at GCSE?

Yes, we have recently changed this, so students can select this as an option at KS4. This ensures they have adequate time to complete the content.



Science

However, if students do not select triple science as an option, we strongly feel that the new double award GCSE will prepare students adequately to study A Level science. The double award still covers all three sciences: physics, chemistry and biology and students who have studied the Double Award Science qualification with us have gone on to study medicine and science at Russell Group universities.

Can I take more than one language at GCSE?



Yes. French and Spanish are taught in Key Stage 3.

In Year 7 students carry on with the language they studied at KS2. Mandarin is offered from Year 7 to half of the cohort. Latin is offered as an option from Year 8 with taster sessions in Year 7. For many pupils in Key Stage 4 taking a GCSE in either French or Spanish is compulsory. Pupils with an aptitude for languages are encouraged to take more than one. Students can study Mandarin and either French or Spanish in KS4 and take GCSEs in both.

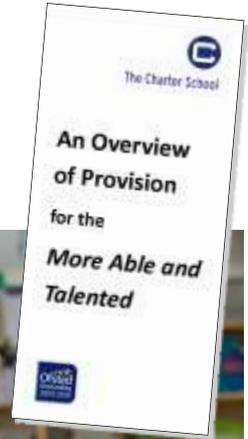
Do you allow students to take GCSE qualifications early?

Yes, under the present system, but exam regulations are changing. We start a number of GCSE courses early. These include science and maths. We always work hard to meet the needs of all our pupils, so we have had exceptionally gifted mathematicians taking **not just GCSEs early but A Levels too...!**

# More Able and Talented (MAT)

What do you do for more able children?

We have an incredible array of exceptionally able children at The Charter School. We provide a range of opportunities and extra-curricular activities to enable them to develop their individual potential; including the termly Charter Challenge competition for



which students can enter outstanding work completed in any subject. For more information please see our leaflet *“An Overview of Provision for the More Able and Talented”*.

## Extra-Curricular

Where do you play your sport – I cannot see any playing fields?

We have a new state of the art Sports Hall. It has a large ball court area with flexible options for different activities, as well as a dance and drama studio. We also have a covered and lit ball court at the rear of the building and a new outdoor gym. Our playing



field is just behind the school, which can be reached in five minutes.

There are competitive fixtures against other schools in a range of **sports including athletics, football, rugby, cricket, netball, girls' football, handball, table tennis, rowing and swimming.**

Additionally, we have many pupils who are selected to compete both for the Borough, London and nationally in a range of sports. We have also had pupils who have left school to play for Premier and Championship League football teams.

Do you run any school trips?

Yes, we organise many trips every year. Nearly all pupils will go on a day trip. These include visits to universities including Oxford and Cambridge, work skills days at leading businesses and

organisations and for those with an interest in performing arts, trips to theatre productions and music concerts. We also run a number of residential trips.

Destinations visited annually or biannually include – Ghana, Berlin, Iceland, Beijing, Brussels, World War I Battlefields (Belgium), Romania, Croatia and Kenya. We also offer Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) award – Gold, Silver and Bronze. Last year our DoE students were amongst the highest number in the borough achieving the Bronze award.



## What about drama productions?

Our drama department is exceptional. The experience, enthusiasm and energy displayed by our staff enables our students to acquire a broad, balanced curriculum which combines skills-based drama with exploring important issues.

There are a large number of GCSE, BTEC and A Level performances each year, many performances are written, devised and directed by students. We produce a whole-school production once a year. Last year, we produced *Hairspray*. The year before, we produced a talent show inspired by stories of diversity and identity. We also work closely with a number of leading organisations including The Young Vic, The National Theatre and The Unicorn.



We also take numerous theatre trips across the year with all age groups. Recent visits included *The Trial* at The Young Vic, *Escaped Alone* at The Royal Court and *Into The Hoods* in the West End. We also work with outside practitioners who lead workshops with students, which is an extremely



enriching experience for students. Recent workshops have included Frantic Assembly, a physical theatre company, and workshops from actors and the production team at The Young Vic to explore plays we have been to see. We also had several well-known TV actors work with our GCSE Year 11 cast earlier on in the year.



Past students have gone on to study at RADA and are appearing on the stage and screen.

What about music and am I required to buy my own instrument?

The music provision at The Charter School is excellent. Our highly committed and motivated staff has an exceptionally diverse range of musical experiences. This combination of professional backgrounds, coupled with our superb resources, has helped to create a highly dynamic music department.



We have instrumental teachers teaching nearly 200 pupils instruments, in small groups (up to 4) or individually. Study is offered in a range of instruments including strings, brass, woodwind, vocals, keyboard, drums and guitar. These are paid for separately by the student. At the moment, many pupils own their own instruments, but the school has a supply of instruments for use with appropriate insurance. We have 30 ensembles and bands and an orchestra and a choir.

Past students have gone on to study at a range of music colleges including the Royal Academy of Music and also secured record contracts with leading music labels.

My child loves art: what support do you offer?

Every year our GCSE and A Level, Photography and Art work is highly commended by examiners, with our students gaining exceptional results. We work with a number of leading





organisations, such as Tate Modern, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Tate Modern and Camberwell College of Art. Our pupils work with professional artists and take part in external competitions such as Amnesty International and Saatchi School.

I often see a police officer outside school and sometimes officers on bikes and in cars, why is this?

Every school in Southwark has a dedicated police officer and we **are no exception (we share ours with JAGS and Alleyn's)**. If the police are aware of any immediate threat, they will react immediately and visibly, hence the numbers of police sometimes seen. PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers in uniform but not police) regularly patrol all the local area after schools finish, ensuring pupils are not victims of crime. In our annual student survey, students report, each year, feeling safe at school and on their way to and from school.

*Updated: September 2017. All information correct at time of going to print.*





The Charter School  
Red Post Hill, London SE24 9JH



Tel: 020 7346 6600  
Fax: 020 7346 6601  
Web: [www.charter.southwark.sch.uk](http://www.charter.southwark.sch.uk)