



DENSTONE  
COLLEGE

Sixth Form  
Entrance and Scholarship  
Assessment  
2026 Entry

## Assessment Days

All students registered for entry to Denstone College will take part in an Assessment Day in November before entry the following September. This day has changed a little from previous years and will include a variety of activities, including a CAT<sub>4</sub> assessment.

### CAT<sub>4</sub> assessments

#### The Process

On the day of the assessment, all candidates will be asked to sit three 45 minute online cognitive ability tests. It is not possible to prepare for these tests as the questions take the form of puzzles, logical thinking, spatial awareness tasks and vocabulary understanding. The pupils do these online and the questions are responsive to ability so all children feel they are making progress. In addition to these tests, the candidates will be interviewed by one member of senior staff, and will undertake a series of group tasks and discussions. This process will allow us to gain a more holistic view of the candidates and will be able to guide our discussions more meaningfully.

All pupils must have confirmed registration before they can be considered for the Assessment Day or scholarship assessments. Registration consists of completing the Application Form, payment of the Registration Fee (£120) and a copy of your child's passport. Please note that references from their current school may be requested at this stage.

## The Rationale

At the heart of the process is the need for The College to get to know the children applying for entry and to ascertain the appropriateness of the continuity of their education. Children's current schools are already aware of the many strengths of the individual which will be communicated to the College in a school report and school reference. And so, there is little benefit in asking the pupils to sit a short Maths and English exam which will tell us what we already know. To that end, the day is structured to ensure we can gain further information about all candidates (irrespective of their current school) and to then use this data to have more meaningful and structured conversations regarding the transition. We also wish to reiterate that these are young people and over-preparation for an assessment for a non-selective school such as Denstone is unhealthy and unnecessary.



## Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded in recognition of outstanding ability in a number of areas: academic, art, drama, design and technology, music and sport.

At Denstone, a scholarship is neither an elitist badge nor some sort of glorified coupon, but a recognition of particular potential and an expression of hope that certain pupils will lead the way in supporting an aspect or aspects of College life. There are no compulsory extra activities for scholars; and equally, all we offer is open to all who are prepared to work diligently, persevere doggedly, commit faithfully and learn humbly. However, we choose our scholars to be the sort of people who will want to do all these things, and so set an example to the whole school of what it means to be a Denstonian.

So our scholars are cultural leaders, people who not only capitalise on all the opportunities given to them, but also act as the catalysts for enthusiasm all around them. Our scholars are those, we hope, who will both love to get involved and to involve others.



There are a number of scholarships and these are detailed below. If we can help by explaining the process of application, or talking about the awards themselves, please do not hesitate to let us know. Assessment for Scholarship usually takes place in November before entry the following September. Scholarships at Denstone are fiercely contested and as such we expect the highest level of academic, sporting, and creative achievement.

We offer scholarships at Third Form, rather than First Form entry. We believe that by this time, pupils have had more of a chance to find a particular niche, to be genuinely excited by and committed to particular aspects of their educational lives, and to understand that 'scholarship' is essentially an attitude they must have in themselves, rather than merely being a goal to win or a process that is done to them.

The majority of Scholarships will not carry any financial concession as financial support is only available to those students who may not be able to access a Denstone College education otherwise. However, we wish to encourage students from all academic backgrounds to apply and as such, financial bursaries are available. Families must apply for the bursary at the same time as applying for admission to the school, and further details can be found later in this document.

# Scholarships in Brief

## Academic

An Academic scholarship at Denstone is about more than mere proficiency at a particular academic subject, or subjects, in the classroom. We are looking for pupils who combine intellectual potential with curiosity, ambition, cognitive creativity and the ability to be inspired by, and to inspire others with, fresh ideas and perspectives.

Academic Scholarships are based on performance in the entrance assessments, and a selection of interview activities. References may also be taken into account.

Academic scholarships are awarded to pupils displaying outstanding intellectual promise among their peer group, both in the College written examinations and interview. Significant evidence of academic potential and impressive commitment to developing their minds above and beyond the taught curriculum are most likely to be rewarded.

## Art

Art results at Denstone are excellent, and it is an extremely popular subject. Scholarship candidates are invited to an interview with the Head of Department, where they will have the opportunity to show and discuss their portfolio work, which should demonstrate outstanding technical ability and a genuine passion for their subject. They should be able to talk intelligently and enthusiastically about their own work. We are looking to discover potential for development more than 'the finished article'. The Art Department aims to allow students the opportunity to develop their understanding of Art in a wide range of disciplines. The emphasis of the teaching is on an individual approach and all work is tailored to encourage a personal response.

## Design and Technology

Design and Technology is an inspiring, rigorous and practical subject. Using creativity and imagination, pupils design and make products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. Students acquire a broad range of subject knowledge and draw on other subjects such as Mathematics, Science, ICT and Art. Many Denstonians move onto degrees and careers in product design, industrial design, architecture, engineering, interior design, automotive design and other related courses.

We are looking for

- Highly creative individuals with a genuine passion and talent for designing and making;
- Individuals with a love of all aspects of design, including research and analysis;
- Individuals with a flair for problem-solving and the ability to bring their designs to reality, whether with traditional methods of construction or through the use of computer-aided design and manufacture.

Candidates will be required to attend a 20-minute interview with the Head of D&T. Candidates will be asked about their interests and aspirations as well as having the opportunity to talk through their portfolio. Their portfolio will display research, design and practical work, potentially developed at home or at school. They will also be required to sit an assessment paper; this will be one hour in length, including questions on design, problem solving and product analysis.

# Drama

Drama is highly successful at Denstone and at least one drama show takes place each term. Drama awards are offered to pupils showing outstanding talent and ability. Students who can provide evidence of experience and a sustained interest in drama will obviously be at an advantage. For instance, candidates should have had a main role in at least two recent drama productions and preferably be involved in drama outside school. Successful candidates will be expected to make significant contributions to Denstone drama throughout their College career. It is not essential that candidates intend to study A Level Theatre Studies although it is preferred.

## Audition:

1. Two contrasting acting extracts from two published plays that the applicant has prepared and learned. The duration for each of the pieces should be 3-4 minutes.
2. Spontaneous Improvisation – candidates will be asked to create a range of characters in a given set of circumstances.
3. Written Assessment – a written paper of one hour. The focus will be on interpreting an extract from a play and offering advice as a director, designer, technician, and/or actor.

# Music

Music at Denstone is an integral part of College life, with a wide range of ensembles and choirs performing regularly throughout the year, as well as a busy programme of solo concerts. The Department is flourishing, with an ever increasing number of opportunities such as competitions and overseas tours, and we are always seeking enthusiastic new Music Scholars who will help to drive our ambitious programme of events, as well as helping to nurture and support our developing musicians.

For audition at 6th Form entry, potential scholars should:

- Perform two pieces on their first instrument, which should be a minimum of Grade 7 standard.
- Perform one piece on their second instrument, which should be a minimum of Grade 5 standard.
- Be prepared to discuss their performances and their own music making in detail with the Director of Music.

Copies of music to be performed should be sent to Admissions in advance of audition.

Please note that applicants are not necessarily expected to have taken the relevant ABRSM exams, but should be performing at that level. We recognise all major exam boards, and welcome applications from less formal backgrounds, such as guitar and drums. In these cases we advise looking at the relevant Rock School or Trinity Rock and Pop grade repertoire to confirm difficulty levels of pieces.

It should be noted that the Grade levels given are indicative of the minimum technical standard at which we might expect a potential scholar to perform, and we often see applicants performing at a considerably higher level.

Our standards for Scholars are deliberately high, and unfortunately it is unlikely that candidates performing at levels lower than those stated will be successful.

The Director of Music is always happy to speak to prospective scholars at any point in the year.

# Sport

Denstone College enjoys a tradition of sporting excellence. This is achieved via a structured programme of physical education lessons and a games programme, in which every individual is given the opportunity to develop their skills. The comprehensive fixture programme can see over half of the pupils concurrently playing in matches. The fixture card is designed to provide our pupils with a relevant level of challenge as we continue to develop a national reputation for sport.

These awards are available for boys and girls who demonstrate outstanding sporting ability and who have the potential to contribute strongly to sport at Denstone.

What are we looking for?

- Excellent sporting ability.
- Potential - just as important as current level of performance.
- Motivation to train and perform.
- The ability to work as part of teams or squads.
- Leadership potential.
- The ability to inspire peers to higher levels of performance.
- The resilience and drive to excel in sport beyond Denstone.
- The ability to manage academic and other school commitments.

Major sports at Denstone are rugby, hockey, cricket and netball.

## The Swales Sixth Form Science Scholarship

Michael Swales OD (Lowe 1944-49), returned to the College as a member of staff from 1958 to 1992.

Michael was an accomplished scientist, Housemaster and all-round contributor to College life. He headed global science expeditions, was the founder and a trustee member of The Denstone Foundation, was honorary Secretary of the OD Club for 25 years and has been a Friend of Denstone committee member since it was launched.

This scholarship is aimed at those intending to study A levels in the sciences: Biology, Physics and Chemistry, (or at least Biology and one other science), and who wish to study Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry at University. The award will be made on the basis of entrance assessments and a science-based interview.

## The Lethbridge Sixth Form Music Scholarship

Lionel Lethbridge dedicated his lifetime's work to music at Denstone College. Between 1948 and 1978 he and his wife were a regular part of College life, and Lionel directed music with love, passion and huge commitment. Following his retirement he was a regular visitor to Denstone, playing the organ in Chapel, accompanying soloists and attending concerts.

This scholarship is aimed at young people who have achieved Grade Eight standard in their specialist instrument, who may wish to study A level music, and indeed music at university or in a specialist conservatoire or college. This is not however a condition of the award. The award will be made on the basis of musical accomplishments, entrance assessments and an interview with the Director of Music.

## The Alastair Hignell Scholarship

This award is named for Alastair Hignell, an Old Denstonian who was at College from 1969 until 1973. Alastair was Cambridge Blue at both cricket and rugby. He played rugby for Bristol and England as well as first class cricket for Gloucestershire. The Hignell family is in fact an important part of Denstone College history. Alastair's three brothers were also educated here, as was his father Tony, who represented Great Britain at athletics, his uncle, Stephen and his grandfather, Harold, who was educated at Denstone at the end of the nineteenth century.

After retiring from the sports field, Alastair taught for a while before joining the BBC as a rugby commentator. In 1999, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and is now an ardent campaigner for raising awareness of the illness. He maintains regular contact with the College and has an open invitation to visit.

This is an award open to top academics who are expected to achieve Grade 9's at GCSE, who demonstrate academic excellence and potential in the entrance assessments, and who have shown national sporting potential. Successful candidates will have an exceptional aptitude for rugby union, cricket, hockey, netball or tennis. The award offers a Sixth Form boarding education at the College and is worth up to 100% of the boarding fees, at the Head's discretion. Parents are asked to complete a confidential Financial Circumstances Form (Bursary Form).

## The Governors' Award

The Governors of Denstone College endow annually one or more means-tested Sixth Form boarding bursary, worth up to 100% of the boarding fees at the Heads discretion. The College invites applications from top academic performers who can demonstrate excellence inside and outside the classroom. Applicants must come to the College from a non-independent educational background.

Performance on the College entrance assessments will be taken into account.

Awards are up to 100% of the boarding fees at the Heads discretion. Parents are asked to complete a confidential Financial Circumstances Form (Bursary Form).







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