



Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

Admissions Policy

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1. Introduction

Merchant Taylors' is a family of Schools with an enviable reputation on Merseyside and the North West. Merchant Taylors' Schools provides education for pupils aged 4-18 at Merchant Taylors' Prep School (Stanfield site), with mixed infants and juniors, and secondary education (Harrison site) for girls and boys through to end of Sixth Form. From September 2025, all sections of the Foundation moved to full coeducation.

The School is academically selective and strives to deliver and support Ambition, Character and Excellence, inside and outside the classroom, combined with a passionate concern for each individual.

Founded in 1620, the School achieves among the best GCSE and A Level results on Merseyside and in the North West and enjoys exceptional co-curricular success.

2. Information and pre-application visits

The School prospectus and accompanying materials provide an overview of life at Merchant Taylors' Schools. In our prospectus, we have tried to convey the special nature of a Merchant Taylors' education. It is not always possible to reflect adequately the warmth of the School community through our prospectus or the website and therefore invite you to visit the School, where you are assured of the warmest of welcomes.

Details and arrangements for admission are available to parents and prospective pupils through this policy.

The Admissions Team will maintain regular contact with all prospective families and provide information relevant to each stage of their enquiry/application including notifications of Open Events, Familiarisation/Taster Sessions and Assessment Days.

To request information about the School or to arrange a visit, please contact the Admissions Office on 0151 949 9366 or email admissions@merchanttaylor.com

Additional information can be found on our website which is regularly updated to include our latest news and events – www.merchanttaylor.com

In line with the Independent Schools Standards and Regulations, the School makes known its policy and arrangements via this Admissions Policy which is made available and published on the School website.

3. Structure of the School

Entry into Merchant Taylors' Schools can be at any age from 4 years to 17 years of age. The most common entry points are Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and the Lower Sixth Form and currently comprise:

- i Merchant Taylors' Prep School – pupils from Reception to Year 6
- ii Merchant Taylors' Senior School – pupils from Year 7 to Year 11
- iii Merchant Taylors' Sixth Form – pupils from Lower to Upper sixth

4. Application procedures and entry requirements

Applications are welcome for entry at all stages from age 4 to 17. Our admissions procedures are age-appropriate and may include entry assessments, interviews, references from the current school, and information shared by parents/carers about any SEND, disability, medical need or other circumstance for which reasonable adjustments may be required during the admissions process.

The following information provides a general guide to entry requirements and procedures. Each application is considered on its individual merit.

5. Admission to the Prep

The Prep School is a co-educational setting. The infant section caters to children from age 4-7. A completed application form should be submitted and where relevant, two recent school/nursery reports and reference from the child's current school/nursery will be required. Once received, your child will be invited to attend a Familiarisation Session or Taster Days. Parents are invited for a tour of the School and a meeting with the Head or a member of the Senior Management Team.

Following completion of Infants, the children then move on to the Junior section. External pupils joining at this stage will complete an application form and will be invited to undertake a Taster Session during which time they will be assessed and meet the Head. A reference will also be taken from the pupil's current school.

Pupils attending the Prep School are regularly assessed during their time in the School and, provided they maintain good progress, will automatically transition through to the Senior School.

6. Admissions to senior schools

Following receipt of a completed application form, candidates for admission at the age of 11 are invited to attend for our Entrance Assessment in the Autumn Term; the date for this will be advertised well in advance and parents informed of the date on receipt of an application.

The assessment is a computerised cognitive ability test comprising verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning. This test is in three sections each lasting around 40 minutes. No preparation is required for this test as it is designed to measure innate ability.

Results of the cognitive ability tests are not shared with parents to ensure that the focus remains on the educational development and support provided to pupils. This approach helps teachers tailor their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of each pupil without external pressure or comparisons. Parents wishing to discuss their child's progress and any concerns, are encouraged to do so by speaking to their current teacher who can provide a comprehensive overview of their child's learning journey. Information giving details of the assessment arrangements and results procedure will be sent to parents at the relevant time by the Admissions Team.

Offers of places for September of that year will be made prior to the Christmas holidays to those pupils who reach the academic standard required. The possible results will be:

- i The offer of a full fee-paying place;

- ii The offer of a Scholarship;
- iii The offer of a Bursary;
- iv The offer to go on a waiting list for a full fee-paying place or Bursary;
- v No offer.

The procedure for formal acceptance of places offered is to complete and return the Acceptance Form together with a non-refundable deposit of £300. A Welcome Evening for new pupils and parents will be held during the Summer Term.

7. Mid-Year admission - Years 7-10

Pupils applying for places throughout the year will, on completion of an application, be invited to attend a Taster & Assessment Day. During the course of the day, they will undertake an age-related cognitive ability test along the same lines as administered for entry to Year 7, as well as attending some lessons, meeting staff, and also spending time with pupils. Candidates will also be invited for interview with either the Head or a member of Senior staff and a confidential reference will be requested from their current school.

There is no preparation required for the CAT assessment.

8. Admission to the Sixth Form

Applications are welcomed from pupils from other secondary schools to enter Merchant Taylors' Sixth Form. A Sixth Form Open Evening is held in the Autumn Term, to which pupils and parents are invited. This evening provides the opportunity to discuss options and career prospects with subject teachers and Sixth Form staff. Pupils meet with Heads of Department of their chosen A Level subjects, Head of Sixth Form, and the Head. Conditional offers are made dependent upon GCSE grades.

Upon receipt of a completed application form, our Admissions Team will provide parents and students with details of the entry criteria and the subjects available for A Level study.

9. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Parents/carers are encouraged to tell the School at the earliest opportunity about any special educational need, disability or medical need, and to provide relevant professional reports where available, so that the School can consider whether reasonable adjustments can be made for visits, assessments, interviews, transition and, if a place is offered and accepted, for the pupil's education in school. We are happy to discuss thoroughly with parents/carers any adjustments that can be reasonably made for their child once they have been offered and accepted the offer of a place and before he/she becomes a pupil of the School. Parents/Carers should provide, where possible, any relevant medical/psycho-educational documents that may support their child's needs. An example of this would be an Educational, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, or Educational Psychologist's Report outlining the need for examination access arrangements. Further details of the SEND provision at Merchant Taylors' School can be found in the SEND Policy, which is available on request.

10. Equal treatment

As required by the Equality Act (2010) and equal treatment for protected characteristics, Merchant Taylors' School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment (in accordance with Section 7 of our Gender Identity Policy), or social background. We receive and accept applications from pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. We believe that diversity enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. All admissions will be in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy which conforms with the Equality Act.

We encourage applications from anyone who feels they will benefit from a Merchant Taylors' School education and who will be willing to contribute to, and benefit from the academic life of the School, its mission and identity, and tradition. Fee support is available to make it possible for as many as possible, who meet the Schools' admissions criteria, to attend the School.

11. Reasonable adjustments

The School is mindful of its obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to undertake to make reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils who meet the necessary entrance assessment standards are able to join the School.

Each case will need reasonable adjustments as required and will be looked at individually and on merit, in consultation with parents and where appropriate off-site agencies.

12. Disability and Accessibility

At present Merchant Taylors' School has limited provision for children with physical disabilities but will do all that is reasonable and practicable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities to children with disabilities who apply to the School.

13. Current fees

The current fees are published in the Admissions section of the website.

14. Siblings

Merchant Taylors' School welcomes the opportunity to educate brothers and sisters of current and past pupils. However, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where we judge that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different educational environment. Many siblings do join us and in recognition of the incremental financial cost to families who wish to educate more than one of their children at Merchant Taylors' School, the Governors have agreed a discount of 10% for the second and third child in a family, who is on School roll, then 20% for the fourth and subsequent children. The sibling discount applies only to tuition fees and if any pupil within the family is in receipt of any other form of financial assistance (excluding Harrison Scholarships), that pupil will not be included within the scope of the Sibling Discount.

15. Bursaries

Bursaries form a major part of the fee support offered by Merchant Taylors' School and is intended to help pupils who are likely to benefit from a Merchant Taylors' education and who will contribute well to the life of the School, but whose parents cannot afford full fees. Bursaries are means tested and are awarded on academic merit dependent upon joint parental income and expenditure.

Parents are required to provide detailed financial documentation when applying and these are means-tested every year to ensure continued eligibility. The School currently uses BAA Consultancy Ltd, who will arrange a personal meeting, to assess the financial need of each applicant for a bursary.

16. Scholarships

Scholarships are available for academic excellence, music, art, drama and sport for those applying to Year 7. In addition, scholarships for music, art, drama and sport plus the academic Harrison Scholarships are available to pupils entering Sixth Form. The value of scholarship awarded is decided by the Head and typically ranges from 10% to 30% of tuition fees. There is no annual means testing of scholarship awards.

17. Staff children

Pupils of staff in the Merchant Taylors' School will be subjected to the same selection process as siblings of current senior school pupils. They will be admitted, provided they do sufficiently well and can demonstrate that they will benefit from a place in the School.

18. Complaints

We strive to ensure that prospective families and their children have a positive experience with our Admissions process and the Admissions Team will always welcome any feedback on your experience with our procedures. The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website and can be provided to prospective parents upon request. Please note that the Complaints Procedure is not applicable to prospective parents.

19. Enrolment

Enrolment to Merchant Taylors' Schools necessitates the signing of a contract and agreement to the Terms and Conditions, which include specific provisions regarding fees in lieu of notice. This means that parents or guardians must formally agree to the Schools' policies/procedure and financial obligations before their child can attend. The contract outlines the requirement for a notice period if a pupil is withdrawn from the school; failing to provide this notice will result in a fee, ensuring the School can manage its resources effectively. This policy helps maintain financial stability and allows the school to plan for staffing and other resources accordingly.

20. Registration

The School will maintain its admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The School will notify the local authority of additions to and deletions from the admission register in accordance with regulation 13 and current DfE

guidance. A pupil's name will only be removed from the admission register where one of the statutory grounds applies.

For each pupil, the admission register contains the following information:

- i Name in full, including the name the pupil uses at School;
- ii Sex [this will be the birth sex unless the person has obtained a gender recognition certification which is not currently available until the age of 18];
- iii Name and address of parent[s] and/or guardian[s], and which parent holds parental responsibility under the Section 3 Children Act 1989;
- iv Where a pupil lives at an alternative address, the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil normally lives;
- v At least 1 telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency, although more than 1 is recorded to meet Safeguarding requirements;
- vi Day, month, and year of birth;
- vii Day, month, and year of admission to the School;
- viii The name of the destination school, as notified by the parent, and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable to ascertain this information.

Where pupils leave Merchant Taylors' at non-standard transitions, the School will notify the local authority and where the School intends to remove the pupil from its register of admissions.

As detailed in the School's Attendance Policy, the School is required to monitor School attendance and respond to absence accordingly.

21. Children missing from education

Where a child has been removed from the school's roll either by parents or the School itself, the School recognises that the child becomes a 'most vulnerable child'. The School will ensure that:

- i The parent gives one term's notice;
- ii During this period, the School will formally write to the parent to obtain confirmation of the proposed school to which the child will attend upon leaving Merchant Taylors';
- iii A member of the admissions team will make contact with the proposed school to confirm that the child has been offered a place;
- iv A CME form will be submitted to the Local Authority, either confirming details of the proposed school or advising that the child does not have a planned future education provision;
- v Where a child is added to the School's roll, a member of the admissions team will make contact with the Local Authority to advise that the child is now on roll at the School.

Please note that this process is not applicable at the key transition Years of 6, 11 and 13.

22. Overseas applicants

Merchant Taylors' School welcomes pupils from all over the world and values their contribution to the life of the School. It is envisaged that the majority of Overseas Pupil enquiries will be post-16 pupils entering the Sixth Form.

As a Student Sponsor, the School take a proactive approach to ensure it meets the sponsorship duties as set out in the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) guidance documents and will make reasonable efforts to assist pupils and parents to comply with the UK Government's requirement on visa entry for children who wish to come to the UK to study. However, responsibility for making a visa application to allow their child to attend Merchant Taylors' Schools rests with the parents. The School cannot assist with resolving visa related issues other than those under Child Student or General Student either for a current pupil or for a child who is proposed to be admitted.

23. Sponsorship information

- i. Merchant Taylors' School holds a Student Sponsor licence with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) (Licence No: N885W3GM9).
- ii. Upon contact from a parent or guardian, and as part of its admissions process, the School will undertake appropriate checks to satisfy itself as to the pupil's nationality, immigration status and right to study in the UK. Any issues concerning Student or Child Student visa requirements will be raised at the earliest opportunity.
- iii. As a selective school, and in order to ascertain academic ability and language proficiency, all applications must be supported by entrance assessment, a report from the pupil's current school and an interview, in order to determine whether Merchant Taylors' School is the right setting for the child. Details of specific requirements for Sixth Form entry are set out below.
- iv. The School will obtain and retain documentary evidence of each sponsored pupil's identity, immigration permission and entitlement to study in the UK, in accordance with current UKVI sponsor guidance. This will normally include a copy of the pupil's current passport (including any relevant identity page, visa vignette, entry stamp or other immigration endorsement, where applicable). Where a pupil holds an eVisa, the School will retain an electronic copy of the pupil's immigration status obtained through the UKVI View and Prove service.
- v. Where a pupil enters the UK without receiving an entry stamp, for example via an eGate, the School will check and record the pupil's date of entry by reference to other evidence, such as an e-ticket or paper or electronic boarding pass. The School may also retain any additional supporting immigration documentation provided by the pupil or parent, where relevant.
- vi. The School must be notified if a pupil obtains a new passport or there is any other relevant change to their immigration documentation or status.
- vii. The School will keep individual immigration and sponsorship records for each international pupil, which may be inspected by UKVI.
- viii. Absence for sponsored pupils must be authorised in accordance with the School's attendance procedures. The School will monitor attendance and report matters to UKVI in accordance with current sponsor guidance, including where a sponsored pupil misses the required number of consecutive expected contact points and sponsorship is being withdrawn.
- ix. Parents must adhere to published term dates when booking international travel and must provide relevant travel details to the Admissions Team
- x. When a sponsored pupil leaves the School, withdraws, changes course, or otherwise triggers a reporting duty, the School will notify UKVI in accordance with current sponsor guidance.

- xi. A pupil applying from outside the UK may normally apply for a Student or Child Student visa up to six months before the start of their course. If applying from within the UK, the earliest application is normally three months before the course start date, subject to current immigration rules.
- xii. If a pupil turns 18 during their course, they may continue studying in accordance with the permission already granted. If they wish to undertake further study in the UK after that point, they would normally need to apply under the Student route, subject to the immigration rules in force at that time.

24. Sixth Form Entry Requirements for Overseas Pupils

The academic year begins in September

- i Overseas Sixth Form applicants should attain the equivalent of 7 x UK GCSEs at Grade 6, with Grade 7/8/9 in their chosen A Level subjects. This is often difficult to equate to overseas examination results and in these circumstances, the School will undertake an academic assessment for the candidate.
- ii Confirmation of overseas examination results should be emailed to Merchant Taylors' School by the pupil's current school as soon as they are known.
- iii The Head has discretion to relax these requirements if it is believed that a particular pupil would benefit from the education offered at Merchant Taylors' School Sixth Form.

As well as meeting the academic criteria, each student will be interviewed by the Head and the subject leaders for the subjects intended to study.

- i A favourable academic reference from the applicant's current school.
- ii An A-level subject options' form should also be completed and returned to the Admissions Team.

25. English Language Tests

Sixth Form applicants who are aged 16/17 years, applying for Student visa, must achieve IELTS Overall Score 5 or above in all components. After joining the School, all overseas pupils must show progress in their English fluency.

It is important to establish that the applicant has a good command of the English Language and will be able to cope with the challenge of learning in this high- achieving School where all lessons are delivered in English. We recommend applicants visit www.ielts.org for further information with a view to gaining an appropriate level for UK university entry which may follow Sixth Form study. Many universities request IELTS Level 6, 6.5 or 7.

Annual fee charges are published on the Schools' website and are regularly updated.

26. New Pupils from Overseas

Merchant Taylors' School must receive the following before a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) can be issued:

- i A copy of the parents' and pupil's passports.

- ii. A completed Application Form, with a personal statement completed by the applicant where applicable.
- iii. A non-refundable application fee of £250 (UK sterling) paid by Internet Banking to Merchant Taylors' Schools, noting the pupil name as a Reference:
- iv. Account Name: Merchant Taylors' Schools
- v. Account No: 30022365
- vi. Sort Code: 20-10-92
- vii. SWIFTBIC: BARCGB22
- viii. IBAN: GB53 BARC 2010 9283 1851 68
- ix. A signed copy of this policy document which will be sent to parents with an offer letter. The offer letter will include the necessary details of a visa letter as set out in the ISC guidance.
- x. A completed and signed Acceptance Form, clearly indicating the parent and child's citizenship, with a view to ascertaining the right to study for EEA and other citizens.
- xi. An Advance Deposit fee of one term's fees and Advance Annual Tuition fee to secure the place as well as Advance Annual Lunch fees.

Once the completed paperwork and fees have been received the application for a CAS is made online and a CAS certificate will be issued to enable parents to apply for a visa. A CAS number is valid for six months.

If a visa application is refused, a copy of the refusal letter must be sent to the School. Similarly, if the family decide not to continue with their application, the School must be notified in writing with an explanation of the decision.

27. Care arrangements

To ensure the safeguarding and care for pupils, all children studying in the UK must have suitable care arrangements in place for their travel, reception on arrival in the UK and living arrangements for the duration of their stay.

It is essential that all parents who are not permanently resident in the UK with a child under 18 appoint a guardian in the UK to act with their full authority and parents must provide details of the guardian arrangement to the School in writing. Those who undertake the role of guardian are providing a thorough commitment to the education and wellbeing of the child.

28. Guardians

Merchant Taylors' School is a day school and does not, therefore, offer boarding facilities, accommodation or guardianships.

Guardians should be arranged by the pupil's own family and may be a nominated friend of the family or another family member or contact. The School is unable to arrange or recommend guardians. It is the responsibility of the parent to choose and pay for a guardian who can fulfil the role to the satisfaction of the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), School and the parent. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the School if the guardianship arrangements change.

Any child residing with a British citizen or any other UK resident who is a close relative or in a private foster care arrangement must provide evidence of the family connection (ie birth certificate and passports). The Schools will notify the Local Authority of any guardianship arrangements not provided by a close family member.

Personal requirements of the Guardian

- i Should not be a full-time student and must be over the age of 25.
- ii Must be a UK citizen and live in the UK.
- iii Should not be absent from their home regularly overnight.
- iv Should be able to correspond with the Schools in English.
- v Should agree to and pass the necessary safeguarding checks as required.
- vi Should be open to an annual inspection as required by the organisation responsible.
- vii Should not be running a guest house or offering any other paid accommodation service.

Role of the Guardian

- i To liaise with the School and act as a representative of a pupil's family.
- ii To encourage and support the pupil, safeguarding and promote the pupil's welfare.
- iii To help with the pupil's understanding of British culture and the development of their understanding of the English language.
- iv To act in loco parentis and to take responsibility for the welfare of the pupil during holiday and half-term periods.
- v To provide a consistently good standard of accommodation and meals with adequate supervision and suitable living and studying accommodation.
- vi To act as necessary in the case of severe illness or emergency medical treatment.
- vii To make travel arrangements as required and inform the School in advance of the times of departure and arrival into and out of the UK.
- viii To provide a point of contact for discussion on matters concerning general welfare or academic progress of the pupil.
- ix To attend parents' meetings (and report back to parents abroad afterwards) and monitor the academic and social development of the pupil in their care.
- x To receive reports and correspondence relating to the pupil (alongside parents).
- xi To provide a friendly point of contact outside of School for the pupil when problems arise.
- xii The guardian should always respect the rights, religion and culture of the pupil.

29. Private fostering

Children under 16 (under 18 if disabled) who are cared for on a full-time basis by adults who are not their parents or a close relative (grandparent, brother, sister, step parent, uncle or aunt who is aged over 18) are privately fostered. It is the responsibility of the parent, carer and anyone involved (including the Schools) to notify the Local Authority of the private fostering arrangement. The Local Authority is responsible for safeguarding and protection of children in these circumstances and will make sure that private foster carers are suitable and receive the support and guidance they may need in supporting and caring for the child.

30. Independent living

In the interests of our pupils, the Schools' strong preference is not to accept pupils living independently as we feel this does not provide the pastoral and safeguarding care to complement the Schools' own approach. We reserve the right to refuse admission, or, in extremis, to cancel a contract for education, if we believe that the fact that an overseas pupil is living independently is likely to harm the welfare and/or educational development of the pupil or others in the School community.

Pupils who are 16 or 17 who wish to live independently must provide the School with a letter from their parents or legal guardian confirming they consent to the child living independently in the UK.

31. Monitoring attendance

In the interests of pupils and to minimise disruption to learning, Merchant Taylors' School closely monitors attendance; details of how we do this may be found in the Attendance Policy

All pupils are required to join the School on the day appointed and may not be absent from School except for medical reasons, without prior permission. Holiday dates are published well in advance and parents/guardians should be aware that holiday must not be booked outside of these periods and authorisation will not be granted.

The Schools hours are 8.40am until 4.00pm; however, pupils are expected to be in School before these times as registration is taken at the start of the School day and again following lunch.

Pupils who need to leave school during the course of the school day for medical, dental appointments etc, must sign out at the School Office and, sign back in on their return. A pupil will only be allowed to leave if the school has received permission from parents.

In the case of absence through illness, parents/guardians are requested to call the School by 9.00am on the first day of absence. If the absence is likely to last for more than one day, it is helpful if parents/guardians give some indication of the probable length of absence. If a pupil is recorded as absent and we have not received a message, we will contact parents/guardians primarily to ensure the safety of the child and as part of the School's 'First Day Response' procedure. Upon returning to School, pupils will need a parental/guardian note stating the dates of absence and nature of illness.

In the case of prolonged absence through illness, parents are requested to notify the School as soon as possible as to the nature of the illness and the probable duration of the absence. Cases of infectious illness should be reported at once.

The School may notify the Local Authority where a pupil's absence falls below 90% and where a pupil has 10 continuous days of absence or 15 days of illness within the academic year.

UKVI will be notified of any absences that are unauthorised and exceed 10 days.

In order that the School can undertake its duties as a sponsor and notify UKVI accordingly, Parents/Guardians must notify the School of the following:

- i The pupil withdraws from their course before they travel to the UK.
- ii The pupil embarks on a course with a different sponsor/institution.
- iii The pupil needs to delay their start date before entering the UK but after entry clearance has been granted.
- iv The pupil is unable to enrol on the agreed date ie missed flight, illness, or decision not to come to the UK.
- v The pupil is refused entry to or right to stay in the UK.
- vi The pupil wishes to defer their studies once they have entered the UK.

- vii Any change in circumstances ie change of course, place of study, residential address, guardianship arrangements, working.

Full details are contained in the School Attendance Policy, published on the School website.

32. Further information

Our Admissions Team is always happy to speak to prospective parents and pupils about the admission process. Please contact them on 0151 949 9366 or admissions@merchanttaylor.com

For the most up-to-date information on what is happening at Merchant Taylors' Schools please visit our website at www.merchanttaylor.com

This policy may be amended at any meeting of the governing body, in which case the revised policy would operate from the start of the following academic year.



Merchant Taylors'
Schools

Ambition | Character | Excellence

Admissions Policy for Overseas Pupils Confirmation Sheet

Name of Pupil: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Applying for entry into Year _____ in September _____

- I/We confirm I/we have read the Admissions Policy, including the section for Overseas Pupils
- That my/our child does not have a criminal record including formal cautions/reprimands)
- Has the pupil had a Visa refused before? Yes / No
 - If yes, please attach details
- Has the pupil ever over-stayed in the UK? Yes / No
 - If yes, please attach details
- I / we confirm that my / our child's passport does not expire within six months of the Visa application

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name in Capitals: _____