

## BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY

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**Principal:** Mrs H Woods, B Sc, B Ed, PQH

**Warden:** Dr K M Bill, M.B. Ch.B., F.C.A.I., F.R.C.A., F.F.I.C.M.

**Voluntary Grammar School  
Co-Educational**

**Age Range:** 11-18

**Admission No:** 200

**Enrolment No:** 1410

### OPEN EVENING

Our Open Evening will be virtual this year. Details are available on our School website.

<https://www.belfastroyalacademy.com/admissions#opennights>

**To Parents/Guardians naming Belfast Royal Academy as a preference on the Transfer Application.**

### Entrance Test Results

The Board of Governors of Belfast Royal Academy will use the score obtained in the AQE Common Entrance Assessment to select candidates applying for entry to Form 1 (Year 8) in 2022.

Please ensure that you provide the following information on the Transfer Application:

- The candidate's score in the Association for Quality Education ("AQE") Common Entrance Assessment ("CEA") which should be entered, along with the AQE Candidate Number, in the following format: 'AQE CEA score', followed by the score with the AQE Candidate Number in brackets.
- **It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make sure that the original notification received from AQE indicating the candidate's AQE CEA score is uploaded with the Transfer Application.**

### Special Cases (also known as Special Circumstances and Special Provision)

If you are making a claim under the School's Special Cases Procedure you should consult the information given in the "Special Cases" section below.

**CAPITAL FEE £140 per annum**

### **RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL**

The Board of Governors has resolved to maintain its practice of delegating to the Principal certain functions and responsibilities in relation to the admission of pupils to Belfast Royal Academy. The Board of Governors nominate a sub-committee to consider all Special Cases.

### ADMISSIONS POLICY

#### **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY OF PUPILS TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) IN SEPTEMBER 2022**

1. The Board of Governors will not use as a criterion the position of preference given to the school by the applicant on the Transfer Application. Therefore, an applicant who has listed Belfast Royal Academy as a second or subsequent preference school will be considered in the same way as those who have placed this school first on the list, where the applicant does not secure admission to his/her first preference school.

2. In the selection of candidates for admission to Belfast Royal Academy, the Board of Governors will apply the following criteria, subject to the overriding criterion that priority will be given to pupils normally resident in Northern Ireland. In these criteria:

“Common Entrance Assessment”	- means the assessment conducted by the AQE Limited in the final two months of the calendar year prior to the year of entry.
“qualifying group”	- means the group consisting of those candidates who participated in the Common Entrance Assessment.
“score”	- means the age-adjusted standard score in the Common Entrance Assessment (CEA) issued by AQE Limited (as varied in the event of a successful claim for Special Cases).
“applicant”	- means the parent or guardian who completes and submits the Transfer Application on behalf of the candidate.
“candidate”	- means the child who is stated on the Transfer Application as seeking to gain admission to the School.
“parent/guardian”	- means a person who at the date of application has legal responsibility for the candidate.
“entitled to free school meals”	- means applicants who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their parent or guardian has signed their post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 (no later than 4 p.m.).
“sibling”	- means children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school.
“child of the family”	- means a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership; a child born to a co-habiting couple; a child born to a single parent; a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship; a child living with a couple who has been treated as a “child of the family” whether there is a marriage or a civil partnership or not; a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a “child of the family”; an adopted or fostered child; a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual.

3. Admission to the School will be governed by the application of the following criteria, in the order set down.
- (a) First, the School will admit candidates in the qualifying group in accordance with the rank order of the score obtained by them in the Common Entrance Assessment, so that the candidate with the highest score in the Common Entrance Assessment will be admitted first, the candidate with the next highest score in the Common Entrance Assessment will be admitted second, and so on until all the available places are allocated or until the qualifying group has been exhausted and there are places remaining.
- (b) Where a decision must be made for the final place between more than one candidate in the qualifying group with the same score or where there are places remaining, priority will be assigned in the following order:
- i. present members of the School in its Preparatory Department who have been registered since the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021;
  - ii. those candidates who have a sibling currently in attendance at the Secondary Department at Belfast Royal Academy (name and current year to be supplied);
  - iii. those candidates who are entitled to Free School Meals.
- (c) In the event of a tie for a remaining place or places, which is not resolved by the application of the criteria above, further selection will occur on the basis of the Methods described below (Method A, then Method B, then Method C).

**Method A** - Candidates will be selected for admission on the basis of their age (eldest to youngest) as entered on a Birth Certificate.

**Method B** - initial letter(s) of surname (as entered on Birth Certificate) in the order set out below:

S D T F H W L M c P U E G M V A N I X K O Q R Y B C J Mac Z

This order was determined by random selection.

In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames the alphabetical order of the initials of the forenames will be used.

**Method C** – Computerised Random Selection.

The candidate’s Birth Certificate and proof of address must be uploaded with the Transfer Application.

Proof of address – any TWO of the following documents with sensitive information redacted: bank/building society statement; utility bill (e.g. electricity, gas, TV licence, telephone); addressed payslip; letter awarding Child Benefit to the child or another letter relating to this benefit; mortgage statement; Land and Property Services rates demand; financial statement such as ISA, pension or endowment; current driving licence; rental agreement.

***Please note: When considering which candidates should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will take into account information which is detailed on or uploaded with the Transfer Application. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the School's admissions criteria is stated on the Transfer Application or uploaded with it. The EA online portal closes for Year 8 post-primary applications on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 at 4pm.***

**These criteria will apply throughout the academic year 2022/23.**

#### **4. Special Cases**

There will be a mechanism by which parents who wish to do so may request the Board of Governors to make allowance for Special Cases (under the processes pertaining under the former 11+, these were dealt with either as "Special Circumstances" or "Special Provisions").

Special access arrangements are available for those who require special facilities whilst sitting the Common Entrance Assessment. Where special access arrangements have been granted by AQE, or where they could have been granted but were not applied for, it will be extremely rare for the same matter, which did or could have given rise to special access arrangements, to also require a candidate's circumstances to be treated as a Special Case.

The Special Cases procedure allows the Board of Governors, at its discretion, to confirm, adjust or award a score after the Common Entrance Assessment has taken place as follows:

##### **(a) Special Circumstances**

Claims for Special Circumstances will be considered by the School where medical or other problems may have affected performance in the entrance assessment. A sub-committee of the Board of Governors will consider applications made under Special Circumstances. Decision-making powers have been delegated by the full Board of Governors to this sub-committee who will make an educational judgement in relation to all material provided by a parent. The score allocated to the candidate will be based on the decision reached by this sub-committee. In the case of special circumstances applications the following information must be provided on the appropriate form or uploaded with the Transfer Application to enable the sub-committee to arrive at a decision:

- Independent documentary evidence based on medical examination of the medical condition;
- Independent documentary evidence of other circumstances relied on contemporaneous with the date(s) of the entrance assessments;
- Evidence of the candidate's academic capacity.

The content and length of assessment of AQE CEA have been amended to accommodate for COVID-19 related circumstances which have impacted the day to day lives of children, since the beginning of the pandemic in February 2019.

Parents are asked to note that the Board of Governors will not accept a 'medical or other problem' which is COVID-19 related as an application for Special Circumstances, in itself, unless accompanied by independent, verifiable and contemporaneous evidence.

##### **(b) Special Provision**

As an exception to the requirements of Section 3, a candidate may request Special Provision, where the candidate:

- i. has received more than half of their education outside Northern Ireland; or
- ii. wishes to transfer to a grammar school from a school outside Northern Ireland; or
- iii. candidates entered for the AQE CEA, who because of unforeseen and serious medical or other problems (including absence due to COVID-19 or the need to self-isolate due to COVID-19) which are supported by appropriate documentary evidence, were unable to sit any of the three AQE assessments.

The final date for receipt of new applications/additional information or changes in preference **in exceptional circumstances** by EA is Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (not later than 4pm). Any applications/information received after this date/time will not be processed until after the end of the procedure.

### NB Late Applicants

Those candidates wishing to transfer from a school outside Northern Ireland who apply for a place after 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 will be treated on the same basis as those who applied before that date, subject to the agreement of the Department of Education to an increase in the Admissions Number for this purpose.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide the information required by the Board of Governors to make an informed decision about a Special Case. Failure to provide sufficient information will adversely affect the ability of the Board to assess your application.

### **For applicants wishing to apply for Special Circumstances, the process is as follows:**

- A. Parents/guardians should obtain independent verification of circumstances which may have affected the candidate's performance or prevented them from sitting a Common Entrance Assessment paper.
  - i. Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the candidate only at the time of any of the assessments making up the Common Entrance Assessment, parents or guardians should provide evidence that the candidate was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time the illness occurred.
  - ii. Where the problem or circumstance is of a non-medical nature, parents or guardians should provide precise details of the problem and append any appropriate credible evidence to corroborate its existence.
- B. The applicant should collect the evidence described above at an early stage and hold it until after the Common Entrance Assessment score is sent to you on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022. If you consider that a Special Case application is appropriate, you should contact the school General Office or the AQE Limited Office to request Form SC22.
- C. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that Form SC22 is properly completed and to collect the evidence requested therein to support the application.
- D. The applicant should complete Section A of Form SC22, which provides details of your claim for Special Cases and a summary list of evidence attached (medical, educational or other independent evidence) in support of the claim.
- E. Educational evidence to support the application should normally be obtained from your child's primary school principal.

You should detach Section B of Form SC22 and give it to your child's primary school principal for completion. If there is insufficient space on the SC22 form to include all appropriate information available, an additional sheet or sheets should be attached.

The following are examples of the type of educational evidence considered appropriate:

- i. your child's performance in English (or Irish in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics in **standardised tests**.
  - ii. your child's relative performance in English (or Irish in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics in relation to other pupils in his/her class. This could take the form of results in internal school tests, transfer practice papers and standardised tests from the beginning of KS2 compared to the results for the same tests of all other unnamed members of the P7 class.
- F. When the applicant completes the Transfer Application, the applicant should request the primary school principal to complete Section B of the SC22 form. Both parts A and B of form SC22, together with any supporting evidence which is provided, should be uploaded with the Transfer Application.

Where the Board of Governors considers that there is a valid Special Case, it will consider educational and other evidence which allows it to form a judgement as to the effect of circumstances on the candidate's score or which allows a judgement to be made in relation to the score the candidate may have obtained if they had sat the Common Entrance Assessment. The School may assess the candidate's academic ability by using standardised assessments to supplement the information supplied.

**For applicants wishing to apply for Special Provision, the process is as follows:**

- i. Where a candidate has received more than half of their education outside Northern Ireland, a letter of verification from the primary school principal should be uploaded with Form SC22 together with any appropriate educational evidence.
- ii. Where a candidate has become resident in Northern Ireland after the 3rd September 2021 but before the deadline for completion of a Transfer Form, proof of residency should be uploaded with Form SC22 together with any appropriate educational evidence.
- iii. Where a candidate has been entered for the AQE CEA, who because of unforeseen and serious medical or other problems (including absence due to COVID-19 or the need to self-isolate due to COVID-19) has been unable to sit any of the AQE assessments, parents or guardians should provide precise details of the circumstance and upload any independent, verifiable and contemporaneous evidence with Form SC22, together with any appropriate educational evidence. Parents/Guardians must provide details of the Candidate Number issued to the child by AQE on the Transfer Application.

If a candidate is not resident in Northern Ireland before 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022, the closure date for completion of the Transfer Application, the application will not be processed as part of the Transfer Procedure. Form SC22 should be completed. Proof of residency should be attached to the Form together with any appropriate educational evidence. Form SC22 and the accompanying evidence should be returned to the school's General Office.

If the Board of Governors decides that your child is suited to a place in the school, then it may request the Department of Education to allow it to admit your child as an additional pupil. It is the role of the Department of Education to decide if a pupil may be admitted in such circumstances.

***Please note: when considering which candidates should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will take into account information which is detailed on or uploaded with the Transfer Application.***

***The applicant should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to the candidate and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the Transfer Form or uploaded with it. The EA online portal closes for Year 8 post-primary applications on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 at 4pm.***

**DUTY TO VERIFY**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any candidate's Transfer Application.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false, unclear or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

**WAITING LIST POLICY**

Should a vacancy arise after 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 all applications for admission to Form 1 (Year 8) that were initially refused, new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. Your child's name will be automatically added to the list. The school will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the school by this method. Please contact the school if you wish for your child's name to be removed from the list.

This waiting list will be in place until our internal Assessment Day in June 2023.

**Applications and Admissions**

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2019/20	200	309	209*
2020/21	200	278	208*
2021/22	200	<b>478</b>	<b>210**</b>

\* Includes pupils admitted with a Statement of Educational Need

\*\* Includes pupils admitted with a Statement of Educational Need (8) and pupils who have been admitted through the Exceptional Circumstances Body (1) and the Post Primary Appeals Tribunal (1)

### **Criteria for admission to Years 9 to 12**

1. The Board of Governors delegates to an Admissions Panel, comprising of the Principal, three Vice-Principals, and Senior Teacher with responsibility for School Admission, the application of the admissions criteria to Forms II-V.
2. The school will normally only consider applications for a place commencing at the beginning of the academic year.
3. Admissions to Forms II, III, IV and V will be within the limit set by the School in order not to exceed the overall Enrolment Number or the Admissions Number for Form I (Year 8) agreed with the Department of Education or the limit for numbers in science classes in Form II, III, IV and V.
4. Candidates who wish to transfer into Forms II, III, IV and V should complete an online application form and should note that applications received after the closing date (Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022) will not be considered.

The link to the online form is:

[Application Form - Forms II to V](#)

5. Candidates are required to provide a copy of their most recent school report by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022. If a school report is not received by Belfast Royal Academy by this date the candidate's application will not be considered.
6. Academic ability is the first criterion for entry to the school, and those seeking admission will be asked to show that they have the capacity to cope soundly with the academic demands of the grammar school. Candidates will come into school for an Assessment Day on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
  - 6.1. All prospective candidates will be given a short Mathematics test.
  - 6.2. All prospective candidates will be required to write a short essay and complete a short English grammar exercise.
  - 6.3. Candidates who wish to enter Forms III and IV may be required to complete a short Science test.
  - 6.4. Candidates who wish to enter Forms III and IV may be given a Modern Language Speaking and Listening assessment and will complete a short written task.
  - 6.5. All prospective candidates may be interviewed by teachers from various Departments, who will assess present and potential achievement.
  - 6.6. A rank order of candidates will be drawn up and places offered, where vacancies are identified, to candidates whose performance in the tests indicates that they have the ability to make academic progress in courses which are distinctly academic in content and bias.

For candidates with a Special Educational Need (verified by supporting documentation provided by the deadline – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022\*), 25% extra time will be allowed for the written Mathematics and English assessments. Parents should make the school aware of any Special Educational Need by completing the relevant section of the online application form, referred to in point 4 above.

\* Examples of appropriate supporting documentation would be:

- written confirmation of current special educational need by the present school's SENCO on headed notepaper;
- a psychological assessment carried out at the request of the candidate's primary and/or secondary school by a qualified psychologist;
- an assessment by a medical doctor of physical or medical requirements.

7. In the interest of successful transition to a new school, as well as GCSE Subject Choices, transfer to Form V, the year of the principal public examinations, is unlikely to be considered.
8. Belfast Royal Academy reserves the right to contact the candidate's present school for a reference before a place is offered.

**Criteria for admission into the Sixth Form**

The Board of Governors delegates to an Admissions Panel, comprising of the Principal and three Vice-Principals and Senior Teacher with responsibility for School Admission, the application of the admissions criteria to the Lower and Middle Sixth Forms.

**1. GENERAL POLICY**

The School determines the appropriate number of possible admissions so that:

- a. the total enrolment figure remains at or below the number permitted by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; or
- b. in the event that there are more applications meeting the criteria for admissions to the Sixth Form than places, the school may apply to the Department of Education for approval for additional places. Only if additional places are granted will offers be made to candidates in excess of admissions numbers.
- c. In all cases, the total number of pupils enrolled in the year group will not exceed the school's resources and facilities to provide appropriately for their curricular and pastoral needs.

**2. ADMISSIONS TO LOWER SIXTH FORM – INTERNAL**

Priority for entry to Sixth Form courses will be given to pupils already enrolled at Belfast Royal Academy. All pupils enrolled in Form V at the school who meet the following criteria will have a right to a place in the Sixth Form:

- Pupils will require a minimum of 12 points at GCSE in subjects which are an appropriate foundation for academic study at Advanced Level (on a scale where A\* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C\* = 1.5 point and C = 1 points). Short Course GCSEs carry a tariff of one half of a full GCSE (A\* = 2 points, A = 1.5 points, B = 1 point, C\* = 0.75 points and C = 0.5 points): please note that pupils with 11.75 points will not be admitted into the Sixth Form. The following points will be awarded to take account of the English scoring system:

GCSE score	CCEA Grade	Points awarded
9	A*	4
8/7	A	3
6	B	2
5	C*	1.5
4	C	1
3-1	D-G	0

This scoring system is applicable for OCR Computer Science and Latin.

- Pupils will normally be expected to have at least a grade C in both GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics.
- Pupils should display a high level of competence in the AS subject chosen. If the AS chosen was taken at GCSE, then a B grade is a minimum requirement (except in Mathematics\*, Biology, Chemistry and Physics where the minimum requirement is grade A).

\* Achieved through M4/M8 CCEA Modules  
(or other board equivalent)

- For all new AS subjects (either not studied at GCSE or not offered at GCSE), please consult the Sixth Form Subject Choice Booklet for details of the minimum requirement to access a subject.

- Pupils must have a proven record of good citizenship. This includes at least 95% attendance in Forms IV and V (in normal circumstances) up to the start of Study Leave in Form V - in cases where special circumstances apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application - and not more than one Level 5 or 6 suspension in Forms IV and V.
- Pupils must study a minimum of 3 AS subjects. Candidates wishing to study 4 AS-levels are required to gain over 24 points across 5 or more subjects.
- In exceptional circumstances a final decision to admit a pupil, who does not meet the minimum requirements for entry to Lower Sixth, will be referred to the Principal and/or Board of Governors.

### **3. ADMISSIONS TO LOWER SIXTH FORM- EXTERNAL**

- Pupils from other schools applying to Belfast Royal Academy, who have satisfied the above academic admissions criteria will be considered for admission to the Sixth Form if there are additional places available. (Please note, however, that pupils with a GCSE in Double Award Science, choosing to study a Science subject at AS should have achieved A\*A\* in Double Award Science at GCSE.)
- In addition to satisfying the academic admissions criteria, pupils transferring from another school will be required to demonstrate a proven record of good citizenship. This includes at least 95% attendance in Forms IV and V (in normal circumstances) up to start of Study Leave in Form V - in cases where special circumstances apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application - and not more than one suspension in Forms IV and V. A copy of the candidate's most recent school report will be required.
- *Pupils coming from other countries which do not use GCSEs will have to provide evidence from an independent source of having achieved at an equivalent academic standard.*

### **4. ADMISSIONS TO REPEAT LOWER SIXTH**

Pupils of Belfast Royal Academy who meet the following criteria will be considered to repeat Lower Sixth:  
Pupils who -

- (i) have extenuating circumstances (i.e. medical or other problems which may have affected a pupil's performance in Lower Sixth);
- (ii) the Principal recommends would benefit from repeating Lower Sixth at the Academy.
- (iii) have a proven record of good citizenship. This includes having: displayed a positive attitude and commitment to AS studies; having attained (in normal circumstances) a minimum overall attendance of 95% or above up to the start of Study Leave (in cases where special circumstances apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application); and not more than one Level 5 or 6 suspension in Lower Sixth.

In exceptional circumstances a final decision to admit a pupil to repeat Lower Sixth may be referred to the Principal and/or Board of Governors.

Parents should note that examination and other fees applicable during the year to be repeated must be paid by the parent/guardian in advance of the pupil being admitted to the year to be repeated.

### **5. ADMISSIONS TO MIDDLE SIXTH FORM – INTERNAL**

All pupils enrolled in Lower Sixth at the school who meet the following criteria will have a right to a place in the Middle Sixth Form:

- Pupils who have achieved a minimum of three Grade D passes at AS level. If a pupil has repeated the Lower Sixth year, a minimum of three Grade C passes at AS level must be achieved.



- Pupils must have a proven record of good citizenship. This includes: having displayed a positive attitude and commitment to AS studies; having attained (in normal circumstances) a minimum overall attendance of 95% or above up to the start of Study Leave (in cases where special circumstances apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application); and not more than one Level 5 or 6 suspension in Lower Sixth.
- In exceptional circumstances a final decision, to admit a pupil who does not meet the minimum requirements for entry to Middle Sixth, will be referred to the Principal and/or Board of Governors.

## **6. ADMISSIONS TO MIDDLE SIXTH FORM- EXTERNAL**

Admission to Middle Sixth Form, which is the year of the principal Advanced level public examinations, will be considered only in exceptional circumstances and if there are additional places available in Middle Sixth.

- Pupils must satisfy the criteria of a minimum of 3 grade D passes at AS level in order to be considered for admission to Middle Sixth. If a pupil has repeated the Lower Sixth year, a minimum of three Grade C passes at AS level must be achieved.
- Proposed A2 courses must be compatible with the pupil's AS qualifications.
- Pupils must have a proven record of good citizenship. This includes: having displayed a positive attitude and commitment to AS studies; having attained (in normal circumstances) a minimum overall attendance of 95% or above up to the start of Study Leave (in cases where special circumstances apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application); and not more than one suspension in Lower Sixth.

## **7. VERIFICATION OF DATA**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require evidence to support or verify information on any application form. This may be requested when an offer of a place is made. It is important that all candidates understand that the provision of false or incorrect information will result in the withdrawal of the place offered.

## **8. APPEALS**

Issues which arise from the admissions process may be raised through the Appeals Panel, comprising three members of the Board of Governors, selected by the Education Committee of the Board of Governors. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.