

VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

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Principal: Mrs K Quinn BSC PGCE PQH

Chair of Board of Governors: Mrs W Blundell OBE

**Voluntary Grammar School
Non-Denominational Girls' Grammar
With Boarding, Preparatory and Pre-School**

Age Range: 3-18

Admission No: 130

Enrolment No: 870

OPEN DAY

A virtual Open Day will be available online in February and can be accessed via the website of the College.

To parents/guardians naming Victoria College Belfast as a preference on your child's Transfer Application.

Due to public health considerations and the disruption caused to the education of Primary 7 pupils as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Board of Governors of Victoria College Belfast will apply the Admissions Criteria detailed in Section 2 to select Candidates applying for entry to Year 8 in September 2021.

Special Provisions

If you are making a claim for your child to be considered under Special Provisions, please note that you are required to:

- present all such material as you consider will assist the Board of Governors' Transfer Panel in determining if Special Provisions is applicable;
- attach/upload all such material to the Transfer Application.

See further Sections 2 and 4 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 determined the Admissions Criteria to be used and has delegated to the Admissions Sub-Committee, of which the Principal is a member, the functions and responsibilities in the application of the Admissions Criteria set out herein. The criteria are reviewed annually in light of any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY OF PUPILS TO YEAR 8 IN SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Definitions

Applicant means the parent or guardian who completes and submits the Transfer Application on behalf of the Candidate.

Candidate means the child identified on the Transfer Application as seeking to gain admission to the College.

Child of the Family means, in relation to the parties to a marriage or to parties living together within the same household, a child of both of them or any other child who is treated by both of those parties as a child of their family. For the avoidance of doubt, the term Child of the Family includes: a child born to a married couple; a child born to a co-habiting couple; a child of either of those people by a previous marriage or relationship; a child living with same sex partners (regardless of whether there is a civil partnership under the Civil Partnership Act 2004 or not); an adopted or fostered child; or a situation where, for example, an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family. The child should be a Child of the Family as at the date of application.

Eldest Child of the Family will be interpreted in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraphs 3 to 5 of Annex 2 of DE Circular 2016/15, *The Procedure for Transfer from Primary to Post-Primary Education*. Eldest Child of the Family will include the eldest or only girl in a family and eldest sibling twins (or other multiples) will be regarded as joint eldest. The Eldest Child of the Family will also apply in circumstances where a family has not had the opportunity to enrol an elder daughter in the College, such as in cases where the elder daughter has already completed their post-primary education, the elder daughter could not attend mainstream school (for example, they attend a special school), or where a family has relocated to Northern Ireland and the elder daughter attended post-primary school outside of Northern Ireland.

Entitled to Free School Meals means a Candidate who, at the date on which they submit their post-primary Transfer Application, or at any time up to 4.00 pm on Monday 12 April 2021, has communicated within their application that they are listed on the Education Authority register as being entitled to Free School Meals.

Parent means a person who at the date of application has legal responsibility for the Candidate.

2. Admissions Criteria

The number of places available in Year 8 is limited to the admissions number set by the Department of Education and is currently 130 places. The cut-off for admission will therefore be the 130th place.

In the event of there being more Candidates than places available, the criteria outlined below at i-viii will apply in the order stated. Only the following will be considered:

- a. girls who were registered to sit the entrance assessments anywhere in Northern Ireland provided by the Association for Quality Education (AQE) and/or GL Assessment (GLA); and
- b. girls who were not entered for the assessments, because they would have been entitled to apply for Special Provisions (see further Section 4 below).

For girls who were registered for the assessment, the College will verify registration and will require applicants to upload a copy of either the AQE or GLA Registration Card showing the registration number of the relevant Candidate.

- i. Candidates who, at the date of application, are enrolled in the Preparatory Department of the College;
- ii. Candidates who, at the date of application, have a Child of the Family currently enrolled in the Secondary Department of the College, or had a Child of the Family who previously attended the Secondary Department of the College;
- iii. Candidates who, at the date of application, are the Eldest Child of the Family eligible for admission to the College in September 2021;
- iv. Candidates who, at the date of application, have another Child of the Family accepted for the Secondary Department of the College for the forthcoming academic year;
- v. Candidates who, at the date of application, have another Child of the Family attending the Royal Belfast Academical Institution (RBAI) or any other male single sex post-primary school;
- vi. Candidates who, at the relevant dates, are Entitled to Free School Meals;

- vii. Candidates who, at the date of application, attend a primary school that is a recognised feeder school for the College. A recognised feeder primary school is one from which pupils have transferred to the College over the preceding three-year period. Feeder primary schools will be ranked according to the average number of pupils who have transferred to the College over the preceding three-year period and those with higher numbers will have precedence.*
- viii. Tie-Breaker: If more than one Candidate is eligible for the final College place, Candidates will be ranked for acceptance on the basis of a computer-based process which will make use of the names of Candidates as shown on their Transfer applications. The process will be carried out by means of a computer programme which, for each Candidate, will generate a ranking number using details from the Transfer application as the seed for a random number generator. The outcome for any given Candidate will be dependent only on the name of the Candidate (as written on the Transfer application) and will not be affected by the details of any other Candidate. Although the process is repeatable and the results may be subsequently verified, it is not possible to predict, in advance of running the programme, what the result will be for any given set of details. Candidates with the lowest ranking numbers will be awarded places up to the number of places available. Further details may be obtained from the Principal.

* The schools listed below are the primary schools (excluding the Preparatory Department of Victoria College Belfast) which sent most pupils to the College in the previous three years, ranked in accordance with the actual number of pupils sent. Parents should note that, in addition to those schools listed below, the College admitted pupils from a further 54 primary schools in 2020. A pupil from the primary school named at 2vii.1 below will be admitted before a pupil from the primary school named at 2vii.2 and so on. (The table below is not an exclusive list of feeder primary schools but shows the main primary schools from which pupils were admitted during the preceding three-year period.)

2vii	1	Stranmillis Primary School	2vii	16=	Loughview Integrated Primary School
2vii	2	St Bride's Primary School	2vii	16=	St Michael's Primary School
2vii	3	Cairnshill Primary School	2vii	20=	Dunmurry Primary School
2vii	4	Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough	2vii	20=	Fane Street Primary School
2vii	5	St Anne's Primary School	2vii	20=	Fullerton House Preparatory School
2vii	6	Harmony Hill Primary School	2vii	20=	Glencraig Primary School
2vii	7=	Finaghy Primary School	2vii	20=	Holy Rosary Primary School
2vii	7=	Moira Primary School	2vii	20=	Oakwood Integrated Primary School
2vii	9=	Academy Primary School	2vii	20=	St Ita's Primary School
2vii	9=	Cavehill Primary School	2vii	20=	St Joseph's Primary School, Holland Drive
2vii	9=	Friends' School Preparatory School	2vii	28=	Carryduff Primary School
2vii	9=	Millennium Integrated Primary School	2vii	28=	Christ the Redeemer Primary School
2vii	13=	Pond Park Primary School	2vii	28=	Fair Hill Primary School
2vii	13=	St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn	2vii	28=	Greenisland Primary School
2vii	15	Springfield Primary School	2vii	28=	Ligoniel Primary School
2vii	16=	Carr's Glen Primary School	2vii	28=	Rosetta Primary School
2vii	16=	Holy Child Primary School	2vii	28=	St Colman's Primary School, Lambeg

If, following the application of the Admission Criteria set out above, all of the available places are not filled, the College will consider applications by girls who were not registered to sit the entrance assessments provided by AQE or GLA anywhere in Northern Ireland. Allocation of the remaining places will be made by applying the sub-criteria listed at i to viii above.

3. Duty to Verify

The College will seek verification of sub-criterion iii above (Eldest Child of the Family) by means of a verification letter. The verification letter must state that the Candidate is the Eldest Child of the Family eligible to attend the

College and it must be written on headed notepaper and signed by a primary school principal, a medical practitioner, a solicitor, a member of the clergy, a police officer or an elected representative. The verifier must not be a member of the family of the Candidate and they must have known the Candidate for at least two years.

The College will seek verification of sub-criterion v above (RBAI or other male single sex post-primary school) by means of a verification letter. The verification letter must state that the Child of the Family attends RBAI or any other male single sex post-primary school and it must be written on headed notepaper and signed by a school principal, a medical practitioner, a solicitor, a member of the clergy, a police officer or an elected representative. The verifier must not be a member of the family of the Candidate and they must have known the Candidate for at least two years.

Furthermore, the Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may deem necessary at its absolute discretion to support or verify any information provided on any Transfer Application.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the College by the deadline stated, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Equally, if information is supplied that appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will also be withdrawn.

4. Special Provisions

Eligibility for Special Provisions

Special Provisions will apply:

- A. for children whose parent wishes them to transfer from a school outside Northern Ireland.
- B. for children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland.

Special Provisions Process

It is the responsibility of the Applicant in making a claim for Special Provisions to attach/upload information with the Transfer Application which will assist the Board of Governors Transfer Panel in determining if Special Provisions is applicable. If it does, those children who the Board of Governors considers to be eligible will be considered under section 2 of the Admissions Criteria.

5. Waiting List Policy

If a vacancy arises after places have been finalised, then all unsuccessful Candidates for admission to Year 8, all new applications, all late applications, and all applications where new information has been provided, will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. This waiting list will remain in place until 30 June of the year following application.

The name of the Candidate will be automatically added to the list and the College will contact parents in writing if a place becomes available in the College by this method. Parents should contact the College if they wish the name of their child to be removed from the list.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2018/19	130	260	130
2019/20	130	259	137*
2020/21	130	212	130

* The College was granted a temporary variation of 7 additional places.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR YEARS 9 - 12 AND POST-GCSE 2021

YEARS 9-12 ADMISSION

1. Admission to Years 9-12 will be governed by the availability of places within that year group, class sizes including practical class sizes and the College's planned allocation and usage of staff, accommodation and other resources. Admission to the College will depend on the Candidate's ability to benefit from the academic and creative life of the College.
2. In the case of Candidates from other post-primary schools a general report or reference will be required. This report must include a general summary of the Candidate's academic and attendance records as well as commenting on her general behaviour. Cognitive Ability Testing (CATS) and interview may be part of the admissions procedure.
3. In the event of being oversubscribed with Candidates for any year group the following criteria will apply:
 - i. Candidates who were previously enrolled in the Preparatory Department of the College;
 - ii. Candidates who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled in or previously attended the Secondary Department of the College;
 - iii. Candidates, who at the date of application, are the Eldest Child of the Family eligible for admission in September 2021;*
 - iv. Candidates who, at the date of the application, have a child of the family accepted for the Secondary Department of the College for the forthcoming academic year;
 - v. Candidates who, at the date of the application, have a child of the family attending RBAI or any other male single sex post-primary school;*
 - vi. Candidate is entitled to Free School Meals;

***This is subject to satisfying verification requirements as set out below:**

Eldest Child of the Family: The verifying letter must state that the child is the eldest girl and that the child and family are known to the verifier.

Brother of Candidate: The verifying letter must state that the male sibling of the Candidate attends RBAI, or other single sex post-primary school and that the sibling and family are known to the verifier.

Verification letter(s) must be written on headed notepaper and signed by one of the following who is not a family member of the Candidate and who has known the Candidate for at least two years: a school principal, elected public representative, GP, solicitor, member of the clergy or a police officer.

Boarding Applications

In accordance with the Secondary Schools (Admissions Criteria) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, a number of places will be reserved for Candidates who wish to avail of the Homestay arrangements which have been put in place to enable potential boarding pupils of Victoria College to attend the College. As a result of the global pandemic, the Board of Governors have agreed to make it possible for such pupils to stay with families and attend at school on a daily basis. The criteria for admission to day places will be applied to applications to avail of such Homestay arrangements. However a criterion of need to avail of such arrangements may have precedence over all other criteria, provided that the Principal is satisfied that the Candidate would be likely to benefit from a grammar school education. Please note the number of places available will be, in part, determined by availability of suitable homestay placements.

These criteria will also apply to Candidates for admission to Year 13 after the beginning of the school year, where the number of such Candidates is more than the number of places available.

POST-GCSE/SIXTH FORM ADMISSION

The Board of Governors of the College recognises the demands of Sixth Form study and will consider applications from those Candidates who have achieved an academic profile that adequately equips them for A level study and will make a positive contribution to the life of Victoria College. Candidates should demonstrate their ability to fulfil these criteria by providing an academic profile and general school record as described below.

YEAR 13 ENTRY

1. Priority for entry to Sixth Form courses will be given to pupils already enrolled at Victoria College. All pupils enrolled in Year 12 at the College who meet the following criteria will have a right to a place in the Sixth Form.

1.1 Academic Profile

The essential minimum criteria for entry to Year 13 are as follows:

- i A minimum of 7 GCSEs at grade C or 4 or higher to include English and Mathematics.
- ii In the first instance Candidates with 14 points or higher will be admitted. Thereafter if places are available Candidates will be admitted on a descending scale to a minimum of 10 points. GCSE points are allocated as shown in the table below:

CCEA Grades	English Exam Board Grades	GCSE Points
A*	9	4
A	8 / 7	3
B	6	2
C*	5	1.5
C	4	1

- iii For a short course GCSE the points awarded in that subject are halved. Candidates must study a minimum of three AS subjects. Candidates wishing to study four AS-levels are required to gain over 24 points.
- iv Candidates 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 where the minimum requirement is grade A, and in Biology, Chemistry and Physics where the minimum requirement is normally grade A or Double Award Science AA). In the event of a class being oversubscribed, priority will be given to those Candidates who have taken the subject to GCSE level and the grade attained. In the case of a subject which is not offered at GCSE, the grade in an allied subject will be the determining factor.

2. General School Record

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make a positive contribution to the College by satisfying the following criteria:

- Attendance: At least 95% attendance in Years 11 and 12 (in normal circumstances) up to start of Study Leave in Year 12.
- Behaviour: Not more than one suspension in Years 11 and 12.

3. Criteria for any extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission into Year 13 (Sixth Form)

The Department of Education (DE) may, on request, increase the number of pupils that the College can admit to Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to Candidates who meet

the basic eligibility criteria for Sixth Form study (as above - ref 1.1) and shall be allocated in the order determined by the criteria to be applied in the order set down.

- Pupils who have most recently completed Year 12 in Victoria College.
- Candidates from other schools where admission to an extra place in Victoria College has been agreed by DE.

The Department's policy on extra Sixth Form places is generally to grant places to a school to extend its ability to admit returners, who meet the College's Sixth Form admissions criteria, to Year 13. The Department also grants extra Sixth Form places to schools for young people from other schools who otherwise would not be able to pursue their post-16 course choices at a suitable school without undertaking an unreasonable journey.

The key test applied by the Department when deciding whether or not to award additional places to the enrolment number of a school for external Candidates seeking a place in that school's Sixth Form is whether or not a Candidate can pursue their post-16 course choices at a suitable school, with places available, without undertaking an unreasonable journey (defined as a journey that cannot be taken within one hour or is further than 15 miles).

To determine the type of school that is suitable for a Candidate, DE first considers all schools to be one of 4 types: (i) denominational (ii) non-denominational (iii) integrated and (iv) Irish-medium. A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 Candidate will belong to one of these 4 types and DE will consider any other school or school from this same type as suitable for the Candidate. DE will also consider as suitable for the Candidate any school from the same type as the type of school that the child attended in Year 12.

4. Special Consideration

Special consideration will be given to Candidates under the following circumstances:

- 4.1 A medical or other problem that may have temporarily affected a Candidate's academic performance. Applications for Special Consideration should be supported by appropriate independent documentary evidence.
- 4.2 If a Candidate fails to meet criterion 4.1 above for a reason which the Principal considers to be substantial and sufficient to allow a judgement that the Candidate would be likely to benefit from the academic courses provided and be able to contribute positively to the life of the College.

ENTRY TO REPEAT YEAR 13

Pupils who meet the following criteria will be considered eligible to repeat Year 13:

Pupils who -

- i have attended Year 13 in Victoria College in the previous academic year;
- ii have extenuating circumstances (i.e. medical or other problems which may have affected their performance in Year 13);
- iii are recommended by the Principal as being able to benefit from repeating Year 13 at the College.

In exceptional circumstances a final decision to admit a pupil to repeat Year 13 may be referred to the Board of Governors.

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

ENTRY TO YEAR 14

The essential minimum criteria for Year 14 are as follows:

1. Academic Profile

- i A minimum of three AS passes, with minimum of D grades.

In exceptional circumstances a final decision to admit a candidate who does not meet the minimum entry requirement for Year 14 entry will be referred to the Principal.

2. General School Record

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make a positive contribution to the College by satisfying the following criteria:

- i Have displayed a positive attitude and commitment to their Year 13 studies;
- ii Have attained (in normal circumstances) a minimum overall attendance of 95% or above up to the start of Study Leave.

In cases where special consideration apply, parents should provide medical and/or other reports in support of their application.

WAITING LIST POLICY

Should a vacancy arise after places have been finalised, all applications for admission to the relevant year group 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. This waiting list will be in place until the 30th June of the year following application.

A Candidate's name will be automatically added to the list and the College will contact parents/guardians in writing if a Candidate gains a place in the College by this method. Parents/guardians are asked to contact the College if they wish a Candidate's name to be removed from the list.

It should be noted that all those who have applied previously, but who have failed to obtain a place in the College, will have their application held open until 30 June of the year following application when their application will be deemed to have lapsed.