

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.R.C.A., F.F.I.C.M

Voluntary Grammar School
Co-Educational

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 200

Enrolment No: 1410

OPEN EVENINGS

Wednesday 11th January 2023 - 6.45pm-9.00pm (viewing of facilities) - 7.00pm & 8.00pm talks to parents and children by the Principal in the Assembly Hall

Thursday 12th January 2023 - 6.45pm-9.00pm (viewing of facilities) - 7.00pm & 8.00pm talks to parents and children by the Principal in the Assembly Hall

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 2023.

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 2023

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 th March 2023 (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 1st September 2022;
 - 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 of surname (as entered on Birth Certificate) in the order set out below:

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

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 Thursday 23rd February 2023 at 4pm.

These criteria will apply throughout the academic year 2023/24.

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.

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 in terms of standardised scores in English and Mathematics.

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 March 2020.

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 Thursday 9th March 2023 (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 20th May 2023 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. The Parent / Guardian as the applicant is expected to 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 4th February 2023. 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 SC23.
- C. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that Form SC23 is properly completed and to collect the evidence requested therein to support the application.
- D. The applicant should complete Section A of Form SC23, 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 SC23 and give it to your child's primary school principal for completion. If there is insufficient space on the SC23 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 SC23 form. Both parts A and B of form SC23, 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 must be uploaded with Form SC23 together with any appropriate educational evidence.
- ii. Where a candidate has become resident in Northern Ireland after the 1st September 2022 but before the deadline for completion of a Transfer Form, proof of residency must be uploaded with Form SC23 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 SC23, 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 23rd February 2023, the closure date for completion of the Transfer Application, the application will not be processed as part of the Transfer Procedure. Form SC23 should be completed. Proof of residency should be attached to the Form together with any appropriate educational evidence. Form SC23 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 Thursday 23rd February 2023 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 20th May 2023 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 Admissions Assessment Day in June 2024.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2020/21	200	278	208*
2021/22	200	478	210**
2022/23	200	285	204***

* 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)

*** Includes pupils admitted with a Statement of Educational Need (2) and pupils who have been admitted through a Temporary Variation request (2).

