

BALLYMENA ACADEMY

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Principal: Mr S W Black, M.Sc., PGCE, PQH (NI)

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Mr J T McKervill, LL.B



Voluntary Grammar School (Non-Denominational)

Age Range of pupils: 11-18 years

Admissions Number: 176

Enrolment Number: 1200

School Open Nights:

Ballymena Academy will be open for visits by P7 pupils and their parents on:-

Wednesday 11th January 2017 - 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

[Those attending Primary Schools situated within approximately 3 miles of Ballymena Academy]

Thursday 12th January 2017 - 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

[Those attending Primary Schools situated more than approximately 3 miles of Ballymena Academy]

To Parents/Guardians naming Ballymena Academy as a preference on their child's Transfer Form. Please ensure that you provide the following information on or with the Transfer Form:

Entrance Assessment Results

Ballymena Academy will use the Age Standardised Score awarded to children sitting the Common Entrance Assessment (CEA) provided by the Association for Quality Education Ltd. (AQE) as specified by the school. Parents should record their child's candidate number and Age Standardised Score in Section C of the Transfer Form and attach the Common Entrance Assessment results sheet to the Transfer Form.

Special Circumstances

Parents/Guardians wishing to claim Special Circumstances must complete Form SC16, available from Ballymena Academy or from AQE.

The completed Form SC16, together with appropriate documentary evidence corroborating the claim for Special Circumstances, must be attached to the Transfer Form.

(Parents/Guardians may wish to provide a copy of Form SC16 and accompanying evidence directly to the school. This should be in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Principal. Such material does not confer advantage on any claim; parent/guardians must ensure the SC16 form and documents are also attached to the Transfer Form).

Special Provision

Parents/Guardians wishing to claim Special Provision must complete Form SC16 available from Ballymena Academy or from the AQE.

The completed Form SC16, together with appropriate documentary evidence corroborating the claim for Special Provision, must be attached to the Transfer Form. Special Provision will not be considered in advance of the school's receipt of the Transfer Forms from the Education Authority.

Upon receipt of a request in writing by a pupil's parent/guardian, a Primary School must disclose the relevant pupil's record of progress and achievement. The onus is on the parent/guardian to obtain from the Primary School full information on the pupil's academic performance and test results and to provide this to Ballymena Academy. No information will be sought by Ballymena Academy directly from the Primary School.

Capital Fee

There is a capital fee of £140 per annum (set by the Department of Education), which is payable by all Parents/Guardians of pupils enrolled in the school.

Parents/Guardians are also asked to make a voluntary contribution to the School Fund. This voluntary contribution helps to support the educational and co-curricular provision within the school. The suggested contribution for session 2017/2018 is £120.00.

A detailed prospectus and information on school policies and organisation may be obtained at the school, free of charge. Detailed information is also available on the school website.

Respective function of the Board of Governors and Principal in relation to Admissions to the school

The Board of Governors is the relevant admissions authority for Ballymena Academy. The Board of Governors draws up and approves the Admissions Criteria and delegates to an Admissions Panel - nominated and approved by the Board of Governors, to include the Principal - the responsibility for considering all applications for admission to Year 8.

Any reference to the term 'the Board of Governors' within these Admissions Criteria includes the Admissions Panel, nominated and approved by the Board of Governors, for the purposes of applying the Admissions Criteria set out in this document.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO YEAR 8

In producing these criteria, the Board of Governors of Ballymena Academy has had regard to relevant material on the Transfer Procedure, issued at various times by the Department of Education. These materials have been given active and receptive consideration; the decisions taken reflect the Board of Governors' focus on communicating clearly, complying with legal guidance and providing an efficient and effective service for children and parents.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or attached to, the Transfer Form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the Transfer Form or attached to it.

Parents of all children transferring from Primary to Post-Primary school are eligible to apply for a place in Ballymena Academy.

The School operates the Common Entrance Assessment provided by AQE. If there are more applications than places available, the Age Standardised Score awarded following the Common Entrance Assessment will be used as part of the admission procedure. Precedence will be given to those applications which include an Age Standardised Score in respect of the Common Entrance Assessment provided by AQE.

1. Eligibility, Priority, Considering Applications and Verification of Information

ELIGIBILITY:

- 1.1 For a child to be considered eligible for admission to Year 8 in Ballymena Academy ("the School") in September 2017, an application in his/her name on a completed Transfer Form, must be submitted according to the requirements of the Transfer Procedure conducted through the Education Authority (North Eastern Region) or any successor body.

PRIORITY to be given to applications:

- 1.2 In determining those children to be admitted, the Board of Governors will consider children who are resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the School before those children who are not so resident.
- 1.3 The Board of Governors of the School will not use as a criterion the position of preference given to the School on the Transfer Form, i.e. a child who has chosen the School in any position on the Transfer Form will be considered equally with those who have put the School first.
- 1.4 Priority shall be given, on equal terms, to two categories of application:
 - Applications for children who have taken the Common Entrance Assessment (provided by AQE, as specified by the School) in an approved Assessment Centre, whether or not an application includes a claim for Special Circumstances (Special Circumstances: see Sections 4 and 5 below).
 - Applications for children for whom a valid claim for Special Provision has been made (Special Provision: see Sections 4 and 6 below).

Then, if places remain after all applications in these categories have been accepted, all remaining applications shall be considered.

CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS

- 1.5 If, after consideration of 1.4, there are still places available, all remaining applications - i.e. those which do not include an Age Standardised Score or are not based on a valid claim for Special Provision - shall be considered.
- If the number of applications remaining does not exceed the number of places available, all shall be accepted.
 - If the number of such applications exceeds the number of places available, the procedure identified in section 2 shall be applied until all places are allocated.

VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION

- 1.6 Duty to Verify: Parents should be aware that the Board of Governors of the School reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify the information written on or submitted with any Transfer Form. The obligation rests with parents to provide this evidence for verification purposes on request.
- 1.7 The provision of false or incorrect information, or the failure to provide information within the deadlines set by the School, can result in the withdrawal of a place or the inability to offer a place.

2. Admissions Procedure

Applications for children who have taken the Common Entrance Assessment specified by the School (or for whom a valid Special Provision claim has been made)

- 2.1 Where the number of applications for children who have taken the Common Entrance Assessment specified by the School along with those for whom a valid claim for Special Provision has been made, exceeds the School's Admissions Number, the School shall apply the Age Standardised Score obtained in the Assessment or determined by the process applied to Special Provision claims, as detailed below at Section 6.
- 2.2 On the basis of the Age Standardised Score achieved in the Common Entrance Assessment or a Score allocated as a result of a claim for Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision, applications shall be placed in rank order; higher scores will be accepted before lower scores.
- 2.3 Where the Age Standardised Score obtained by two or more children is identical, and insufficient places remain to admit both or all of them, the following sub-criteria shall be applied in the stated order.

Precedence shall be given, in the following order to an application for a child who:

- 2.3.1 has sibling(s)* currently enrolled in the School, or has sibling(s) already approved for acceptance by the School in the current admissions process.
(**N.B.** Preference shall be given on the basis of the greatest or greater number of siblings).

- 2.3.2 is the eldest** or only child of the family.

* Where applicable "sibling" is defined as another child of the family (Article 2(2) of the Domestic Proceedings (NI) Order 1980) to include, for example, half-brothers and sisters, together with children who are adopted or fostered.

** Twins and other multiples who are eldest in the family are treated as joint eldest children.

- 2.4 If, after the implementation of each of 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, there remain more applications with identical Age Standardised Scores than there are places available, then the following random selection process as determined by the Board of Governors and overseen by the Admissions Panel shall be applied to determine the remaining applications to be accepted:

- each application to be considered at this stage is allocated a random number electronically generated within 'Microsoft Excel';
- the applications are then ranked in order of the random number, with higher numbers having precedence.

Applications for children who have not taken the Entrance Assessment specified by the School
(and for whom a valid Special Provision claim has not been made)

- 2.5 Should any place(s) remain after all applications which include a Standardised Age Score or are made on the basis of a valid claim for Special Provision have been accepted, then other applications shall be considered for the remaining place(s).
- 2.6 If the number of such applications does not exceed the number of places available, all the applications shall be accepted up to the School's Admissions Number.
- 2.7 Where the number of such applications exceeds the number of places available, sub-criteria 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.4 shall be applied in the stated order until all places have been allocated up to the School's Admissions Number.

3. Admissions following conclusion of Transfer Procedure

- 3.1 Should a vacancy arise after the Transfer Procedure concludes, between May 2017 and 31st August, 2017, further admission to Year 8 shall be considered if fewer pupils are enrolled in Year 8 than the Admissions Number allows. At that point all applications (including those received after the final date for changes of preference) will be considered, and the published admissions criteria applied (see 2.1 – 2.7 above).

Parents/Guardians who wish to have their child considered for admission in the event of a place becoming available after 1st September, 2017 should write to the Principal stating this. An acknowledgement will be issued. If any place(s) subsequently become available and there are more applicants than places available, then a decision will be made upon application of the Admissions Procedure set out at Section 2 to those children seeking admission at the time the place(s) become available.

- 3.2 If the School's Admissions Number has been reached, an application for a child moving into the area can be considered, subject to the Department of Education granting a temporary extension to the admissions number.

4. Special Circumstances and Special Provision: Context & Summary

- 4.1 'Special Circumstances' refers to the claim that medical or other problems, constituting a temporary illness, injury or indisposition experienced by a child at or about the time the Common Entrance Assessment was conducted, have detrimentally affected her or his performance.

If a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of a child's score in one assessment, the Board of Governors will take into account where the child took all three assessments and that the child's score is based on the best two results.

- 4.2 'Special Provision' refers to applications which claim that children were unable to sit the Common Entrance Assessment on the basis that: they are transferring from Primary Schools outside Northern Ireland or they have received more than half of their primary school education outside Northern Ireland or that they have been affected by medical or other serious problems which have prevented them from taking the Common Entrance Assessment.

- 4.3 In the event that an application to the School is unsuccessful, information regarding any claim for Special Circumstances or Special Provision shall be returned with the Transfer Form and made available to other post-primary schools to which application has been made through the Transfer Procedure.

5. Claiming Special Circumstances

- 5.1 It is the sole responsibility of parents to obtain and present all such material as they consider will enable the School to make a judgement in respect of the Age Standardised Score to be used in the application of Section 2. **Parents who wish to apply to the school under Special Circumstances should complete Form SC16, obtainable from the school or from AQE, and attach it, along with appropriate documentary evidence, to the Transfer Form.**

Parents are reminded that when considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or attached to, the Transfer Form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria – including Special Circumstances claims – is stated on the Transfer Form or attached to it.

The School requires:	Examples of material which Parents are required to provide:
Information about the Special Circumstance which is claimed to have affected the child's performance.	Details of medical or other problems which occurred just before or during the Common Entrance Assessment.
Evidence that the Special Circumstance existed.	Evidence to corroborate the existence of the problem. Parents should note that greater weight will be applied to independent evidence.
If claimed problem is medical: Evidence that the child was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness, that the problem was as described, and that the child's health and well-being were impaired at or about the time of the Common Entrance Assessment.	Written statement from a Doctor or appropriate medical practitioner specifying illness or condition, its impact on the child and dates of examination(s).
If claimed problem is non-medical: Details of the problem and independent professionally-sourced evidence to corroborate its existence and impact on the child.	Written statement from an appropriately qualified individual who knows and/or works with the child in a formal and professional context and is able to give independent confirmation of the nature of the problem, when it occurred and its impact on the child.
Robust educational evidence to show Age Standardised Score does not correspond to the child's ability.	'Robust educational evidence.' e.g. scores obtained in all standardised tests in English and Mathematics, taken by the child since the start of Key Stage 2.

Please note that these examples are neither compulsory, nor exhaustive. The School will consider all such material presented to it and parents should include appropriate educational evidence.

5.2 Accurate information about the child's attainment is essential. To that end, parents should ensure that information, which they are entitled to receive from the primary school, such as scores obtained in standardised tests and dates on which taken and other relevant assessment outcomes, are obtained and used as supportive evidence for a Special Circumstances claim.

5.3 Parents are free to provide any other educational evidence for consideration by the Admissions Panel by attaching it to the Transfer Form and Form SC16. The Admissions Panel will consider all evidence provided in exercising its judgement in order to award a score to the applicant. However the onus lies with the parents/guardians to provide such evidence and have it, when necessary, appropriately verified. It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

6. Special Provision

6.1 Applications for Special Provision must be attached to the Transfer Form and be made in line with the detailed procedures set out below. This includes the appropriate Form (SC16), a copy of which should be attached to the Transfer Form and requires parents to submit appropriate, independent, documentary evidence in support of the claim.

6.2 Special Provision claims may be considered for children who have not taken the Common Entrance Assessment:

6.2.1 who are transferring from primary schools outside Northern Ireland;

6.2.2 who have received more than half of their primary education outside Northern Ireland;

- 6.2.3 whose educational provision to date has been negatively affected by serious medical or other problems, and who may, as a consequence, have been unable to take the Common Entrance Assessment.
- 6.3 It is the parents' sole responsibility to ensure that information is provided for the School to be able to determine if the child is eligible for Special Provision.
- 6.4 Decisions on admitting a child for whom a Special Provision claim has been made, require the Admissions Panel to form an educational judgement based on evidence of that child's ability and determine an appropriate Age Standardised Score for that child, following which, that child shall then be considered with all other applicants by application of Section 2 above.
- 6.5 Parents are free to provide any other educational evidence for consideration by the Admissions Panel by attaching it to the Transfer Form and Form SC16. The Admissions Panel will consider all evidence provided in exercising its judgement in order to award a score to the applicant. However the onus lies with the parents/guardians to provide such evidence and have it, when necessary, appropriately verified. It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

Year 8 Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No.	Total Applications All Preferences	Total Admissions
2014/15	176	184	176
2015/16	176	208	177
2016/17	176	202	176

This table does not include children who were admitted to the school with a statement of special educational needs.

N.B. The Department of Education has determined that the Transfer Booklet will not provide parents with detailed information on the pattern of applications and admissions to this school. Additional information may be obtained on request from the school or on the school website.