

## BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY

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

Warden: Ms Caroline Dillon



Voluntary Grammar School  
Co-Educational

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 200

Enrolment No: 1410

### OPEN EVENINGS

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 - 6.45pm-9.00pm** (viewing of facilities) - (7.00pm & 8.00pm talks to parents and children by the Principal in the Assembly Hall)

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020 - 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 your child's Transfer Form.

#### Entrance Test Results

The Board of Governors of Belfast Royal Academy will use the score obtained in the AQE Common Entrance Assessment, as defined in paragraph 3 of the criteria, to select applicants applying for entry to Form 1 (Year 8) in 2020.

Please ensure that you provide the following information on Section C of your child's Transfer Form:

- your child'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 their child's AQE CEA score is attached to the Transfer Form.**

#### **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 2020**

- 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 Form. 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 applicants 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).

"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 Form, or at any date up to and including 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

- 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 applicants in the qualifying group in accordance with the rank order of the score obtained by them in the Common Entrance Assessment, so that the applicant with the highest score in the Common Entrance Assessment will be admitted first, the applicant 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. pupils currently enrolled in the Preparatory Department of Belfast Royal Academy;
  - ii. those with a sibling currently in attendance at Belfast Royal Academy;
  - iii. children who are entitled to Free School Meals;
  - iv. those who are the first or only child of the family or a twin\*;
  - v. those who are the first boy or first girl of the family\*;

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

The verifying letter must state that the child is the eldest/first boy/first girl and that the child and family are known to the verifier. It must be written on headed notepaper and signed by one of the following who is not a member of the applicant's family:

- |   |                        |   |                            |
|---|------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| a | a medical practitioner | c | a clergyman or equivalent  |
| b | a solicitor            | d | a primary school principal |

- (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 a computerised random selection process.

These criteria will apply throughout the academic year 2019/20.

#### **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 applicant 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 attached to the Transfer Form 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 applicant's academic capacity (see Point 5 below).

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

As an exception to the requirements of Paragraph 3 an applicant may request Special Provision, where the applicant

- has received more than half his/her education outside Northern Ireland; or
- had entered for assessment but was unable to be assessed due circumstances beyond the applicant's control which are supported by appropriate evidence; or

- wishes to transfer to a grammar school from a school outside Northern Ireland.\*

\* Applicants wishing to transfer from a school outside Northern Ireland should be aware that the Education Authority may not process forms after *24 April 2020*.

#### *NB Late Applicants*

Those wishing to transfer from a school outside Northern Ireland who apply for a place after *29 May 2020* 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:**

1. Parents/guardians should obtain independent verification of circumstances which may have affected their child's performance or prevented him/her from sitting a Common Entrance Assessment paper.
  - i. Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the applicant only at the time of any of the assessments making up the Common Entrance Assessment, parents or guardians should provide evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time the illness occurred.
  - ii. Where the problem is a medical one which prevented the applicant from taking at least two of the papers making up the Common Entrance Assessment, parents or guardians must forward to the School evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness, who has certified that, by reason of such illness, the applicant was unable to sit at least two papers.
  - iii. 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.
2. You 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 25 January 2020. If you consider that a Special Case application is appropriate for your child, you should contact the school General Office or the AQE Limited Office to request Form SC19.
3. It is your responsibility to ensure that Form SC19 is properly completed and to collect the evidence requested therein to support the application.
4. You should complete Section A of Form SC19, 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.
5. Educational evidence to support your application should normally be obtained from your child's primary school principal.

You should detach Section B of Form SC19 and give it to your child's primary school principal for completion. If there is insufficient space on the SC19 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.

The Board of Governors concurs with advice given by the Department of Education that results obtained in InCAS tests should not be used for selection purposes as these tests are not considered appropriate for this purpose. The Board of Governors will not therefore accept the results obtained in InCAS tests as educational evidence.

The Board of Governors will consider a report from an educational psychologist, provided by you, if you wish to submit one.

6. When you complete the Transfer Form, you should request the primary school principal to complete Section B of the SC19 form. Both parts A and B of form SC19, together with any supporting evidence which you are providing, should be attached to the Transfer Form.

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 your child's score or which allows a judgement to be made in relation to the score your child may have obtained if he/she had sat the Common Entrance Assessment. The School may assess the applicant's academic ability by using standardised assessments to supplement the information supplied (See Point 5).

**You should note that:**

- i. Parents have the option of submitting candidates for either two or three CEA papers. If a parent submits a candidate for all three CEA papers, the candidate's best two results will be used to produce the final CEA score. If a Special Case application is made in respect of a candidate's result in one CEA paper, the Board may, where the candidate took all three CEA papers, take into account that the candidate's score is based on the best two of these results.
- ii. If a Special Cases application is made in respect of matters for which Access Arrangements were granted, the school may take into account the fact that the candidate was granted Access Arrangements for those matters. The possibility of a candidate's score being based on two out of three CEA papers may also be taken into account.

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

Where an applicant has become resident in Northern Ireland after the **6 September 2019** but before the deadline for completion of a Transfer Form, proof of residency should be attached to Form SC19 together with any appropriate educational evidence as described in Point 5 above.

If an applicant is not resident in Northern Ireland before 24 April 2020, the closure date for completion of the Transfer Form, the application will not be processed as part of the Transfer Procedure. Form SC19 should be completed. Proof of residency should be attached to the Form together with any appropriate educational evidence. The type of educational evidence that would be appropriate is described in Point 5 of the information for applicants described above. Form SC19 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 children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will 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. The necessary information is listed in section 4(b) above and parents also note that they should attach to their application the original notification received from AQE of the test score.***

**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 applicant's Transfer Form.

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 or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

**WAITING LIST POLICY**

**Should a vacancy arise after 29 May 2020 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. This waiting list will be in place until 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The school will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the school by this method.**

**Your child's name will be automatically added to the list. Please contact the school if you wish for your child's name to be removed from the list.**

**Applications and Admissions**

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
<b>2017/18</b>	200	268	*207
<b>2018/19</b>	200	311	**212
<b>2019/20</b>	200	309	*209

\* Includes pupils admitted with a statement of educational need

\*\* Includes pupils admitted through the Exceptional Circumstances Body and those with admitted with a statement of educational need