

BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY

Cliftonville Road

Belfast BT14 6JL

Telephone No: 028 9074 0423

Fax No: 028 9075 0607

E-mail: info@bfsra.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Website: www.belfastroyalacademy.com

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

Warden: Mr D.E.Porter,M.Sc.,C.Eng.,M.I.C.E.,M.C.I.H.T.,M.C.I.W.E.M.

**Voluntary Grammar School
Co-Educational**

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 200

Enrolment No: 1410

OPEN EVENINGS

Wednesday 7th January 2026 - 6.15pm -8.45pm (viewing of facilities) – 6.15pm, 7.15pm & 8.15pm talks to parents and children by the Principal in the Assembly Hall

Thursday 8th January 2026 - 6.15pm -8.45pm (viewing of facilities) – 6.15pm , 7.15pm & 8.15pm 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 Schools' Entrance Assessment Group's Entrance Assessment to select candidates applying for entry to Form 1 (Year 8) in 2026.

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

- The candidate's Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) in the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) Entrance Assessment which should be entered, along with the SEAG Unique Pupil Number, in the following format: 'SEAG TSAS', followed by the score with the SEAG Unique Pupil Number in brackets.
- **It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make sure that the original notification received from SEAG indicating the candidate's SEAG TSAS is uploaded with the Transfer Application.**

SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil who only takes one paper (i.e. either Paper 1 or Paper 2 but not both) will not have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such pupils will, however, have their "single paper" marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have designation "e" (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, e.g. Total Standardised Age Score TSAS 196e; Band 4e. Such pupils may be considered for admission by Belfast Royal Academy under Special Provisions.

Special Cases (also known as Special Circumstances and Special Provisions)

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. This sub-committee is referred to as the Special Cases panel.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY OF PUPILS TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) IN SEPTEMBER 2026

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, a candidate 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 candidate does not secure admission to their 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:

“Entrance Assessment”	- means the assessment conducted by the SEAG Limited in November of the calendar year prior to the year of entry.
“qualifying group”	- means the group consisting of those candidates who participated in the SEAG Entrance Assessment
“score”	- means the Total Standardised Age Score in the Entrance Assessment issued by SEAG 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 candidates 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 24 th February 2026 (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.
TSAS	This is Total Standardised Age Score and is the pupil’s overall outcome from the SEAG Entrance Assessment based on answers to the 56 English (or Gaelge) Questions in Papers 1 and 2 and the 56 Maths questions in Papers 1 and 2.

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 strict rank order of TSAS, highest to lowest, up to the approved admissions number.
- (b) If more than one candidate is eligible for the last remaining place(s) because they have equal scores, priority will be assigned in the following order:
- present members of the School in its Preparatory Department who have been registered since the 1st September 2025;
 - those candidates who have a sibling currently in attendance at the Secondary Department at Belfast Royal Academy (name and current year to be supplied);
 - those candidates who are entitled to Free School Meals.
- (c) In the event of a tie for the remaining place(s), 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:

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

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/Guardians 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 19th February 2026 at 12 noon.

These criteria will apply throughout the academic year 2026/27.

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.

It should be noted by parents/guardians that consideration of all Special Cases by the Board of Governors involves an exercise in educational judgement and is not a precise calculation. The Board of Governors reserves the right to exercise its objective and informed educational judgement in reaching a decision.

Special access arrangements are available for those who require special facilities whilst sitting the Entrance Assessment. Where special access arrangements have been granted by SEAG, 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 SEAG 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 and applies to candidates who have sat both Entrance Assessment papers and have received a TSAS. Parents/Guardians should refer to the Special Circumstances Guide for Parents/Guardians and complete the SC Form (both documents are available from the School website).

The SC Form **must** be completed for a Special Circumstances claim to be considered.

Consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances consists of three stages:

- Stage 1 requires consideration of whether there is, in the judgement of the Special Cases panel, sufficient contemporaneous medical, professional or other evidence to warrant acceptance that the case is valid for consideration under Special Circumstances.
- If an applicant is permitted to be considered as having Special Circumstances, Stage 2 requires an educational judgement to be made by the Special Cases panel on the verifiable educational evidence[^] provided to assess if the Total Standardised Age Score achieved by the child in the SEAG Entrance Assessment does not correspond to the academic ability of the child. This educational evidence must have been completed prior to the date of the first SEAG Entrance Assessment.
[^]The Board of Governors reserves the right to determine the most appropriate educational evidence to be considered.
- If Stages 1 and 2 are met, at Stage 3 the Special Cases panel will adjust the TSAS, taking into account the nature of the Special Circumstances claimed by each individual.

Details of the Special Circumstances protocol is available from the School on request.

(b) Special Provisions

As an exception to the requirements of Section 3, a candidate may request Special Provisions, 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. due to serious medical or other problems which are supported by appropriate documentary evidence or for a demonstrably valid reason also supported by appropriate documentary evidence, were EITHER unable to sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment OR has an estimated outcome because they only sat one of the two Entrance Assessment papers.

Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the child only at the time of the SEAG assessment(s), parent/guardians should be aware that the School will attach greater weight to evidence indicating that the child was examined by a medical practitioner at the time of the illness.

Parents/Guardians should refer to the Special Provisions Guide for Parents/Guardians and complete the SP Form (both documents are available from the School website).

The SP Form **must** be completed for a Special Provisions claim to be considered.

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.

DEADLINES

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria, punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on Tuesday 27th January 2026 at 12 noon and an application submitted by the closing date of Thursday 19th February 2026 at 12 noon will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12 noon on 19th February 2026 and up to 4.00pm on 24th February 2026 will be treated as a late application.

The final date for receipt of new applications/additional information or changes in preference **in exceptional circumstances** by EA is Tuesday 24th February 2026 (not later than 4pm). Any applications/information received after this date/time will not be considered by the School.

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 online 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 9th May 2026 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 2027.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions*
2023/24	200	261	209
2024/25	200	317	210
2025/26	200	289	203

*Pupils in excess of the approved admissions number have been admitted via one of four routes:

- Statement of Educational Needs;
- Via the Education Authority Appeals Process;
- Via a temporary variation request from the School; or
- Via the Independent Exceptional Circumstances Board (ECB)

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO FORMS II-V 2026/2027

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 (Wednesday 6th May 2026) will not be considered.

The link to the online form is: <https://forms.gle/oi4NTteW6bJ2pPDm9>

5. Candidates are required to provide a copy of their most recent school report by Wednesday 6th May 2026. 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 Wednesday 3rd June 2026. Academic ability will be assessed as follows:
 - 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 – Wednesday 6th May 2026*), 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.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO THE SIXTH FORM 2026-2027

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. Please refer to the Addendum.
- 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 or AA in Double Award Science and a GCSE points score greater than 24.
- 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.*
- Pupils are encouraged to complete a Declaration of Interest Form before the publication of the GCSE results.

The link to the online form is: <https://forms.gle/Qgv5bM51ty8MJw838>

4. ADMISSIONS TO REPEAT LOWER SIXTH

Pupils of Belfast Royal Academy who meet all of 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

- Pupils must study a minimum of 3 A2 subjects.
- For a pupil to access a course at A2 level, it is strongly recommended that at least a Grade D should have been achieved in that subject at AS level.
- 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.

- For a pupil to access a course at A2 level, at least a Grade D must have been achieved at AS level.
- 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.
- 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.

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 of 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.

ADDENDUM TO SIXTH FORM ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

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

The Department of Education may, in response to a request from a school, increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to its Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to pupils who meet the basic eligibility criteria for Sixth Form study (as set out below) and shall be allocated in the order determined by the criteria to be applied in the order set down.

1. Pupils who have most recently completed Year 12 in Belfast Royal Academy.
2. Pupils from other schools where admission has been agreed and additional places granted by the Department of Education.*

*Parents should note how the Department of Education (DE) will, in response to a school's request, temporarily increase a school's enrolment number in order to allow extra post -16 pupils to enrol. DE will only increase the school's enrolment number if it is content that each external pupil for whom a place is requested would not be able to pursue their post-16 course-choices at another suitable school without undertaking an unreasonable journey (i.e. a journey, that by public transport, would be over an hour from where the young person lives or is further than 15 miles distance). If DE finds that no other suitable school may provide all of the post-16 courses that the pupil wishes to pursue - then DE will agree a school's request for an extra place.

NOTES:

1. If the Board of Governors of an 11-18 school wishes to maximise the number of additional places they can be granted under the extra Sixth Form places policy then they should publish the proposed criterion as an appendage to the existing Sixth Form criteria. It is entirely a matter for the Board of Governors of the school to decide if they want to use the addendum. **If they do not publish the addendum, the school cannot apply to the Department for additional Sixth Form places.**
2. The recommended criterion should be appended to the school's existing Sixth Form admissions criteria. **Please note it is only by using the precise wording provided and as an appendage to the existing criteria that the text is recommended.** The wording assumes that the addendum will be listed directly underneath the school's post 16 criteria.

3. The addendum will not affect the basic eligibility criteria that the school applies in order to consider applicants eligible for Sixth Form admissions, prior to any question of admissions priority. It also does not affect the admissions criteria by which the school determines the admissions priority of applicants for places available within the approved enrolment number. It still remains the case that at all times it is entirely the choice of a school whether or not to request any extra places or none.
4. The criteria addendum states that the Department will consider what suitable alternatives are available to a pupil for whom an additional place is sought. To determine suitability, the Department 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 pupil will belong to one of these 4 types and the Department will consider any other school from this same type as suitable for the pupil. The Department will also consider as suitable for the pupil any school of the same type as that attended by the child in Year 12.