Belfast High School

Admissions Policy (Sixth Form)

Date: November 2025
Date Ratified: 3 December 2025
Ratified by: Board of Governors
Responsibility: Board of Governors
Author: Principal
Review Date: November 2026

Introduction
The Board of Governors of Belfast High School delegates to the Principal the authority to select those pupils who meet the criteria for entry into Sixth Form outlined below. The Principal may consult with the Admissions Sub-Committee if necessary. The total admissions figure for Sixth Form cannot exceed the total enrolment figure for the School or the School's resources and facilities to provide appropriately for the curricular and pastoral needs of the pupils. The School may request a temporary variation in enrolment number for Sixth Form from the Department of Education. All prospective Sixth Form pupils will be issued with an Information Booklet which contains details of all 'A' level subjects offered and the subject-specific entry requirements.

Admission to Sixth Form (Year 13) – Internal Applicants
Section 1 applies to Belfast High School pupils currently in Year 12.

1. All Belfast High School Year 12 pupils who meet **ALL** of the following criteria will have the right to a place in Year 13:

    a. Obtain at least 3 x B and 4 x C*/C grades (or numerical equivalent for English exam Boards) in their GCSE examinations (or equivalent).
    b. Meet the entry requirements for each subject chosen for A Level study. Full details are in the Information Booklet, available on the school website.
    c. A good school record with regards to achievement, behaviour, attendance (normally 95% minimum), punctuality and uniform.
    d. Agree to follow the requirements of the Sixth Form Agreement.
    e. Study a minimum of 3 A Level subjects.

2. For pupils who wish to study in Year 13 at Belfast High School but do not gain admission via criterion 1, they will be considered via the procedure below:

    a. Completion of an Application Form for admission to Year 13 at Belfast High School (appendix 1) by the end of the school day on the date of publication of GCSE results at the latest. Those who have submitted an application form before that date should telephone their results to the Principal's PA by 1.00pm on that day.
    b. Applicants will be asked to attend an interview with the Principal to discuss potential subject choices and provide written confirmation of their results and most recent school report. Criteria outlined in section 1 above will be applied.
    c. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, then applicants will be ranked according to the points score based on their best 7 GCSEs (A*/9=5, A/8/7=4, B/6=3 etc) or equivalent. Places will be offered in rank order. In the event that more than one applicant for the last place has the same score then the following criteria will be applied in order:

        (i) Points score based on the best 8 GCSEs (or equivalent).
        (ii) Children who have a sibling (as defined in Annex 2 of DENI Circular 2025/12 (Circular 2025/12) enrolled at the School at the time of application.
        (iii) The use of a tie-breaker which shall be on the basis of computerised random selection.

3. Applications from pupils for whom it is not the normal age to progress from GCSE to AS Level will normally be considered after those for whom it is the normal age of progression.

4. Applicants who have been unsuccessful in meeting these minimum entry requirements and who still wish to enter Sixth Form will be placed on a reserve list and will be informed by telephone as quickly as possible whether or not they can be offered a place under the criteria listed at 2 and 3 above.

Please note:
In a case where a pupil whose performance in GCSE examinations may have been detrimentally affected by extreme medical or other problems, the Principal is empowered to waive the requirements above in exceptional circumstances. In these circumstances each case will be carefully assessed, taking into account the available evidence before a decision on admission is made.

All applications for Sixth Form (Year 13) that were initially refused, will automatically be added to a separate waiting list. New applications and applications where new information has been provided will also be added to the waiting list. The Sixth Form waiting lists will be in place until the end of September of the year of application after which the application is deemed to have lapsed. Should a vacancy arise, the procedure outlined in the admissions criteria for entry of pupils to Sixth Form will be followed. The School will contact parents/carers in writing if their child gains a place in the school. Please contact the School if you wish your child's name to be removed from the list.

Entry to Sixth Form (Year 14)

(i) If you have 3 C grades in AS you may proceed automatically.
(ii) If you have one subject where performance is a concern you will be required to meet with a member of SLT or Head of Year 14 to discuss an action plan for Year 14.
(iii) If you have 2 subjects or more where performance is a concern you will be required to meet with the Principal or a Vice Principal to discuss the most appropriate way forward.

Pupils must satisfy the Principal on their attendance, behaviour, punctuality and commitment to Sixth Form. (The school's attendance target is 96% or more attendance).

It should be noted that pupils will **not** be permitted to return to Year 14 to study for fewer than 3 A2 subjects (or equivalent).

In the case of pupils whose performance in AS examinations, or their attendance, may have been detrimentally affected by extreme factors, the Principal is empowered in exceptional cases to waive the requirements of (i) and (ii). Each case will be carefully assessed by the Principal, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Head of Year (HOY), and will take into account appropriate documentary, medical or other evidence. In such cases the decision of the Principal will be final.

In certain cases, progression to Year 14 may involve implementation of some of the following strategies:

- A discussion with parents/carers about the best way forward;
- A specific target setting programme will come into operation and be regularly monitored with the expectation of improvement;
- Modules may be identified to be re-taken in June of Year 14 which may include attending some Year 13 classes;
- Regular meetings with a member of the pastoral team and with relevant Heads of Department will be arranged to discuss progress and targets.

Criteria for all extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission to Sixth Form (Year 13)
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 eligibility criteria for Sixth Form as set out above 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 High School.
2. Pupils from other schools where admission has been agreed and additional places granted by the Department of Education.

Parents/carers 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 ie 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.

The Verification of Information Provided by Applicants

Those making application should note that the information contained within an application that qualifies the applicant for admission will be verified.

Appendix 1

BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL
APPLICATION FOR A PLACE IN YEARS 13 - 14

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

Contact details:

Telephone _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Current School: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone Number: _____

Current Year Group: _____

Request to start school on: _____

Please give details of any special educational needs or access requirements:

Does your child have English as an additional language:	Yes		No	
Copy of child's long birth certificate enclosed:	Yes		No	
Copy of child's most recent school report enclosed:	Yes		No	

Copy of GCSE results enclosed: Yes ☐ No ☐ Not yet available ☐