

METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST

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Principal: Mrs J Lendrum BA MEd

Chair of Board of Governors: Rev Dr J Unsworth

**Voluntary Grammar School
Co-Educational
Non-Denominational**

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 240

Enrolment No: 1810

OPEN EVENING INFORMATION

Thursday 5 & Friday 6 January 2023 - 6.30 – 9.00pm (there will be a presentation by the Principal in the Assembly Hall at 6.30pm, 7.30 pm and again at 8.15pm)

CAPITAL FEE: £140 per annum.

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL

The responsibility for selecting applicants for places on the basis of the following criteria is delegated by the Board of Governors to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal. These criteria have been approved by the Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast (referred to herein as ‘the College’, see note 3 below for further explanation). Any reference herein to the term the Board of Governors includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admission criteria set out herein.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) 2023 - 2024

Section 1. Introduction:

1.1 The Governors of Methodist College Belfast intend to apply academic criteria to the applications received and so will accept the score awarded by AQE in the Common Entrance Assessments. If only one assessment was taken because of illness, self-isolation or other unforeseen circumstances, a claim under Special Circumstance should be submitted, which should include the raw score for the AQE paper sat along with additional evidence of academic ability. The Board of Governors will also give due consideration to other claims for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions as explained in Section 3 and Section 4 of this policy.

The candidate number and the score in the AQE CEA should be entered in the online post-primary Transfer Application. Parents/guardians must also upload the notification of the result issued by AQE to their child’s online post-primary Transfer Application.

The score awarded in the AQE CEA will be used as follows:

Applicants will first be placed in rank order based on their results in the CEA. Higher scores will precede lower scores. Applicants will then be sub-divided into bands of 5 marks. All applications will be carefully considered, and any claim for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions will be given due weight using the process outlined in sections 3 and 4 below. The 5 mark bands the College uses for admission purposes are as follows:

Band	Score
1	125 +
2	120 – 124
3	115 – 119
4	110 – 114
5	105 – 109
6	100 – 104
7	95 – 99
8	90 – 94
9	85 – 89
10	80 – 84
11	75 – 79
12	70 – 74

13	65 – 69
14	60 – 64
15	55 – 59
16	50 – 54
17	45 – 49
18	40 – 44
19	35 – 39
20	30 – 34
21	25 – 29
22	20 – 24
23	15 – 19
24	10 – 14
25	5 – 9
26	0 - 4

Please note: the College does not consider the order in which parents’ list schools on the online post-primary Transfer Application as part of their admission’s criteria. All applications are treated as equal.

- 1.2 Applicants who will be resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the College will be selected for admission before any such applicants not so resident.
- 1.3 The number of places available is limited to the admissions number set by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; this is currently 240 places. **The cut-off for admission will therefore be the 240th place.**

Section 2. The admissions criteria will be applied in the following order:

2.1 Those applicants in the bands down to and including the 240th place based on the applicant’s performance in the AQE Common Entrance Assessment

In the event of over-subscription in the band containing the 240th place then the following sub criteria will be applied in order:

- 2.2 Applicants who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSME) (see note 1 below for further explanation);
- 2.3 The children of Methodist Ministers in accordance with the terms of the Methodist College Act (see note 2);
- 2.4 Present members of the College in its Preparatory Department (see note 3);
- 2.5 Those with sibling(s) who is/are at present enrolled in the Secondary Department of the College or has/have already been offered a place; (see note 4);
- 2.6 The remaining applicants;
- 2.7 If after applying all sub criteria (an applicant may have more than one sub criterion e.g. criterion 2.2 and criterion 2.5 and would be placed ahead of an applicant with 2.2 only), the number of applicants in any of the above groups within each category exceeds the remaining number of places available, the applicants will be further ranked for acceptance on the basis of a computerised random selection process. (see note 5 below for further explanation).

If, following the application of criterion 2.1, all the available places have not been filled, the College will consider for admission any pupils without a CEA standardised score. Allocation of these remaining places will be made by applying criteria 2.2 to 2.7.

Section 3. Procedure for Special Circumstances:

- 3.1 Methodist College has academic performance as its first criterion, subject only to the consideration of medical or other problems which may have affected performance in the AQE Common Entrance Assessment (CEA) and which are supported by documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These ‘medical or other problems’ are commonly referred to as ‘Special Circumstances’.

Please note, if a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Special Access arrangements were granted, the College may take into account the fact that the applicant was granted Special Access arrangements for those matters.

Parents who wish to apply to the College under Special Circumstances should complete Form SC23 obtainable from the College or AQE's website and upload it with appropriate documentary evidence to the online post-primary Transfer Application. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the evidence as detailed in Form SC23.

3.2 Details of Medical or Other Problems

Where it is claimed that an applicant's performance in the CEA has been affected by a medical or other problem, it is the responsibility of the parents to set out in the Form SC23 precise details of the problem and upload evidence to corroborate its existence.

Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the applicant only at the time of the CEA, the College will give greater weight to evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the assessment.

Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the parents should upload appropriate evidence.

It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

3.3 The following Educational Evidence will be considered:

3.3.1 The score awarded in the AQE Common Entrance Assessment, if any.

3.3.2 The results for the applicant of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, with the exception of diagnostic tests which will not be accepted, and the results in any end of year tests in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 (see note 5 below).

3.3.3 The results (without names) for other pupils in the applicant's Year 7 class of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, the results in any end of year tests in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, and where available, the respective AQE CEA scores.

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the educational evidence. Where such information is unavailable for good reason, the Governors reserve the right to make a decision based on the information available.

3.4 A panel appointed by the Governors will consider the application for Special Circumstances. Where Special Circumstances are accepted, the panel will determine, on the basis of the information available, a band for the applicant. **Please note that the College does not use a pre-determined weighting, point system or percentage increase. In coming to its decision the panel will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming a judgement. This may include comparative and historical data.** Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a CEA score and the admissions criteria applied.

Section 4. Procedure for Special Provisions:

4.1 Special Provisions will apply for:

- a) children whose parents wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland;
- b) children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland;
- c) children, entered for the AQE Common Entrance Assessments, who because of unforeseen and **serious** medical or other problems were unable to participate in the Common Entrance Assessment.

It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the AQE CEA, with the exception of those applicants who take up residence in Northern Ireland after the start of Year 7.

Parents who wish to apply to the College under Special Provisions should contact the College as soon as possible. In addition, they should complete Form SC23, obtainable from the College or AQE's website, stating the precise reason why they believe the applicant is eligible for consideration under Special Provisions and provide appropriate independent documentary evidence, including any educational evidence as detailed under Special Circumstances above and that might assist the panel to determine an appropriate score. A copy of the

Form SC23 and all the documentary evidence should be uploaded to the online post-primary Transfer Application.

For those pupils whose parents wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, applications for Special Provisions should be received by the College by 9 March 2023. (see note 6 below).

- 4.2 A panel appointed by the Governors will consider the application for Special Provisions. Where Special Provisions are accepted, the following procedure will apply:
- The College will consider any assessment information, with the exception of diagnostic test results, and may choose to assess the applicant's ability in English, mathematics, verbal reasoning and non-verbal reasoning.
 - A panel appointed by the Governors will determine, on the basis of the information available, a band for the applicant. In coming to its decision the panel will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming a judgement. This may include comparative and historical data. Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a CEA score and the admissions criteria applied.

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

WAITING LIST POLICY

Should a vacancy arise after 20 May 2023 all applications for admission to Form 1/Year 8 that were initially refused, new 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 30 June 2024. Should a place become available for your child by this method, the College will contact you. Your child's name will be automatically added to the list. Please contact the College if you wish your child's name to be removed from the list.

Notes:

- "entitled to Free School Meals" will mean pupils who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their parent or guardian has completed their online post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including 9 March 2023, no later than 4 pm.
- Methodist Ministers must be in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland and provide verification from the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- The College has two constituent parts: the Preparatory Department and the Secondary Department.
- Sibling is defined as "Children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school". DE definition of the Child of the family covers the following:
 - 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; or,
 - a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual.
- The random selection process referred to in criterion 2.7 above is carried out by means of a computer program which, for each applicant, generates a random number. The result, for any given applicant, is not affected by the details of any other applicant. Applicants with the lowest random number will be given places up to the number of places available. The operation of the process will be independently monitored by a Vice Principal not involved in the Admissions process.

6. Parents can obtain information about the educational attainment of their child by contacting or writing to the Primary School Principal. Parents are entitled as of right to such information. In the unlikely event that this information is not forthcoming further advice can be obtained from the Information Commissioner's Office. A link to this advice can be found in the Admissions section of the College website.
7. The parents of pupils who wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, must complete the online Transfer Application process, in advance of the Transfer Office deadline of 9 March 2023, no later than 4 pm, beyond which any new/additional preferences received by the Transfer Office will not be processed until after 20 May 2023.
8. Anyone requiring further information about the Admissions Criteria or the application of the Admissions Criteria should contact the Principal or Admissions Officer of the College.

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

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2020/21	242	369	244*
2021/22	240	599	240
2022/23	240	420	240

*** One application upheld on Appeal and one application upheld by Exceptional Circumstances Body**

Criteria for Admission to Forms 2 – L6

The criteria for admitting pupils to places in Forms 2 to Lower Sixth have been approved by the Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast. The application of the criteria is delegated to an Admissions Panel consisting of the Principal, the Vice Principal (Pastoral), Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Admissions Officer. Consideration will be given to any medical or other problem that may have temporarily affected a student's academic performance. This needs to be supported by appropriate documentary evidence. A pupil will be admitted only where their admission will not prejudice the efficient use of resources.

Entry to Forms 2 to 4

The decision of the Admissions Panel will be based on the following evidence of academic ability, if available:

1. The two most recent school reports and / or;
2. An assessment set by the College;
3. Any other appropriate evidence of academic ability and/or potential.

Please note that only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family move necessitating a change of school) will new pupils be admitted to Form 5.

Entry to Sixth Form

The academic requirements for entry into Sixth Form are as follows:

1. A minimum of 6 GCSE subjects at Grade 'C' or above (all taken by the end of Form 5)
2. Students are expected to take three subjects in Sixth Form. This means that for the majority of students, entry to Lower Sixth will require them to have achieved a minimum of 3 B Grades and 3 C Grades at GCSE including English Language and Mathematics.

3. Grade 'B' or above in each of the subjects to be taken at A Level or equivalent unless otherwise stated in this booklet. If the A Level subject is not available at GCSE then a Grade B or above in a related subject will be accepted. (A related subject is a subject taken at GCSE which requires comparable skills to a proposed A Level subject).
4. Students may request to take a 4th subject if they:
 - Intend to apply for a university course that requires 4 A Levels or
 - Intend to study Medicine, Veterinary Studies or Dentistry
 - Are studying Mathematics and Further Mathematics at A Level or
 - Have another compelling reason to study an additional subject.

It is anticipated that all students will progress to Upper Sixth. However, if a student is significantly underachieving in the Lower Sixth Year then a meeting will be arranged with Head of Sixth Form and/or the Vice- Principal Curriculum to discuss and identify alternative pathways of progression.

Pupils coming from an education system which does not use GCSE / IGCSE will have to provide evidence of having achieved at an equivalent standard. They may also have to complete entrance assessments set by the College.

Should the number of applicants mean that school's enrolment number would be exceeded if they were all admitted to the Sixth Form then students will be selected using the following criteria which are presented here in order of priority:

1. Those students who were students of Methodist College in Form 5 and who meet the above entry criteria.
2. Those students of Methodist College in Form L6, who need to repeat the year due to significant pastoral or medical issues.
3. In rank cumulative GCSE score order, those students from other Post Primary schools who have completed an application form by the date of formal application and who meet the above entry criteria and are able to be coursed subject to availability, until the school's enrolment number is reached.