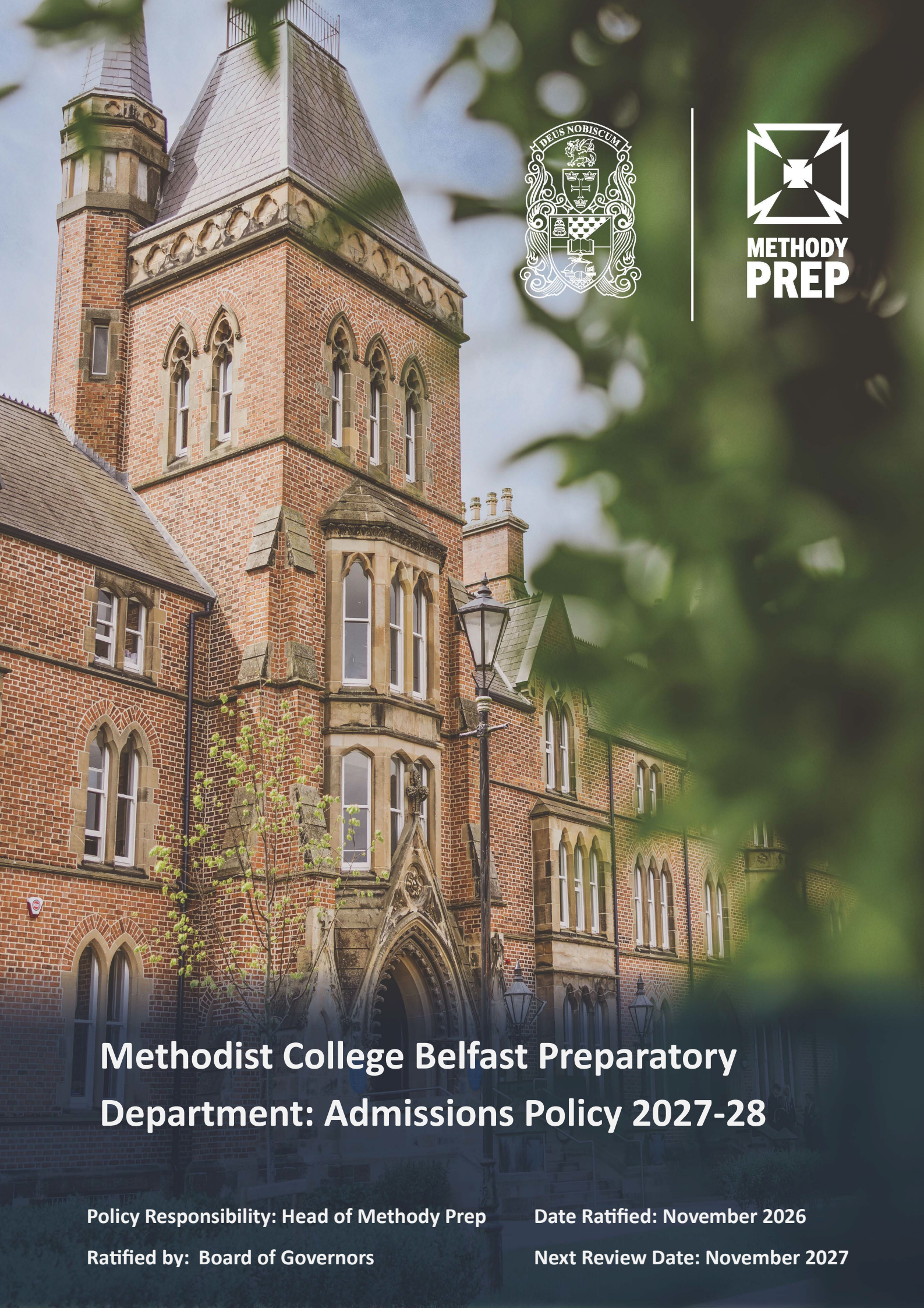

Methodist College Belfast Preparatory Department: Admissions Policy 2027-28

Policy Responsibility: Head of Methody Prep

Ratified by: Board of Governors

Date Ratified: November 2026

Next Review Date: November 2027

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Admissions to Pre-Prep

Admissions to Pre-Prep for September 2027 will be subject to the following:

Admissions Number

The Admissions Number for Pre-Prep is 16.

An application form must be completed for each applicant to Pre-Prep by Friday 18 December 2026 at 12 noon via the College's website.

Applications will be accepted for children for their final Pre-Prep year if they were born between 2 July 2023 and 1 July 2024 (inclusive). When completing the application form, please be cognisant of the notes included as Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Criteria for Admission to Pre-Prep

If the number of applications by the closing date is less than the Admissions Number, then all children will be accepted into Pre-Prep. Emails confirming acceptance will be sent to parents by Wednesday 6 January 2027.

If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number, then the College will apply the entrance criteria to all applications and emails confirming the outcome will be sent to parents by Wednesday 6 January 2027. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email and placed on the waiting list.

If Pre-Prep is oversubscribed by the closing date of applications, the following entrance criteria will apply, in the order stated below:

1. A child who is the son or daughter of a Methodist Minister.
2. A child who attends Methody Pre-Prep as a Pre-Pre-Prep age child, as notified at time of application.
3. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled at Methody Prep, names to be provided at time of application.
4. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled in the Secondary Department, names to be provided at time of application.
5. A child of a member of current staff of the College on Friday 18 December 2026, name to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
6. A child whose parent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
7. A child whose grandparent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
8. Applicants to whom criteria 1-7 do not apply.

In the event of a tie a random computer selection will be used to determine the accepted applicant(s).

All unsuccessful applicants will have their names placed on a waiting list.

In the event of a place(s) becoming available the criteria above remain applicable and will be applied to all applicants on the waiting list at the time of the place becoming available.

If the number of applications is less than the Admissions Number on 5 June 2027 applications will be considered for children who were born between 2 July 2024 and 1 September 2024, these applications will be considered in order of date of birth of the child from oldest to youngest.

Admissions to Prep 1

Admissions to Prep 1 for September 2027 will be subject to the following:

Admissions Number

The Admissions Number for Prep 1 is 26, except in exceptional circumstances in which case the Board of Governors has the authority to increase the Admissions Number.

Application Procedure

An application form must be completed for each applicant to Prep 1 via the College's website by Friday 18 December 2026 at 12 noon. When completing the application form, please be cognisant of the notes included as Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Criteria for Admission to Prep 1

If the number of applications by the closing date is less than the Admissions Number, then all children will be accepted into Prep 1. Emails confirming acceptance will be sent to parents by Wednesday 6 January 2027.

If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number, then the College will apply the entrance criteria to all applications and emails confirming the outcome will be sent to parents by Wednesday 6 January 2027. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email and placed on the waiting list.

If Prep 1 is oversubscribed by the closing date of applications, the following entrance criteria will apply, in the order stated below:

1. A child who is the son or daughter of a Methodist Minister.
2. A child who attends Methody Pre-Prep.
3. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled at Methody Prep, names to be provided at time of application.
4. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled in the Secondary Department, names to be provided at time of application.
5. A child of a member of current staff of the College on Friday 18 December 2026, name to be provided at time of application). Further verification may be requested.
6. A child whose parent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
7. A child whose grandparent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
8. Applicants to whom criteria 1-7 do not apply.

In the event of a tie a random computer selection will be used to determine the accepted applicant(s).

All unsuccessful applicants will have their names placed on a waiting list.

In the event of a place(s) becoming available the criteria above remain applicable and will be applied to all applicants on the waiting list at the time of the place becoming available.

Admissions to Prep 2 – Prep 7

The Admissions Number for Prep 2-7 for 2027 onwards is 24, except in exceptional circumstances in which case the Board of Governors has the authority to increase the Admissions Number.

An application form must be completed for each applicant to Prep 2 to Prep 7 via the College's website. When completing the application form, please be cognisant of the notes included as Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Applications during the year for immediate entry to Prep 2 to Prep 7 – applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and the criteria below will be applied should a place become available.

Applications for September 2027 will be considered and places offered by 31 March 2026. If the number of applications is greater than the place(s) available, the following criteria will apply, in the order stated below.

1. A child who is the son or daughter of a Methodist Minister.
2. A child who attended Methody Pre-Prep.
3. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled at Methody Prep, names to be provided at time of application.
4. A child who has a sibling currently enrolled in the Secondary Department, names to be provided at time of application.
5. A child of a member of current staff of the College on Friday 18 December 2026, name to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
6. A child whose parent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
7. A child whose grandparent(s) attended the College, names and dates of attendance to be provided at time of application. Further verification may be requested.
8. A child who is a currently resides in Northern Ireland. Further verification may be requested.

In the event of a tie applications will be taken in order of application date. All unsuccessful applicants will have their names placed on a waiting list.

In the event of a place(s) becoming available the criteria above remain applicable and will be applied to all applicants on the waiting list at the time of the place becoming available.

Appendix 1: Notes

1. A Methodist Minister must be in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland and provide verification from the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

2. A sibling is defined as “Children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school”.

3. The DE definition of the Child of the family covers the following:
    a. a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership;
    b. a child born to a co-habiting couple;
    c. a child born to a single parent;
    d. a child of either / any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship;
    e. 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;
    f. a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a “child of the family”;
    g. an adopted or fostered child; or,
    h. a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual.

4. The College has two constituent parts, a Secondary Department and Methody Prep (including Pre Prep).

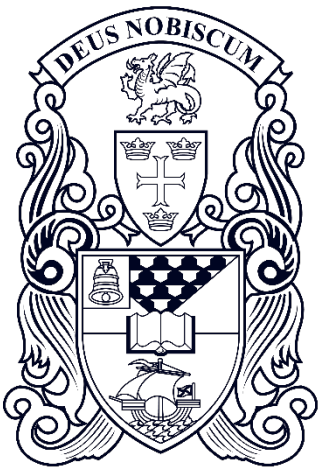
5. A parent is defined as:
    a. All biological parents;
    b. Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person (which could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, a guardian or other relative); or,
    c. Any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

6. The random selection process 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 member of staff not involved in the Admissions process. Any additional applications after the closing date will be placed on the waiting list in order of criteria.

7. The child’s Birth Certificate and proof of address must be uploaded with the Application Form. Proof of address – any TWO of the following recent (within the past 3 months) documents with sensitive information redacted: Bank/Building Society Statement; Utility Bill (e.g. Electricity, Gas, TV Licence, Landline 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.

8. The Board of Governors notes that Circular 2024/16 “Open Enrolment in Primary Schools” does not apply to admissions to Preparatory Departments of Grammar Schools.



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