

Admissions Criteria for Years 9 – 12

1. The School will offer such places as it has available to those pupils who seem to be most suitably qualified on application of the criteria listed in paragraph 2.

The appropriate number of possible admissions to the school will be determined so that the total enrolment figure does not exceed the number allowed by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Places will only be offered to pupils in a particular year group where to do so would not be prejudicial to the efficient use of resources.

2. Applications for entry to Years 9 – 12 will be considered with respect to the following criteria which are listed in order of decreasing importance. The application must be accompanied by a completed copy of Form DHS 9/12 APP.

(i) Academic record

The application must be accompanied by standardized test scores and academic information such as results in external tests, school reports, marks with year averages (in year positions with total number in year group), in internal examinations etc which would indicate that the pupil would be likely to be able to deal successfully with the courses of study provided by the school and would enable the Board of Governors to make a judgement on the pupil's academic ability.

(ii) Personal Record

Evidence, such as a Headteacher's letter, indicating the pupil's record in terms of attendance, punctuality, behaviour etc must accompany the application.

(iii) Appropriateness of the curriculum available

It is expected that in order to ensure efficient use of resources pupils entering Down High School will take on a full programme of courses and lessons. The Board of Governors will also take into account how well any external examination courses being taken by a pupil match those that are offered within the Down High School timetable.

(iv) Particular talents or aptitudes

The Board of Governors will take into account any special talents, aptitudes or achievements of the applicant especially if these make it more likely that the pupil would make a significant contribution to the school's extracurricular activities. Evidence of any such talents or aptitudes must accompany the application.

(v) Special Circumstances

The school will take into account any special circumstances including medical, social and personal issues which are brought to its attention. Where appropriate, documentary evidence must accompany the application.

(vi) Existing links

The Board of Governors will take into account any link with the school and in particular whether the pupil has a brother or sister in attendance at the school.

3. *Application of Criteria*

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available in light of the restrictions outlined in paragraph 1 then all applications for entry into Years 9 – 12 will be considered with respect to the criteria outlined in paragraph 2. The Board of Governors will determine for each applicant a numerical total which will determine the applicant's position on the reserve list which will be arranged in order of decreasing numerical total. Places will normally be assigned, following a meeting with the Principal, on the basis of this order, provided this would not be contrary to the restrictions outlined in paragraph 1.

The usual deadline for applications for admission to Year 9 – 12 at the start of the following academic year is the end of April. Applications received by this deadline will be considered by the Board of Governors during May. Depending on the number of pupils in individual year groups it may be possible for the Board of Governors to make a definite offer of places immediately after the May meeting in some cases. Nevertheless it will not be possible to finalise the number of pupils to be admitted until after the results in external examinations and consequent decisions for the pupils in years 12 and 13 are known, i.e. until the start of the academic year. The Board of Governors reserves the right to consider any application received after the end of April.

Applicants to Years 9 – 12 who are not admitted will remain on the reserve list for the duration of the following academic year unless a request for the application to be withdrawn is received.

In practice it may take the first few weeks in September for all decisions relating to entry at the start of the academic year to be finalised. For the remainder of the academic year the reserve list will be maintained and will also contain pupils whose applications were received after the end of April as well as those received during the course of the following academic year. If a place becomes available during the course of the following academic year due to a pupil leaving the school, then a place will be offered to the applicant with the highest numerical total on the reserve list provided this is not contrary to the restrictions outlined in Paragraph 1.

In the event of two pupils having identical numerical totals, the following tie-breaker will be used. Pupils will be selected for admission on the basis of the initial letter of their surname (as entered on their Birth Certificate) in the order set out below:

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

This order was determined by a randomised selection of the letters of the alphabet. 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 (as entered on their Birth Certificate) will be used.

4. Parents and guardians should note that it is their responsibility to ensure that all relevant information and evidence that would be needed for the Board of Governors to adequately consider the application is attached to the application form. A completed copy of Form DHS 9/12APP should also be attached to the application form. The school reserves the right to seek additional information, e.g. from the child's current and previous schools.

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify any of the information provided. Such evidence would be requested if and when the offer of a place is made. It is important that all parents and guardians understand that the provision of false or incorrect information, or the failure to provide information or evidence thereof within the specified deadline, will result in the withdrawal of the place at the school.