

DOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Mount Crescent

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Principal: Mrs M Perry BATH PGCE PGDip NPQH

Chairperson Board of Governors: Mrs Avril Heenan LLB, MResTh

CONTROLLED GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Age Range: 11-18

Admissions Number: 128

Enrolment Number: 934

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Visit the school website <http://www.downhighschool.org.uk/> to view interactive videos showcasing life at Down High School and to explore our prospectus. Down High is an academically selective grammar school, which meets the needs of academically able young people who thrive in a fast-paced learning environment.

TO PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) NAMING DOWN HIGH SCHOOL AS A PREFERENCE ON YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE TRANSFER APPLICATION.

The Board of Governors of Down High remains firmly committed to academic selection as a method of entry to the School. In this unprecedented year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of the Common Entrance Assessment administered by the Association of Quality Education (AQE), the alternative Admissions Criteria outlined below have been adopted.

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

The Board of Governors, with the assistance of the Principal, draws up the Admissions Criteria and applies them.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

The Board of Governors has determined that preference will be given to pupils who are resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the School over pupils who are not so resident.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or attached to the on-line Transfer Application. Parents 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 attached to it.

It is parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that any information considered relevant to the criteria is included in the online Transfer Application.

If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number, the following criterion will apply:-

1. Preference will be given to those pupils who were registered to sit the AQE CEA at Midnight on 20 November 2020 or granted Special Provision (by the Board of Governors) in accordance with the arrangements for Special Provision set out below.

If, following the application of the above criterion, it is not possible to identify for admission the exact number of children in line with the admissions number, pupils enrolled in the School's Preparatory Department as at 1st September 2014 will be admitted and the following sub-criteria will then be applied in the stated order.

- (a) pupils with a sibling* who attends or previously attended Down High School (full names and dates of attendance to be supplied)

OR

pupils who currently attend a Down High School 'feeder'**** primary school who are the eldest** child of the family*** (including only child). Where applicable, twins (or other multiples) will be treated as joint eldest;

- (b) pupils who currently attend a Down High School 'feeder'**** primary school and are;
 - i.) the eldest girl or eldest boy of the family*** **OR**
 - ii.) are the first child of the family*** to transfer to a Grammar School;
- (c) pupils who currently attend a Down High School 'feeder'**** primary school;

In the event of over-subscription after any of the above sub-criteria being applied, the tie-breaker will be used only with respect to the group of pupils who became eligible by falling into sub-criterion (a) or sub-criterion (b) or sub-criterion (c). **Priority will be given in each sub-criterion to pupils who have named Down High School as their first preference on the Transfer Application.**

In the event that there are places available after sub-criterion (a) or sub-criterion (b) or sub-criterion (c) have been applied to pupils who have named Down High School as their first preference school, sub-criteria (a) and (b) and (c), in that order, will be applied to pupils who name Down High School as second preference on the Transfer Application.

In the event that there are places available after sub-criterion (a) or sub-criterion (b) or sub-criterion (c) have been applied to pupils who have named Down High School as their second preference school, sub-criteria (a) and (b) and (c), in that order, will be applied to pupils who name Down High School as third preference on the Transfer Application.

In the event of over-subscription after any of the above sub-criteria being applied, the tie-breaker will be used only with respect to the group of pupils who became eligible by falling into sub-criterion (a) or sub-criterion (b) or sub-criterion (c).

In the event that there are places remaining, the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

- (d) pupils who do not currently attend a Down High School 'feeder'**** primary school and who have named Down High School as a first preference;
- (e) pupils who do not currently attend a Down High School 'feeder'**** primary school and who name Down High School on the Transfer Application.

In the event of over-subscription after sub-criteria (d) or (e) being applied, the tie-breaker will be used only with respect to the group of pupils who became eligible by falling into that sub-criterion.

For the purpose of the sub-criteria sibling*, eldest** child of the family*** will be interpreted in accordance with DE Circular 2016/15, Annex 2 paragraphs 2-5 of The Procedure for Transfer from Primary to Post Primary Education issued by DE ie:

***Sibling:** applicants qualify for the sibling criterion according to whether or not they have another 'child of the family' already attending the school in question.

****Eldest:** applicants qualify for the eldest criterion if they are the first child of the family eligible to apply for a post primary mainstream school.

*****Child of the family:** defined in relation to the parties to a marriage or parties living together in the same household, means: a child of both of them; and any other child who has been treated by both of those parties as a "child of their family". The Department of Education has been advised that this definition of a child of the family covers: a child born to a married couple; a child born to a co-habiting couple; a child of either of those people by a previous marriage or relationship; a child living with the same-sex partners whether there is a civil partnership under the Civil Partnership Act 2004 or not; an adopted or fostered child; a situation where, for example, an orphaned cousin is being brought up with the family.

******Down High School 'feeder' primary schools:**

For the purpose of the sub-criteria, a Down High School 'feeder' primary school will be defined as a primary school from which more than one pupil progressed to Year 8 in Down High School in the last three years. The following list names Down High School 'feeder' primary schools.

Academy Primary, Saintfield	Downpatrick Primary	St Brigid's Primary, Downpatrick
Alexander Dickson Primary	Drumlins Integrated Primary	St Colmcille's Primary, Downpatrick
All Children's Integrated, Newcastle	Glasswater Primary	St Joseph's Primary, Carnacaville
Anahilt Primary	Holy Family, Teconnaught	St Joseph's Primary, Strangford
Annalong Primary	Killinchy Primary	St Joseph's Primary, Tyrella
Ballynahinch Primary	Killyleagh Integrated Primary	St Malachy's Primary, Strangford
Carr Primary	Kirkistown Primary	St Mary's Primary, Newcastle
Carrickmannon Primary	Millennium Integrated Primary	St Macartan's Primary, Loughinisland
Carryduff Primary	Moneyrea Primary	St Patrick's Primary, Ballynahinch
Cedar Integrated	Newcastle Primary	St Patrick's Primary, Legamaddy
Cumran Primary	Portaferry Integrated Primary	St Patrick's Primary, Saul
Derryboy Primary	Spa Primary	

2. Tie-breaker

In the event that a tie-breaker is required following application of a sub-criterion where the number of pupils exceeds the exact Admissions Number, the final number of available places will be allocated to the cohort of pupils to whom only the last sub-criterion applied.

The following tiebreaker criteria will be applied in the stated order, to distinguish between pupils tied for the final place(s) on the basis that they are an identified group through the final applied sub-criteria.

- (i) Pupils will be ranked on the basis of the initial letter of their surname (as entered on their Birth Certificate) in the order set out. 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.
- (ii) A number will be assigned to each pupil with the lowest number being allocated to the first child on the alphabetical list working down to the last name alphabetically. This number range will be entered into a Casio fx-83GT PLUS calculator. The function "RanInt" will be used to generate a list of the numbers entered. The remaining available places will be offered to pupils in the order that their number is generated by the calculator.

Important Note to Parents/Guardians

- Parents are asked to include, on the on-line Transfer Application, the AQE Candidate Number with either the AQE Registration Letter or the AQE Examination Card attached as evidence.
- Parents are asked to include on the Transfer Application the name of the child as entered on his or her Birth Certificate in order to facilitate the use of the tie-breaker set out above.
- Parents/Guardians are strongly advised to indicate on the Transfer Application which of the above sub-criteria apply and if more than one sub-criterion applies **all** relevant sub-criteria should be indicated.
- If a pupil meets sub-criterion (a) then parents/guardians are asked to include the name and current year group/dates of attendance of the sibling on the Transfer Application **or** independent written confirmation (for example a letter from the Primary School Principal) to confirm that the child is the eldest child of the family to transfer for a post-primary mainstream school.
- If a pupil meets sub-criterion (b) then parents/guardians are asked to include independent written confirmation (for example a letter from the Primary School Principal) to confirm that the child is the eldest girl or boy of the family **or** the first child of the family to transfer to a Grammar School.

It is for parents/guardians to present all such material as they consider will assist the school in applying the admissions criteria. All such material should be attached to the Transfer Application. The information provided will be verified by the school.

Special Provision

Special Provision will only apply to children who have not entered for the AQE CEA because they took up residence in Northern Ireland after 9 October 2020 or received more than half of their primary education outside Northern Ireland.

Parents/guardians who wish to apply to the School under Special Provision should complete Form SP20, obtainable from the School, stating the precise reason why they believe the child is eligible for consideration under Special Provision and upload it with appropriate evidence with the Transfer Application. Parents/Guardians who are applying for Special Provision must do so by 16 March 2021. Using the information provided, the Board of Governors will determine whether Special Provision applies. If it does, those children who the Board of Governors considers to be eligible will be included under Criterion 1 of the Admissions Criteria.

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 Transfer Application/Application Form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline specified by the Board of Governors, 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 Lists

Down High School operates a waiting lists policy. For Year 8, all applications for admission to Year 8 that were initially refused will be automatically placed on the Year 8 waiting list. New applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will also be added to the Year 8 waiting list. This waiting list will be in place until the end of the following academic year, that is, the end of Year 8. Please contact the school if you wish your child's name to be removed from the Year 8 waiting list.

Should a vacancy arise after the day on which pupils are informed of their primary school place, the procedure outlined in the Admissions Criteria for entry to Year 8 will be followed. The School will contact you if your child gains a place in the School by this method.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8

Year	Admissions No.	Total Applications i.e. All preferences	Total Admissions
2018/19	128	182	128
2019/20	128	177	139*
2020/21	128	155	128

**Figure includes temporary variation to admissions number.*

Admission Criteria for Entry to 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 (blank copy available on request from the School Principal's PA).

Academic record

The application must be accompanied by standardised 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.

Personal Record

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

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.

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.

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.

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, on the basis of this order, provided this would not be contrary to the restrictions outlined in paragraph 1.

The deadline for applications for admission to Years 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 Mc Y T N I B X W D M V H F Z L G R Q O K Mac 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 9/12 (blank copy available on request from the School Principal's PA) 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 information on any applicant's Transfer Application/Application Form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline specified by the Board of Governors, 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.