

West Bromwich Collegiate Academy Admissions Policy for 2021-22

Introductory statement

West Bromwich Collegiate Academy (WBCA) is a 11-16 Secondary School supported by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust and established via the Free School Presumption programme. It aims to provide a high-quality education for local children and prepare them for further education or employment in a safe and welcoming environment.

Our inclusive admissions process will at all times be open, transparent and fair, and will meet the requirements of the national Schools Admissions Code, the Appeals Code and Admissions legislation.

Our vision & values

Our mission at WBCA is to develop a generation of learners who aim higher, see further and are concerned for all. They will learn in a way that encourages both independence and collaboration in a technology-rich environment to enable them to succeed in an ever-changing world. We have three core beliefs:

- We believe that every pupil will have access to a whole education underpinned by academic rigour.
- We believe that every pupil should be equipped for today, tomorrow and their future lives, through learning cutting-edge skills and the ability to discover the world and beyond.
- We believe that every pupil should be safe, happy, ambitious for themselves and respectful of all.

All of this is underpinned by a set of strong values that are central to the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust Family of schools. They are: **Innovate, Inspire and Collaborate**

Admission number(s)

The school has an admission number of 150 pupils for entry in year 7 from September 2021.

The school will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applicants than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year group are received, the Academy Trust will offer places at the school to all those who have applied.

In accordance with the law, children with Education Health and Care Plans will be admitted to the school where the Local Authority has specifically named WBCA as the most appropriate placement.

Application process

As part of the national co-ordinated admissions arrangements across all Admissions Authorities, **parents MUST complete an online registration form provided by their Local Authority by 31 October 2020**. In completing this form WBCA must be chosen as one of the 6 preferences on the Local Authority registration form.

Preference forms received after the closing date will be considered where the Local Authority identifies that exceptional circumstances apply.

Preference forms received after the places have been offered will be kept on file and form the basis of the 'Applications to Transfer to Year 7'. Those who are offered a place at the Academy will be informed on 1 March 2021 by the home Local Authority.

Those not offered admission will be informed on 1 March 2021 and will be offered a place at an alternative school by the home Local Authority.

Banding

WBCA will use norm referenced banding to achieve an intake representative of the ability profile of applicants. This is a method of achieving an intake which reflects the range of abilities of the children applying to a particular school. It is not a way of selecting children by high academic ability or aptitude for a particular subject. WBCA uses fair banding as an oversubscription criterion; all children applying for a place are distributed into one of five equal sized ability bands based on their performance in an NFER non-verbal reasoning test. Places are then allocated within each band using the oversubscription criteria detailed below. Within bands, priority is not given according to performance in the test. The Local Authority will allocate places and will do so according to the Code of Practice.

The assessment tests will be held at the WBCA site during December 2020 (all children who have completed an application form will be invited for testing). A 'mop-up' session will be offered to students who for any reason could not attend their first date. Students not sitting the test at all will be considered for a place but only after all those who did attend testing have been considered.

Oversubscription criteria

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils an Education & Health and Care Plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special

guardianship order including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.¹

2. Priority will next be given to the siblings of pupils attending the school at the time of admission. Sibling is defined in these arrangements as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.
3. Priority will next be given to children living closest to the school. Distance is measured in a straight line from the child's home to the school's main entrance.²
Where parental responsibilities are equally shared, the home or residential address will be considered to be with the parent/carer with whom the child spends the majority of the school week (Sunday to Thursday night) and which is registered with their GP.

Tie-break

'If in categories 2-3 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, the child living closest to the school will be given priority for admission. Distance is measured from the child's home to the main entrance of the school in a straight line.

Random allocation undertaken by the local authority will be used as a tie-break in categories 2-3 above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between a child's home and the academy/free school is equidistant in any two or more cases.'

Random allocation will not be applied to multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family tied for the final place. We will admit them all, as permitted by the infant class size rules and exceed our PAN.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. To do so parents should include a request with their application, specifying why admission out of normal year group is being requested.

When such a request is made, the academy trust will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the headteacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent.

¹ A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions as defined by section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making the application for a school place

² Measured from the Ordnance Survey address point for the property. In all cases, should the number of applicants exceed the number of places available, places will be allocated on the basis of distance between home and school, as measured in a straight line from home to the main entrance of the school building with priority being given to those living closest to the school.

Waiting lists

If the Academy is oversubscribed and children have been refused admission because other applicants have a higher priority for admission under the published admission criteria, then those applicants who are unsuccessful will automatically be placed on the waiting list. This will be maintained by the Local Authority. Children placed on the waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the Academy's published admissions criteria. For Sandwell schools, waiting lists will normally operate until the end of the Autumn Term.

In year applications

All in year admissions are managed by Sandwell Local Authority. Applications for places at WBCA should be made to the Sandwell Local Authority. If several requests for places in the same year are received at the same time, places will be offered according to the criteria set out below:

1. Children with an Education Health and Care Plan where WBCA is specifically named.
2. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.³
3. Siblings (brother and sister at the Academy at the time of admission). Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.
4. Thereafter, on the basis of distance between their home address and the main entrance to the Academy.

NB: Children with a Education & Health Care Plan (previously known as Statement of Educational Needs), naming a particular school will be admitted before all other applicants.

Appeals

The Governing Body of WBCA has contracted the appeals function to Sandwell Local Authority (LA).

If you are unhappy with the school allocated to you (even if it was your first preference) and you wish to appeal, contact the LA's Admission and Appeals Service for an appeal form.

³ A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions as defined by section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making the application for a school place

Before deciding to appeal, you may wish to contact the Advisory Centre for Education (0808 800 5793) who will provide you with free, impartial advice.

If you choose to exercise your right of appeal, arrangements will be made for you to attend an appeal hearing. The Appeals Panel is independent of the LA and WBCA and is arranged by Democratic Services of the Council. The Panel will consist of 3 or 5 members. There will also be someone representing WBCA (this will be a LA officer) and a clerk from Democratic Services in attendance. At the meeting, you will be invited to say why you would like your child to go to WBCA rather than the one offered. The LA officer will explain why a place at WBCA has been refused.

You cannot appeal for WBCA if you did not list it on your common application form. The LA recommends that you accept the school that has been offered to you even if you decide to appeal for WBCA. By accepting the school offered, you will guarantee a school place for your child. If you refuse the place, you are likely to be reducing the options which may be available to you. Accepting the place will have no bearing on the outcome of your appeal.

Appeal hearings will normally be held within 40 school days of the deadline for submitting an appeal i.e during the late Spring and early Summer Terms. You will be given 10 days' notice of an appeal hearing date and time. Appeals for heavily oversubscribed schools can last for up to two weeks. You will be notified of the decision no later than five school days after the last hearing unless there is good reason why the decision has been delayed.

The decision of the Panel is binding on parents, the LA and schools. The Council, Councillors and even Members of Parliament are unable to change its decision. If you think that the appeal process has been conducted unfairly you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman does not have the power to change the decision of the Panel.

All arrangements for allocation of school places and for appeals will be in line with the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education.

Notes:

Home address:

The home address is where a child normally lives. Where a child lives with parents with shared parental responsibility, each for part of a week, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents stating the pattern of residence. If a child's residence is split equally between both parents, then parents will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. If no joint declaration is received where the residence is split equally by the closing date for applications, the home address will be taken as the address where the child is registered with the doctor. If the residence is not split equally between both parents then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week.

Sibling:

'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, a half brother or sister, a legally adopted brother or sister or half-brother or sister, a step brother or sister or other child living in the same household as part of the same family who, in any of these cases, will be living at the same address at the date of their application for a place.