



Ashfield Girls' High School



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Admission and Waiting List Policy

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Executive Summary

The Board of Governors take pride in ensuring that Ashfield Girls' High School provides a caring educational experience that focuses on learning for pupils, who select Ashfield Girls' High School as their preferred choice of post-primary school. It is with regret that we are not able to provide provision for all pupils who wish to enrol in Ashfield Girls' High School. The oversubscription in all year groups has resulted in the need to outline the admissions and waiting list procedures in the Admissions and Waiting List Policy.

The Admissions and Waiting List Policy provides a point of reference document for all stakeholders to ensure that places are allocated by the Admissions Team in accordance with Department of Education Policy and in a fair and transparent manner.

The Admissions and Waiting List Policy outlines the procedures for admission, the waiting list procedures and mechanisms to challenge the decision not to admit.

As a school, we do not want any pupil to leave and while we accept that on occasion a place will become available due to house moves or relocations, this is not a regular occurrence. The Admissions Team will review any available places as indicated on the schedule of meetings and applicants will be notified regarding the offer of a place.



Section A – Aims of the Policy

The aim of the Admissions Policy is to have a clear and concise point of reference document for all stakeholders in relation to the admission of pupils into Ashfield Girls' High School.



Section B – Legislative Context, Guidance and Linked Policies

The Department of Education operate an open enrolment policy. Under the open enrolment arrangements, (the Education (NI) Order 1997), there is a statutory requirement that all schools must admit pupils up to their approved admissions number and within their overall enrolment number. These numbers are determined by the Department of Education, in consultation with the Education Authority. Changes to admissions numbers and overall enrolment numbers are also agreed in consultation with the Board of Governors and are based on the capacity of the school building, facilities and staffing levels. Parents and carers are able to express a preference for the school in which they wish their child to attend, however the ability to admit a pupil is constrained by the approved admissions number and overall enrolment number.

Under Department of Education guidelines, all schools must publish the admissions criteria that will be used to select a pupil if there are more applications than places. Ashfield Girls' High School publishes the admission criteria for admission in Year 8 on the EA Admissions Portal and on the school website. The admission criteria for Year 9-12 and the separate admissions criteria for Sixth Form are also published on the school website.

Circular 1996/24 (amended) provides guidance about and explains the procedures for the approval of pupils transferring from Primary to Post-Primary education, either a year early (underage pupils) or a year later (overage pupils) than they would normally be required to transfer.

Circular 2012/10- Waiting List Guidance

Circular 2016/09 – Temporary Variation Requests

Circular 2016/11 – Maximum Class Sizes

Circular 2016/15 - should be read in conjunction with Circular 2013/24, which advises principals and Boards of Governors on the duty to verify information contained within applications for admission.

Circular 2022/15 - Procedure for Transfer from Primary to Post-Primary Education.



Section C – Policy and Procedures

Admission into Year 8

Ashfield Girls' High School has an approved admissions number of 130 pupils in Year 8. This number does not include those pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (Stage 3 of the Code of Practice). There is a separate process, managed by the Education Authority, for the admission of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Primary 7 into Year 8 transfer is managed by the Education Authority. Parents and carers of pupils in Primary 7 who wish to apply for their daughter to attend Ashfield Girls' High School in Year 8 do so independently through the online Education Authority Portal. The Education Authority Portal also publishes the agreed Admissions Criteria for admission. The Senior Clerical Officer manages this process in relation to the processing of applications received for Ashfield Girls' High School, at all stages on behalf of the Board of Governors and in consultation with the Principal.

The Education Authority will provide communication regarding the allocation of places, appeals and the exceptional circumstances body applications to all applications processed on the Education Authority Portal.

If a pupil is granted a place in Ashfield Girls' High School, the parent / carer will receive communication from school advising on the arrangements for the Induction Programme. The pupil will be formally enrolled into Ashfield Girls' High School on their first day that they physically attend Ashfield Girls' High School. Their Common Transfer Form (CTF) will be subsequently requested from their previous primary school.

The published Admissions Criteria for admission into Year 8 can be found on the Education Authority website or the Ashfield Girls' High School website. A statement of oversubscription is also published on the Education Authority website at the same time as the release of the outcomes on the portal.

Waiting List in Year 8

Should a vacancy arise after decision letters are received by applicants in May, all applications for admission to Year 8 that were initially refused, new applications (using the school application form) 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 of the academic year of Year 8. The school will contact parents /carers if a place is granted from pupils on the waiting list.

Applicants who were initially unsuccessful in obtaining a place in Year 8 will have their name automatically added to the list. Parents / carers should contact the school if they wish their child's name to be removed from the waiting list.



Admission into Year 9 to Year 12

Admissions into Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 are managed entirely by the school. The admissions criteria are approved by the Board of Governors and are published on the school website.

Applications for admission to Years 9-12 should be made on the school application form, which is located on the school website.

The Admissions Team meet regularly, to review all new applications. An acknowledgement of receipt will be provided on receipt of any new application for admission into Years 9-12. Following the half-termly Admissions Team meeting, decisions on admission will be forward to each new applicant. Decisions on admissions for any available places in Year 9-12 will be made by the Admission Team based on the availability of spaces and will be in line with the overall enrolment number approved by the Department of Education. In addition, admissions to Year 11 and 12 will be made based on the availability of spaces in specific qualifications across the three Key Stage 4 Pathways.

Waiting Lists in Year 9 -12

Ashfield Girls' High School operates a separate waiting list in each year group (Year 9 to 12). While applications are received throughout the academic year across each year group there are key times throughout the academic year that applications will be considered and a decision made by the School Admission Team. This ensures that there is a planned schedule to processing applications and admissions and also manages the workload of all staff involved in the Admissions Team meetings and those required to support the induction process of any pupil to be newly admitted into Ashfield Girls' High School. The key times are outlined below;

- August
- Prior to the October half-term holiday
- Prior to the Christmas holiday
- Prior to the February half-term holiday
- Prior to the Easter holiday
- Prior to the Summer holiday

Applications received will be initially acknowledged and a decision letter will be provided in due course for each new application considered at the Admission Team meeting.

Admission into Year 13

The Board of Governors publish the admissions criteria for Year 13 admissions on the school website. The majority of admissions into Year 13 will normally occur on the Year 12 results day in August, however applications for admission are accepted up until the end of the second week in September.



Due to the intensity of Level 3 qualifications, pupils enrolled in Ashfield Girls' High School will have up to and not exceeding 14 days (2 weeks) to review specific qualification choices and adjust if possible. Adjustments may not be possible if specific qualifications have already reached their maximum number of pupils. Any adjustments to qualifications in Year 13 are made by the Vice Principal for Curriculum. The adjustments of qualifications to be studied cannot be considered after the initial 14 days (2 weeks) settling in period.

Due to the intensity of Level 3 qualifications, applications from pupils to join Year 13 will not be considered from the 1 October (of that academic year). Pupils joining Ashfield Girls' High School in Year 13 after the first two weeks of September, but before 1 October (of that academic year) will not have the opportunity to change qualifications.

Waiting List in Year 13

There is no waiting list in Year 13.

Admission into Year 14

Level 3 qualifications are two-year courses, there will be no admission of a pupil in Year 14.

Waiting List in Year 14

There is no waiting list in Year 14.

Specific Issue Statements

Review of the Admissions Criteria

The Board of Governors review the admissions criteria annually. The most recent change to the Year 8 admissions criteria was approved for admissions in September 2021/22. The most recent change to the Years 9 – 12 admissions criteria was approved for admission in September 2021/22. The Sixth Form admissions criteria will be reviewed in November 2023 for implementation for admissions in September 2024/25. The admissions criteria published on the school website in December will be up-to-date for the following academic year.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs under the Code of Practice

Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, under the Code of Practice, are considered by the Department of Education as supernummary, in terms of admissions or enrolment numbers. There is a separate admissions process managed by the Education Authority for Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, in that the parents / carers nominate a school on their statement. This nomination is then sent to the school to assess the ability to meet the needs of the pupil. The decision is then communicated to the parent / carer through the Education Authority.



Maximum Number of Pupils in a Practical Classroom

There are specific Department of Education guidelines related to the numbers of pupils and adults (teachers, technicians and classroom assistants that can be in a practical classroom at any one time). Therefore, along with the total enrolment number of a school and the individual admissions number of each year group, the Admissions Team also have to consider the number of pupils in practical classes to ensure that the number of persons in the practical classroom does not exceed the maximum permitted.

Meeting the Criteria for Sixth Form

The admissions criteria for Sixth Form is based on achieving an overall level of achievement in Level 2 qualifications. When students select a preferred qualification from the option choices available they must also meet the specific subject requirements in order to be able to choose that subject to study at Level 3.

Communication regarding position on the waiting list

While it is acknowledged that there may be potential frustration that a parent / carer may feel if their daughter is not admitted through the various admission procedures, the Senior Clerical Officer will not be able to provide regular updates on waiting list positions. As a school, we do not want any pupil to leave and while we accept that on occasion a place will become available due to house moves or relocations, this is not a regular occurrence. The Admissions Team will review any available places as indicated on the schedule of meetings and applicants will be notified regarding the offer of a place by the Senior Clerical Officer.

Challenge to the decision not to admit a pupil in Year 8

There are two mechanisms to challenge a decision not to admit a pupil in Year 8.

- Parental right of appeal to an independent admissions appeal tribunal where it is claimed by a parent that a school has not, or has not correctly, applied its admissions criteria. This process is managed by the Education Authority.
- Parental right to apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Body. This process is managed by the Department of Education.

Challenge to the decision not to admit a pupil in Year 9-12

There are three mechanisms to challenge a decision not to admit a pupil in Year 9-12.



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- Parental right of appeal against a school with places available that has refused admission to an application for a place in a year group other than Year 1 or Year 8. This process is managed by the Department of Education.
- Parental right of appeal to an independent admissions appeal tribunal where it is claimed by a parent that a school has not, or has not correctly, applied its admissions criteria. This process is managed by the Education Authority.
- Parental right to apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Body. This process is managed by the Department of Education.

Challenge to the decision not to admit a pupil in Year 13-14

Admissions will be decided upon based on the published criteria. If it is considered that the published criteria has not been applied accurately at the time of decision, a letter requesting the decision to be reviewed should be written to the Principal in line with the school Complaints Procedure Policy.



Section D – Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has strategic responsibility for deciding the admissions criteria that are to be applied to admit any pupil into Ashfield Girls' High School. The Board of Governors are also responsible for ratifying the Admissions and Waiting List Policy.

Principal

The Principal has operational responsibility of the implementation of the Admissions and Waiting List Policy. The Principal is also responsible for keeping abreast of new legislation and guidance that would impact the Admissions and Waiting List Policy and presenting any necessary amendments of the policy to the Board of Governors for re-ratification. The Principal leads the Admissions Team.

Admissions Team

The admission team is comprised of the Principal, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, the Vice Principal for Pastoral Care, the Senior Clerical Officer, the Learning Support Coordinator and relevant Heads of Progress.

Senior Clerical Officer – Pupil Services

The Senior Clerical Officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of admission in consultation with the Principal. The Senior Clerical Officer is part of the Admission Team.

Parent / Carer

Parents and carers are responsible for being aware of the admission criteria and the processes outlined in the Admissions and Waiting List Policy.

Education Authority

The Education Authority is responsible for managing the Year 8 admissions procedures through the online portal. The Education Authority are also responsible for managing appeals.

Department of Education

The Department of Education is responsible for approving admissions and overall enrolment numbers. The Department of Education are responsible for approving



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temporary variation of number requests from the school. The Department of Education are responsible for managing request for the Exceptional Circumstances Body.



Section E – Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation

As this policy is fully directed by Department of Education and the Education Authority Procedures therefore there has been no consultation. The Admissions and Waiting List Policy is communicated to all stakeholders or potential stakeholders through the school website. The Admissions and Waiting List Policy is initially ratified by the Board of Governors. The policy is monitored regularly by the Principal and will be adjusted in line with any change in legislation or guidance. Any changes will be presented to the Board of Governors for re-ratification.

Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



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