



The Blue Coat School

ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures was devised by the Headmaster, the Deputy Heads and the Admissions and Marketing Manager in consultation with colleagues in the school.

Date of Next Review: Summer 2020

ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. GENERAL

1.1

The Blue Coat School, Birmingham is a co-educational independent school for boys and girls, ages 2 to 11 years. There are approximately 600 pupils on roll, all of whom are day children. The School has strong traditions in music, drama, art and sport. There are many extra-curricular activities, all of which are important in developing a well-balanced, confident individual.

1.2

Deciding on the right school for your child is very important, and a personal visit is invaluable. The Headmaster and staff very much hope that you and your child will visit The Blue Coat School: to that end a number of Open Mornings are held throughout the year. These provide a stimulating introduction to the School. Details of the dates and arrangements are published on the School website (thebluecoatschool.com). Prospective parents and their children are very welcome at other times and visits can be arranged through the Admissions Registrar, Mrs Rachel Kearney, on 0121 410 6807 or by email to admissions@thebluecoatschool.com.

1.3

The Blue Coat School has regard to relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislation in respect of admissions and the admissions process including the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Children missing education (Statutory guidance for Local Authorities) (DfE) And Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018)*.

1.4

Admissions and attendance registers are kept electronically and these are backed up on a monthly basis.

2. THE ENTRY PROCEDURE

2.1

The Blue Coat School is an academically selective co-educational school. From the age of 5, selection is based upon the assessment process that is described in Section 7, and references from the prospective pupil's previous school or nursery. The selection process is designed to identify pupils who will be able to benefit from the balanced and well-rounded education provided by the School and who will make a positive contribution towards the life of the School.

2.2

The usual points of entry are at 2 years of age (into Buttons Nursery), at 3 years of age (into Transition), and at 7 years of age (into Year 3). Places for children at other ages are occasionally available. Details of the availability of places are available from the Admissions Registrar.

2.3

The School pays due regard to the Equality Act 2010 in its admissions procedures and reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in terms of admission. However, parents must inform the school if a prospective pupil has been diagnosed with any SEND in order that reasonable adjustments can be made.

3. APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

3.1

Parents should make an application for their child's admission to Buttons Nursery or Transition as early as possible after his or her birth. Waiting Lists develop quickly, and parents are therefore advised, if possible, to register their interest in a place before their child has reached the age of three months. Applications for places in other year groups should similarly be made as far in advance as possible. In order to register their interest in a place at The Blue Coat School, parents should complete and return the Application Form, together with a non-refundable fee of £100 and a copy of the child's Birth Certificate. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Blue Coat School Birmingham Limited'. This £100 fee is to cover the cost of

administering the registration procedure, including administration of the waiting lists. It should be noted that completing an Application Form does **not** of itself guarantee entry to the School.

3.2

The School will then respond in one of two ways:

1. By informing parents that, subject to a satisfactory outcome in the assessment process described below, their child's details will be entered into the Admissions database for the year in question.
2. By informing parents that their child has been placed on the Waiting List for the year in question. Should a place subsequently become vacant, and subject to a satisfactory outcome in the assessment process described below, a place will be offered to the next child on the Waiting List. Once all the places for the academic year in question have been accepted, the School will write to the parents of children still on the Waiting List, asking whether they wish their children to remain on the list.

3.3

Most siblings usually join The Blue Coat School. However, admission is not automatic, and there may be occasions where it is judged that a sibling is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment. That apart, siblings of children who are currently at the School are given priority for places at Buttons Nursery and Transition level **provided they are registered by the age of 3 months**.

3.4

Places are usually confirmed up to one year prior to the date of entry (Buttons Nursery or Transition) or following the successful undertaking of the appropriate assessment. Parents who wish to accept the offer of a place will be asked to sign an Acceptance Form signifying their acceptance of the Standard Terms and Conditions and any associated policies (the 'Parent Contract'), and to pay a £300 deposit (which amount may be reviewed periodically) by a stated date. The deposit will be returned by a credit (without interest) on the account when the pupil leaves the School. If the acceptance deposit has not been received by the stated date, the offer will be withdrawn and the pupil's name will be removed from the list.

3.5

Parents are advised that they should keep their child's current school informed of any intended move to The Blue Coat School, and must observe their regulations regarding the giving of notice. The Blue Coat School cannot accept anyone from another Independent School who has failed to meet their commitment to the previous school, in full, before joining the School.

3.6

Although every effort will be made to notify parents, the School reserves the right to change the Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures without notice at any time.

3.7

The School also reserves the right not to accept a child or to continue his or her education if, after appropriate tests and an interview, the Headmaster considers that the child will not benefit from attending or continuing at The Blue Coat School, or judges that the School does not have the appropriate staff and/or facilities to meet a child's particular needs (see below).

4. EQUAL TREATMENT

4.1

The School aims to encourage applications from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches the School community and is vital in preparing pupils for their life ahead.

4.2

The Blue Coat School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a child's race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background.

5. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

5.1

Although The Blue Coat School has Christian roots and a Christian ethos, pupils are not selected for entry on the basis of religious belief. However, parents should be aware that all pupils are expected to attend regular services in the School Chapel.

6. SPECIAL NEEDS

6.1

The Blue Coat School is an academically selective co-educational school and admission is subject to the Assessment Process set out in Section 7 below. Pupils with special educational needs are admitted, provided that the Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. Pupils with physical disabilities are admitted, provided that the site can accommodate them. Further details are set out in The Blue Coat School Policy for Equal Opportunities and The Blue Coat School Disability Discrimination Policy.

6.2

Parents of a child who has any disability or special educational needs must provide the School with full written details when applying for a place, or subsequently before accepting the offer of a place. The School needs this information so that, in the case of a child with particular needs, those needs can be assessed and parents can be consulted about the adjustments that can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the child's needs both during the admissions process and if an offer of a place is made, subject to 6.1 above.

6.3

Similarly, if a special educational need or a disability become apparent after an offer of a place has been accepted or after a child has started at the School, the School will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow their child to continue at the School, subject to 6.1 above.

7. THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

7.1 Buttons Nursery (ages 2-3)

7.1.1

Children are eligible for admission to Buttons Nursery in the September or January following their second birthday, subject to a place being available. All children are required to make an informal pre-admission visit to Buttons Nursery with their parents, after which, if it is felt that the child is physically, emotionally and socially ready to participate and progress, the offer of a place may be made. Places are offered only to those children who have a reserved place in Pre-Prep, and priority will be given to siblings of children already at the School *provided they have been registered by the age of 3 months* (see above). Children in Buttons Nursery may attend for 3, 4 or 5 mornings (8.30 am – 1.10 pm) or alternatively 3, 4 or 5 days (8.30 am – 3.15 pm) a week. Subject to the availability of places, children may also, if desired, attend Buttons Nursery Morning Care and Aftercare for an additional charge. Children must attend Buttons Nursery for a minimum of two terms. If parents decide to defer acceptance of the offer of a place in Buttons Nursery, the School cannot guarantee to keep the place for the child.

7.1.2

It is expected that children who attend Buttons Nursery will subsequently transfer to the Pre-Prep Transition classes, unless in the School's view this would not be in the child's best interests.

7.2 Pre-Prep (ages 3-7)

7.2.1

Children are eligible for entry to Pre-Prep Transition classes in the September following their third birthday, subject to a place being available. All children are required to attend an informal pre-admission assessment in Pre-Prep with their parents, after which, if it is felt that the child is physically, emotionally and socially ready to participate and progress, the offer of a place may be made. Priority will be given to siblings of children already at the School *provided they have been registered by the age of 3 months*. Children in Transition (age 3+) may attend for 5 mornings for their first two terms, but thereafter must attend for 5 full days a week. Subject to the availability of places, they may also, if desired, attend Pre-Prep Morning Care and Aftercare for an additional charge. If parents decide to defer acceptance of the offer of a place in Transition, the School cannot guarantee to keep the place for the child.

7.2.2

Since most children remain at the School unless their parents move from the area, fewer places become available between the ages of 4 and 7. Where a place becomes available children up to the age of 5 are required to attend an informal pre-admission assessment in Pre-Prep with their parents.

7.2.3

Children aged between 5 and 7 are assessed to ensure that they have reached an appropriate standard in English and mathematics during a visit to the school which will also include lessons in an appropriate year group. A formal offer of a place is also subject to a satisfactory report from the prospective pupil's current setting where appropriate. Assessment scores remain confidential to the School.

7.2.4

It is expected that children in Pre-Prep will subsequently transfer to Prep, unless in the School's view this would not be in the child's best interests.

7.3 Prep (ages 7-11)

7.3.1

For entry to Prep between the ages of 7 and 11, all children are assessed to ensure they have reached an appropriate standard in English and mathematics. No specific preparation for these entrance tests is needed: all prospective pupils start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to display their academic aptitude. Assessment scores remain confidential to the School.

7.3.2

In addition, candidates may be required to spend a day in school before an offer of a place is made, and a confidential report will be sought from their present school. Where possible the Headmaster will meet with all prospective pupils at the time of assessment.

7.3.3

The dates of the main Assessment Days for the current year are published on the School website, thebluecoatschool.com. Individual assessments can be arranged if places remain available in particular year groups.

7.3.4

It is expected that children in Prep will continue at the School until they have completed Year 6, unless in the School's view this would not be in the child's best interests.

8. SCHOLARSHIPS

8.1

The Blue Coat School offers six scholarships a year for internal or external entry into Year 3 for excellence in academic subjects or music.

8.2 Purpose of Scholarships

8.2.1

Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. In recognition of this achievement, the scholar is offered a 25% reduction in the fees throughout his/her time at The Blue Coat School, provided his/her conduct and progress are satisfactory. Details of the scholarships available will be sent to all Year 3 applicants or entrants.

8.2.2

Parents of Scholars who anticipate that they will experience difficulty in meeting the balance of the tuition fees, are encouraged to apply at the same time for one of the School's means-tested Assisted Places described below.

8.3 Academic Scholarships

8.3.1

Academic scholarships are awarded to the most outstanding performers in the entrance or transfer tests.

8.4 Music Scholarships

8.4.1

Music Scholarships are awarded to outstanding musicians who play any instrument or sing with exceptional ability. Candidates must obtain a specialist reference from their current instrumental teacher. They will be required to perform two short pieces on one or two instruments (the voice counting as one of these instruments, if desired) and to undertake aural and practical tests. Candidates will be expected to

demonstrate enthusiasm for and commitment to music, and will be expected to make a contribution to the musical life of the School throughout their time at the School.

8.4.2

Music Scholarships will only be awarded to pupils who have passed the School's academic entrance examination.

9. ASSISTED PLACES – BLUE COAT SCHOOL FOUNDATION AWARDS

9.1

There are a limited number of Assisted Places at The Blue Coat School. Parents or Guardians of children entering the school at the start of Year 3 or Year 4 and Parents or Guardians of children transferring from Pre-Prep may be considered eligible, depending on personal circumstances, to apply for such an award for their child. New applicants must also meet the entry criteria for a place at The Blue Coat School as set out in Section 7.

9.2

Parents or Guardians must indicate that they require financial support when applying for a place.

9.3

Current or Prospective Parents or Guardians must notify the Bursar's Office in the September prior to the child's transfer to Year 3 if they wish their child to be considered for financial support in Year 3.

9.4

Parents or Guardians meeting initial criteria will be required to apply formally for financial assistance; to provide evidence of family and financial circumstances; and to facilitate a home visit. The offer of such assistance is dealt with by the Governors' Awards Committee who have a wide discretion as to whether or not to make any award in any particular case and whose decision is final. Annual renewal of an Assisted Place Award is subject to a detailed annual review to verify any significant changes in family circumstances.

10. SCHOOL'S CONTRACTUAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

10.1

Copies of the School's Contractual Terms and Conditions will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

12. ADMISSIONS REGISTER

12.1

A child's name is added to the school Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified that a child will attend the school. Other details forming part of the Admissions Register include: the child's full name; sex; name and address of every person known to the school to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides and which parents hold parental responsibility as defined by Section 3 Children Act 1989); at least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency; day, month and year of birth; day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school; and the name and address of the school last attended, if any. Where reasonably possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. Where it has not been possible to obtain a second emergency contact number in exceptional circumstances, this will have been agreed with the Headmaster and parent and recorded on the Admission Register.

12.3

If a child fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and the school will consider notifying the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity and record details of those enquiries and the reasons for the decision.

12.4

If a pupil's name is about to be deleted from the Admissions Register for any of the fifteen reasons as set out in the current edition of *Children missing education (Statutory guidance for Local Authorities) (DfE)* the school will notify the Local Authority and the Local Authority in which the child normally resides, if this is

different. The notification to the Local Authority will include all the information as requested or required by the Local Authority. This does not apply for pupils transferring to secondary schools at the end of Year 6 unless this information is requested by the Local Authority.

12.5

If a pupil does not return to school within five school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence (in both cases, in the absence of illness or other unavoidable cause) the school and Local Authority will jointly make reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts. If such enquiries fail, the school will delete the pupil's name from the Admissions Register. Any such removal of a child's name from the Admissions Register is also subject the Terms and Conditions of the Parent/School Contract.

12.6

The school will notify the Local Authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the Admissions Register at a non-standard transition point. The notification will contain all the details requested or required by the Local Authority. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the Admissions Register at a standard transition point (at the first year of education normally provided by the school) unless the Local Authority requests that such returns are made.

12.7

If a parent informs the school in writing that they are home educating their child(ren), the school will inform the Local Authority and the Local Authority in which the child normally resides, if this is different, and delete the child(ren)'s name from the Admissions Register. However, if a parent only gives this notification orally then the school will notify the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity.

12.8

Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of informing the school of any changes whenever they occur. They are also expected to complete a data checking sheet annually. If a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the Admissions Register will be updated with the relevant information (including the full name of the parent with whom the child will live and the date from when it is expected that the child will live at this address) where it has been reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain this information.

12.9

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the name of the new school, and the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

12.10

Every amendment made to the Admissions Register and the Attendance Register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. Preservation of the Admissions Register and Attendance Register Every entry in the Admissions Register and Attendance Register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

13. ATTENDANCE

13.1

The school maintains and monitors daily attendance registers in accordance with the Independent School Regulatory Requirements. An attendance register is completed at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. The attendance register will show whether the pupil is: present; absent; attending an educational activity outside school approved by the school and supervised by a person approved by the school; unable to attend through exceptional circumstances; taking authorised absence (e.g. granted leave of absence by the school – usually by a senior member of staff, unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs). Where there are amendments to the original entry then the Attendance Register must show the original and amended entry, the reason for the entry, the date of the amendment and name of the person making the amendment.

13.2

The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of all of its pupils and as such all unexplained absences will be investigated and reported to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) if there are safeguarding concerns about the pupil. Further details are set out in the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Parents/guardians will be contacted on the first day of a child's absence from school without authorisation. If no contact can be made, then the school will attempt to contact the child's parents using the other school contact numbers for the child. If the child is known to any other service such as Children's Social Care or Family Support, then the school will contact them for relevant information. A home visit will be considered no later than within the first five days of absence if necessary.

13.3

The school will notify the Local Authority when a child of statutory school age fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than ten continuous school days. If the child is not of statutory school age, the school will discuss attendance issues with the child's parents and if considered necessary with the MASH as set out in 13.2 above.

14. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

14.1

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or before if necessary. It will be presented to the Governors' Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee for approval. The minutes of this meeting will be presented to the Governors.