



The Blue Coat School

ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures was devised by the Headmaster, the Head of Prep, Director of External Relations and the Admissions Registrar in consultation with colleagues in the school.

Date of Next Review: Trinity 2023

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 3 to 11 years. There are approximately 620 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. There is an Open Morning in January, details of which 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 by email to admissions@thebluecoatschool.com or by phone on 0121 410 6807.

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 (2017)*; *Children missing education: (Statutory guidance for Local Authorities) (DfE) (2016)* and *School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies independent schools and local authorities (DfE) (August 2020)*.

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 3 years of age into Nursery 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 Nursery 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 one month. 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 as specified on the School website and a copy of the child's Birth Certificate. The 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** guarantee entry to the School.

3.2

The School will then respond as follows:

1. By entering the child's details on the Admissions database.
2. By advising on the current availability for the child's age group.
 - a. If a place is available an assessment will be carried out as detailed in Section 7 below.
 - b. If the year group is full, the child will be placed on the Waiting List. 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. Priority is given to siblings of current pupils. Places are then offered based on how soon families have applied after the birth of their child.

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 in Nursery **provided they are registered by the age of one month.**

3.4

Places are usually confirmed up to one year prior to the date of entry for Nursery 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

The Blue Coat School has Christian roots and is a school of designated religious character and a Christian ethos.

5.2

Pupils of all faiths and none are welcome to attend the School. However, parents should be aware that all pupils are expected to attend regular services in the School Chapel. Parents are welcome to join in our collective worship at a weekly Chapel Service and at other Services throughout the year.

6. SPECIAL NEEDS

6.1

The Blue Coat School is a 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. 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 Pre-Prep (ages 3-7)

7.1.1

Children are eligible for entry to Pre-Prep Nursery 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. They will spend about an hour with a small group of children and will be observed interacting with one another. Parents will also be required to attend a meeting with a senior member of staff. If it is then felt that the child is physically, emotionally and socially ready to participate and progress, the offer of a place may be made. A home visit or a visit to the child's current setting may also be made if this is felt to be helpful and a report from the current setting may be sought.

7.1.2

Priority will be given to siblings of children already at the School **provided they have been registered by the age of one month**. Children in Nursery (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 Aftercare for an additional charge. If parents decide to defer acceptance of the offer of a place in Nursery, the School cannot guarantee to keep the place for the child. It is expected that children in Nursery will move on into Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, unless in the School's view this would not be in the child's best interests.

7.1.3

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.

7.1.4

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.

7.1.5

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.

7.2 Prep (ages 7-11)

7.2.1

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. Prospective pupils for Year 3 will be required to attend an interview with a senior member of staff as part of the admissions process. Following this interview, the child might be offered a place at the school. Parents also meet with a senior member of staff as part of the interview process.

7.2.2

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.

7.2.3

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.

7.2.4

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 exceptionally in 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.

11. ADMISSIONS REGISTER

11.1

In accordance with legal requirements, the School maintains an Admissions Register and Attendance Register. Every child's name is added to the school Admissions Register and the Attendance 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.

11.2

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 reason for the absence. The Attendance Register will be marked accordingly. The School will notify the Local Authority if the child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained.

11.3

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. The notification to the Local Authority will include all the information as requested or required by the Local Authority including the full name of the pupil; the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives; at least one telephone number of any parents with whom the pupil lives; the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable; the name of the pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date, if applicable; and the grounds for which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the Admission Register. The Local Authority must be notified as soon as the grounds for removal of the pupil's name is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the Register. 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.

11.4

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.

11.5

The school will notify the Local Authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the Admissions Register other than at the start of the School's youngest year group, namely at the start of Nursery. The notification will contain all the information held within the Admission Register about the child.

11.6

If a parent informs the school in writing that they are home educating their child(ren), the School will inform the Local Authority 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.

11.7

Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of informing the school of any changes whenever they occur, including updating emergency contact numbers. They are also expected to complete a data checking sheet annually. If a parent notifies the school that the 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; the date from when it is expected that the child will live at this address; and the new address).

11.8

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 on the Admissions Register.

11.9

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.

12. ATTENDANCE

12.1

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; or not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19); 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). The Register codes are set out in Appendix I together with explanatory notes.

12.2

The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of all of its pupils and all pupil absences will be followed up. 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. The School will ascertain the reason for the absence; ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken as required; identify whether the absence is approved or not; and identify the correct code to be used before entering it on to the School's electronic register.

12.3

Unexplained absences or absences giving cause for concern 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. A home visit will be considered no later than within the first five days of absence if necessary.

12.4

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 five continuous 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 12.3 above.

13. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

13.1

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.

13.2

This Policy should also be read in conjunction with other policies such as the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The COVID-19 Policy sets out further details about permissible absences due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix I: Register Codes

The register codes to be used are as follows:

- /** Present (am)
- ** Present (pm)
- C** Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- H** Holiday – absence approved
- I** Illness – communicated to school (not medical or dental appointments)
- L** Late for registration (up to 9.30 am – thereafter the code U)
- M** Medical/Dental appointments
- N** No reason yet provided for absence
- R** Religious observance
- V** Educational visit or trip
- X** Not attending in circumstance relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- X** Not required to be in school (used for sessions for children of non-compulsory school age are not expected to attend)

Codes to be used in agreement with the Headmaster in the first instance or alternatively, the Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep:

- E** Excluded (Suspended or Expelled)
- G** Holiday – absence not approved or in excess of the approved period
- O** Unauthorised absence (if the Headmaster is not satisfied with the reason given)
- U** Arrived in school after registration has closed
- Y** School fully or partially closed to pupils or widespread travel disruption due to a local or national emergency has prevented the pupil from attending school

NB If no reason has been provided then an 'N' is first entered and this is later corrected (ideally within two weeks) to the appropriate symbol (in this case only, overwriting is allowable in an electronic system) and N must not be allowed to remain indefinitely.

Code # can be used for whole or planned school closures that are known or planned in advance such as between half terms, occasional days such as Bank Holidays, weekends where this is required by the school Management Information System.

Explanatory Notes

Code	Details
	Authorised absences
C	Leave of absence approved by the School in exceptional circumstances and after considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context
H	Holiday approved by the School – leave of absence for holidays should only be in exceptional circumstances and should be with the approval of the Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep. The length of time for the holiday must be agreed.
I	Illness – Parents must notify the School on the first day that a child is unable to attend due to illness. If the School has genuine cause for concern about the veracity of the illness then the absence will be followed up.
L	Late arrival before the register has closed.
M	Medical or dental appointments – parents are reminded to make appointments outside of school hours as far as possible.
N	No reason yet provided – see notes above about length of time for N to be kept as a register code
R	Religious observance – days exclusively set aside by the religious body to which the parents belong.
V	Educational visit or trip – attendance at organised trips or visits, including residential trips organised by the school.
X	Not attending due to circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) – this would be in circumstances where the pupil’s attendance at school would conflict with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from the relevant authorities; • Any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
X	Not required to be in school – this is for children of non-compulsory school age who are not expected to attend.
	Codes to be used with the approval of the Headmaster (or in his absence the Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep)
E	Excluded (suspended or expelled) – this code must only be used with the express permission of the Headmaster. It is to be used if the pupil is still on the Admission Register but no alternative provision has been made for them to continue with their education whilst excluded. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made the pupil should be marked with the appropriate attendance code.
G	Holiday not approved or in excess of approved period – this is recorded as an unapproved absence
O	Unauthorised absence – this code will only be used if the School is not satisfied with the reason for the absence
U	Arrival after the close of registration – the School is alert to patterns of late arrival.
Y	School fully or partially closed to pupils or widespread travel disruption due to a local or national emergency has prevented the pupil from attending school.