

METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST

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Website: www.methody.org

Principal: Mrs J Lendrum BA PGCE MEd PQH(NI)

Chair of Board of Governors: Rev Niall Johnston MA BTh

Voluntary Grammar School

Co-Educational

Non-Denominational

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 240

Enrolment No: 1810

OPEN EVENING INFORMATION

An open night for pupils of P6 and P7 and their parents will be held in the school on Thursday 9th and Friday 10th January 2025 - 6.30pm – 9.00pm (there will be a presentation by the Principal in the Assembly Hall at 6.30pm, 7.30pm and again at 8.15pm). The prospectus will be available on the College's website www.methody.org.

CAPITAL FEE: £140 per annum.

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

The responsibility for selecting children for places on the basis of the following criteria is delegated by the Board of Governors to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal. These criteria have been approved by the Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast (referred to herein as 'the College', see note 2 below for further explanation). Any reference herein to the term Board of Governors includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admissions Criteria set out herein.

There is a separate Form 1 (Year 8) Admissions Process for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is operated by the Education Authority.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

ENTRY TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) 2025 - 2026

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria, the Board of Governors will consider late applications received by 4pm on Tuesday 25th February 2025 to be equal to punctual applications received by 12 noon on Thursday 20th February 2025. When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or uploaded with the Transfer Application.

Section 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast intends to apply academic criteria to the applications received and so will accept the Total Standardised Age Score (referred to herein as 'the score') awarded by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (referred to herein as 'SEAG') in the Entrance Assessment.
- 1.2 SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A child who only takes one paper (i.e. either Paper 1 or Paper 2 but not both) will not have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such children will, however, have their "single paper" marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for children who only sit one paper will have the designation "e" (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, e.g. Total Standardised Age Score TSAS 196e; Band 4e. **Such children will only be considered for admission by the Board of Governors under Special Provisions.** If only one assessment was taken because of illness, or other unforeseen circumstances, a claim under Special Provisions should be submitted, which should include the estimated score for the SEAG paper sat, along with additional evidence of academic ability/attainment. The Board of Governors will also give due consideration to other claims for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions as explained in Section 3 and Section 4 of this policy.
- 1.3 The child's unique pupil number and the score in the SEAG Entrance Assessment should be entered in the online Transfer Application. Parents/Guardians must also upload the Statement of Outcomes issued by SEAG to their child's online Transfer Application.

Please note the Board of Governors does not consider the order in which Parents/Guardians list schools on the online post-primary Transfer Application as part of their Admissions Criteria. All applications are treated as equal.

Children who will be resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the College will be selected for admission before any such children not so resident.

Section 2. Admissions Criteria for entry of pupils to Form 1 (Year 8) in September 2025

The number of places available is limited to the Admissions Number set by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; this is 240 places. The cut-off for admission will therefore be the 240th place. If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number determined by the Department of Education, the following criteria (to include sub-criteria) shall be applied in the order listed below until the point where the admissions number is reached.

2.1 The first 200 places from the admissions total of 240 will be allocated to those children who have applied and provided a SEAG Total Standardised Age Score (including those to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply) on the basis of the rank order of their respective scores with those achieving higher scores being allocated places before those achieving lower scores. If several children are eligible for the 200th place because they have equal scores then all such children will be allocated places up to the school's admissions number and on application, if necessary, of the criteria listed in 2.1.i – 2.1.iv and 2.2ii (below).

Following the allocation of places as described above, a limited pool of around 60 children will be identified from the remaining applicants, again by rank order of their SEAG Total Standardised Age Scores (including those to whom Special Circumstances or Special Provisions apply), with those achieving higher scores being allocated to the pool before those with lower scores. If several children are eligible for the 260th place because they have equal scores then all such children will be included within the pool. Then all remaining available places up to the school's admissions number will be allocated from this pool upon application of the following sub-criteria which will be applied in the order in which they are set out:

2.1.i Children who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSME) (see note 1 below for further explanation);

2.1.ii Present members of the College in its Preparatory Department (see note 2);

2.1.iii The children of Methodist Ministers (see note 3);

2.1.iv Those with sibling(s) who is/are at present enrolled in the Secondary Department of the College or has/have already been offered a place (see note 4);

2.2 If, following the application of the above criteria and sub-criteria, it is not possible to identify for admission the exact number of children equivalent to the admissions number (in the event of children being tied for the final place(s) on the basis of the sub-criteria) then children will be selected for the remaining place(s) on the basis of the following criteria, in order:

2.2.i The SEAG Total Standardised Age Score, those achieving higher scores being allocated places before those achieving lower scores.

2.2.ii If two or more children are tied on the final score, they will be ranked for acceptance based on a computer-based process (see note 5 for further explanation).

In the event that there are fewer children complying with a particular sub-criterion than there are places available or remaining, those children complying with that sub-criterion will be admitted and the next sub-criterion will be applied to the remaining children.

In the event that there are more children complying with a particular sub-criterion than there are places available or remaining, those children complying with that sub-criterion will go forward to be considered under the next sub-criterion and those not complying with that sub-criterion will be eliminated.

If, following the application of criterion 2.1 and 2.2 and sub-criteria, all the available places have not been filled, the Board of Governors will consider for admission any pupils without a SEAG standardised score. Allocation of these remaining places will be made by applying criteria 2.1.i to 2.1.iv and 2.2ii.

Section 3. Procedure for Special Circumstances

3.1 Methodist College has academic performance as its first criterion.

The Board of Governors will consider medical or other problems which may have affected performance at the time of the SEAG Entrance Assessment and which are supported by documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These 'medical or other problems' are commonly referred to as 'Special Circumstances'.

Parents/Guardians who wish to apply to the College under Special Circumstances should complete the Special Circumstances Form (SC Form), obtainable from the College website, and upload it with appropriate documentary evidence to the online post-primary Transfer Application. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to provide the evidence as detailed in the SC Form.

Access Arrangements

Parents must disclose in the information they provide for an application for Special Circumstances, if they applied **successfully or unsuccessfully** to SEAG for Access Arrangements for their child, on the SC Form, Section D.

(If a Special Circumstances application is made in respect of matters for which Access Arrangements were granted, the Admissions Committee will consider the fact that Access Arrangements were granted.)

An Explanation of the Special Circumstances 2 Stage Process

Stage 1

Does the Admissions Sub-Committee consider that the verifiable evidence of the medical or other problems meets the threshold for consideration of this application under Special Circumstances?

Yes – the application will proceed to Stage 2 of the Special Circumstances Process.

No – the claim for Special Circumstances is rejected.

Stage 2

Considering the educational evidence provided, what adjustment, if any, should be made to the child's SEAG Total Standardised Age Score?

For claims for which Special Circumstances are deemed eligible to be considered at Stage 2, the Admissions Sub-Committee will consider the educational evidence provided, using standardised assessment scores from P5 and P6, to assess the likely impact of the accepted Special Circumstances on the child's score. It should be noted by parents that both parts of the consideration referred to involve an exercise in judgement. An application for Special Circumstances considered at Stage 2 does not lead automatically to a change in SEAG Total Standardised Age Score.

3.2 Details of Medical or Other Problems

Where it is claimed that an applicant's performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment has been affected by a medical or other problem, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to set out in the SC Form precise details of the problem, how it impacted the applicant and upload evidence to corroborate its existence.

Where the problem is a medical one of short-term duration which affected the applicant only at the time of the Entrance Assessment, the Board of Governors will give greater weight to evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the assessment.

Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the Parent/Guardian should upload appropriate evidence.

It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

3.3 The following Educational Evidence should be attached:

3.3.i The score awarded in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.

3.3.ii The results for the child of any PTE/PTM standardised tests conducted in Year 5 and Year 6.

- 3.3.iii The results (without names) for other pupils in the child's Year 7 class of any PTE/PTM standardised tests conducted in Year 5 and Year 6, and where available, the respective SEAG scores.

It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to provide the educational evidence. Where such information is unavailable for good reason, the Governors reserve the right to make a decision based on the information available.

Section 4. Procedure for Special Provisions

4.1 Special Provisions will apply for:

- a) children whose Parents/Guardians wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland;
- b) children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland;
(based on the time from the start of Primary 1 [1st September 2018 to the 25th February 2025] i.e. more than 3 years and 3 months)
- c) children who because of unforeseen and **serious** medical or other problems were unable to participate in the SEAG Entrance Assessment;
- d) children, entered for the SEAG Entrance Assessment, who only completed either paper 1 or paper 2 and received an estimated grade.

It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment, with the exception of those children who take up residence in Northern Ireland after the start of Year 7 or those applying under section 4.1c.

Parents/Guardians who wish to apply to the College under Special Provisions should complete the Special Provisions Form (SP Form), obtainable from the College website. This should state the precise reason why they believe their child is eligible for consideration under Special Provisions and provide appropriate independent documentary evidence. Any educational evidence as detailed under Special Circumstances above that might assist the panel to determine an appropriate score should be included. A copy of the SP Form and all the documentary evidence should be uploaded to the online post-primary Transfer Application.

For those children whose Parents/Guardians wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, applications for Special Provisions should be received by the College by Tuesday 25th February 2025. (see note 7 below).

4.2 The Board of Governors will consider the application for Special Provisions. Where Special Provisions are accepted, the following procedure will apply:

- a) The Board of Governors will consider Years 5 and 6 PTE and PTM Assessment information, if available and may choose to assess the child's academic ability/attainment.
- b) The Board of Governors will determine a score for the child. Such children will then be considered with all other children who have received a SEAG score and the Admissions Criteria applied.
- c) For those children applying under section 4.1d, information must be provided that confirms the reason why only one assessment paper was completed.

DUTY TO VERIFY

Those making applications should note that the information contained within an application that qualifies the child for admission will be verified. The Board of Governors therefore reserves the right to request such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any Transfer Application. Those making applications should also note that the provision of false information or incorrect information, or the failure to provide verifying documents according to the required deadline, may result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the Board of Governors to offer a place.

WAITING LIST POLICY

The Board of Governors operates a separate waiting list for Form 1 (Year 8.) If a vacancy arises and is to be filled after the completion of the Transfer Procedure or during Form 1 (Year 8) the next child on the original transfer list rank order will be contacted. This list does not transfer automatically into applications for other year groups.

Notes:

1. “entitled to Free School Meals” will mean children who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their Parent/Guardian has completed their online post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including 25th February 2025, no later than 4pm.
2. The College has two constituent parts: the Preparatory Department and the Secondary Department.
3. Methodist Ministers must be in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland and provide verification from the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
4. Sibling is defined as “Children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school”. DE definition of the “child of the family” covers the following:
 - a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership;
 - a child born to a co-habiting couple;
 - a child born to a single parent;
 - a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship;
 - a child living with a couple who has been treated as a “child of the family” whether there is a marriage or a civil partnership or not;
 - a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a “child of the family”;
 - an adopted or fostered child; or,
 - a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual.

Parents/Guardians claiming the sibling criterion must include the name, date of birth and tutor group of the sibling currently attending the College.
5. The random selection process referred to in criterion 2.2.ii above is carried out by means of a computer program which, for each applicant, generates a random number. The result, for any given applicant, is not affected by the details of any other applicant. Applicants with the lowest random number will be given places up to the number of places available.
6. Parents/Guardians can obtain information about the educational attainment of their child by contacting or writing to the Primary School Principal.
7. Parents/Guardians of children who wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, must complete the online Transfer Application process, in advance of the Transfer Office deadline of Tuesday 25th February 2025 no later than 4pm, beyond which any new/additional preferences received by the Transfer Office will not be processed until after the Admissions Cycle closes on Saturday 10th May 2025.
8. Anyone requiring further information about the Admissions Criteria or the application of the Admissions Criteria should contact admissions@methody.org.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or uploaded with, the online Transfer Application. Parents/Guardians should ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the College’s Admissions Criteria is stated on the online Transfer Application or uploaded to it.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2022/23	240	420	240
2023/24	250 ⁺	347	251*
2024/25	240	473	240

⁺ Temporary Variation

* Appeals Process

Please visit www.methody.org for information on applications to other year groups.