

THE ROYAL SCHOOL ARMAGH

College Hill

ARMAGH BT61 9DH

Telephone: 028 3752 2807

Email: info@royalschool.com

Website: www.royalschool.com

Headmaster: Mr G.G.W Montgomery BA, PGCE

Chairman of the Board of Governors: The Most Reverend F.J McDowell - Archbishop of Armagh

Voluntary Grammar Non-Denominational

Boys and Girls

Age Range: 4-19

Boarding and Day

Admissions Number: 100

Enrolment Number: 770

OPEN EVENING INFORMATION

Parents/Guardians and boys and girls in P6/P7 and prospective Sixth Formers are invited to visit the School
Open Evening at 7.00pm on Thursday 16 January 2025.

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

The responsibility for selecting applicants for places is based on the following criteria and is delegated by the Board of Governors to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the headmaster. These criteria have been approved by the Board of Governors of the Royal School Armagh (referred to herein as ‘the school’). Any reference herein to the term the Board of Governors includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admission Criteria set out herein. In the event that the number of applications for admission into Year 8 exceeds the stated “Admission Number” of the school, the headmaster, on behalf of the Board of Governors, will apply the admission criteria for at least 85-day school places. The remaining places up to the Admissions Number of 100 will consist of boarding pupils.

Introduction

The Royal School, Armagh is a voluntary grammar school for boys and girls offering a wide-ranging curriculum of academic courses. The Royal School has a rich history, having been founded in 1608 by King James 1, and is proud of its reputation and the successes of generations of young people.

The school will initially consider, for non-boarding places, those candidates who have taken the Assessment provided by The Schools’ Entrance Assessment Group (referred to herein as SEAG). The school will accept the Total Standardised Age Score (referred to herein as the TSAS) awarded by SEAG, subject only to the provisions contained below in Section B or consideration by the Board of Governors of those candidates claiming Special Circumstances or Special Provisions as explained below in Section C and Section D.

SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil 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 pupils will, however, have their “single paper” marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have the designation “e” (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, e.g. TSAS 155e. Such pupils will only be considered for admission by the School under Special Provisions. If only one assessment was taken because of illness, or other unforeseen circumstances, a claim under Special Provision should be submitted, which should include the estimated TSAS for the SEAG paper sat along with additional evidence of academic ability / attainment. The candidate’s unique pupil number and the TSAS in the SEAG should be entered in the online post-primary Transfer Application. Parents/guardians must also upload the statement of outcome issued by SEAG.

The number of places available is limited to the Admissions Number set by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; this is currently 100 pupils. Up to a maximum of 15 of these places will be available each year for Boarding Pupils. The cut-off for admission will therefore be the 100th place.

Northern Ireland boarding applicants will be required to make an online application through the Education Authority portal in the same way as a ‘day place’ applicant and indicating their preference for boarding. All boarding applicants should also make direct contract with the school in advance of placing boarding as a preference as the school is the main information point for parents regarding boarding applications and procedures.

In selecting pupils for admission to the Royal School, with the exception of boarding applications, children who are resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school will be selected for admission before any children who are not so resident.

To Parents/Guardians naming The Royal School, Armagh as a Preference on your child's Transfer Application

Entrance Test Results

The Royal School, Armagh uses the TSAS awarded to candidates who completed the Entrance Assessment conducted by SEAG on Saturday 16 and 23 November 2024. It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the SEAG Entrance Assessments, except for those children who take up residence in Northern Ireland after 26 September 2024.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make sure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the School's Admissions Criteria, as outlined below, is stated on, or uploaded with, the Transfer Application.

The application procedure opens on the EA Connect for online applications on Tuesday 28 January 2025 - at 12 noon (GMT) and must be submitted by the closing date via EA Connect by 12 noon (GMT) on Thursday 20 February 2025 and will be marked as a 'punctual' application. An application received after 12 noon (GMT) on 20 February 2025 and up to 4pm on Tuesday 25 February 2025 will be marked as a 'late application'. During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria, punctual applications and late applications will be treated equally and the Admissions Criteria applied.

SEAG consists of two Assessment Papers taken a week apart. Pupils sit both Papers. It is not a choice between sitting Paper 1 or Paper 2. Parents / Guardians will receive five outcomes for their child. Only the TSAS will be used by the Royal School for admission purposes.

If a candidate misses one of the papers due to illness, or other unforeseen circumstances an application can be made to the school under Special Provisions (see Section D).

Fees and Charges

From September 1990 parents of all pupils admitted to the Royal School, Armagh (except in the case of pupils who are not resident in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland) will not be required to pay Tuition Fees. (Capital fees still apply). A Capital Fee (currently £140 per annum) is charged to all pupils.

ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO YEAR 8 SEPTEMBER 2025

A. Definitions

"Applicant" means the parent or guardian who completes the Transfer Application on behalf of the candidate;

"Brother or sister" means children who have both parents in common or children who reside with the same family in the candidate's Normal Home Address (including foster children and step brothers and sisters living with the candidate at his or her Normal Home Address);

"Candidate" means the child who is stated on the Transfer Application as seeking to gain admission to the School;

"Eldest child" means a candidate who, at the date of application, is the eldest child of the family to be eligible to apply for admission to the School;

"Eldest eligible" means in circumstances where a family has not had the opportunity to have an elder child already and currently enrolled, i.e. in cases where a child is more than 7 years younger than their next sibling; cases where a family has moved residence; or cases where an older sibling cannot attend mainstream school, for example attends a special school;

"Normal Home Address" means the candidate's permanent home address at the date of application. This should be where the parent and candidate live and where the candidate spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday including nights). Where the candidate lives with parents with shared responsibility, it is for the parents to determine which address is to be used;

"Parent or guardian" means a person who, at the date of application, has legal responsibility for the candidate;

“Special Need” means a candidate who is in receipt of a statement of special education needs, which has been issued under Article 16 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

It should be noted that the Board of Governors will not take into account the position of preference given, to the School, by the applicant on the transfer Application. An application from a child who has placed the School 2nd in order of preference, and who has not been offered a place in the school of first choice, will be considered in the same way as all first preference applications to the School.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO YEAR 8 2025 - 2026

B. Admission Criteria

1. The first 80 places from the Admission Number of 100 will be allocated to candidates based on the TSAS rank order of their respective scores; those achieving higher TSAS scores being allocated places before those with lower scores. If several candidates are eligible for the 80th place because they have equal TSAS, then all such candidates will be allocated places up to the School’s Admission Number, using the tie-breaker criteria as necessary. This will be net of the boarding applications accepted for admission in that year as per 2. below.
2. Up to a maximum of 15 boarding places will then be allocated from the Admissions Number of 100. All candidates applying for a boarding place must attend for an interview with the Headmaster in order to establish their suitability for boarding. The candidate is not required to have taken the SEAG, but is not precluded from consideration for a boarding place by having done so. The interview will not be to assess academic aptitude, but to ensure the candidate’s suitability to join the Boarding Department, and that the candidate and their parent(s) accept the conditions of entry. Brothers or sisters of boarders on the School roll at the time of application will be given priority for a boarding place. Boarding places are offered and accepted on the understanding that the candidate will remain in boarding until the end of Year 12. A pupil cannot be given a day place if the pupil is withdrawn from boarding before the end of Year 12. A separate Admission Criteria is applicable in respect of boarding places and is available to parents upon request.
3. If, after the application of 1 and 2 above there are any remaining day places from the Admission Number these will be allocated from a pool of 20 candidates comprised of those identified by rank order of their SEAG TSAS with those achieving higher scores being allocated places before those with lower scores to the pool. In the event of several candidates being eligible for the 20th place in the pool because they have equal scores, the pool will be increased and all such candidates will be included in the pool. Candidates from this pool will be allocated to the remaining places on application of the tie-breaker criteria.
4. If, following the application of criteria 1, 2, and 3 all the available places in the School’s Admission Number have not been filled, the School will consider for admission any candidates who have not taken the SEAG. In the event that the number of such candidates exceeds the number of remaining places, allocation of the remaining places will be made by applying the tie-breaker criteria.
5. The ‘tie-breaker’ criteria.

If as specified in criteria 1, 3 or 4 that the tie-breaker criteria apply, the following criteria will then apply successively in the order stated below, until the final selection is completed. Therefore, if there are more candidates who satisfy criterion (i) than there are places available, criterion (ii) will then be applied and successively thereafter, until all the remaining places are allocated.

- (i) Candidates enrolled in the School’s Preparatory Department as at 1 September 2023 and who continue to be enrolled as on 31 December 2024;
- (ii) Candidates with a brother or sister currently enrolled in the School’s Secondary Department (details to be supplied) or accepted for enrolment in September 2025;
- (iii) Candidates who are siblings of a multiple birth (e.g., twins or triplets) and whose multiple birth sibling is to be admitted to Year 8 in September 2025;
- (iv) Candidates who are the eldest child of the family to be eligible for admission in September 2025 (details to be supplied);
- (v) Candidates who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSME)*;
- (vi) If after all the criteria 5(i) to 5(iv) have been exhausted it becomes necessary to make a further selection, places will be allocated on the basis of the rank order of the candidates’ respective score; those achieving higher scores being allocated places before those with lower scores.

(vii) If more than one candidate is eligible for the final place because they have equal scores which is not resolved by the application of the above criteria, then the Board of Governors will select the remaining candidate(s) using computerised random selection. The computerised random selection process, as determined by the Board of Governors, will be overseen by a representative from the Board of Governors.

* 'Entitled to Free School Meals' will mean candidates who, at the date on which they have signed their post-primary Transfer Application or at any date up to and including 25 February 2025, have communicated within their Transfer Application that they are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals.

(Please ensure that the relevant information is stated on the Transfer Application. The School emphasises that it is the responsibility of those completing the Transfer Application to notify the School on the Transfer Application where the above criteria apply, and to furnish all relevant details.)

C. Special Circumstances

The Royal School has academic performance as its first criterion, subject only to the consideration of medical or other problems which may have resulted in an exceptional negative performance in the SEAG and which are supported by independent contemporaneous (i.e. should be dated October/November 2024) documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. The purpose of a claim for Special Circumstances is so that a child can be assigned a score equivalent to that which he or she would have obtained in the SEAG, under normal conditions. Consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances consists of two parts. The first requires the consideration of whether there is, in the judgement of the Committee of the Board of Governors, sufficient material to permit a child to be considered as having Special Circumstances. If a child is permitted to be considered as having Special Circumstances, the second part of the consideration requires an educational judgement to be made on the totality of the material presented to the Committee of the Board of Governors so that a mark equivalent to that which the child would have obtained in the SEAG Assessment under normal conditions can be awarded.

It is for parents to present all such material as they consider will assist the Committee of the Board of Governors in performing both parts of the consideration described above. Parents/guardians should provide raw score data from Papers 1 and 2 to support a Special Circumstances claim.

The medical practitioner providing the evidence must be independent i.e. not related to the candidate. When the difficulty or problem is of a more long-term nature the medical evidence is still required but does not have to be contemporaneous with the timing of a test or tests.

These 'medical or other problems' are commonly referred to as 'Special Circumstances'. Special Circumstances situations for candidates for a day place will be considered by a Subcommittee of the Board of Governors who will, before the application of the criteria, decide whether the score awarded in the SEAG should be adjusted.

If a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Special Access arrangements were granted for a candidate, the School will take into account the fact that the candidate was granted Special Access arrangements for those matters.

• **Details of Medical or Other Problems**

Where it is claimed that a candidate's performance in the SEAG Assessment has been affected by a medical or other problem, it is the responsibility of the parents to set out in the Form SC (**obtainable from the school's website**) outlining the precise details of the problem and append independent evidence to corroborate its existence. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the evidence as detailed in Form SC.

Where the problem is a medical one of short-term duration which affected the candidate only at the time of the SEAG Assessment, the School will require the production of evidence that the candidate was examined by a qualified medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the SEAG Assessment.

Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the parents should append appropriate independent evidence.

• **Educational Evidence**

This is based on the score achieved in the SEAG Assessment.

In respect of educational evidence, the parent is expected to secure from the Principal of the Primary School evidence of the child's performance as compared with the performance of peers of a similar level together

with the SEAG scores allocated to these pupils. Objective documentary evidence, which should be verified, must be provided by the parents together with the Transfer Application at the time of application. This should include where they exist, the results for the pupil of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 and the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics.

It would be useful for the school to have additional comparative information from the Primary School. This should include the results (without names) for other candidates in the pupil's Year 7 class of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 and the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics.

A Subcommittee of Governors will consider the application for Special Circumstances. Where Special Circumstances are accepted, the Subcommittee will then determine, based on the information available, a score for the candidate. In coming to its decision the subcommittee will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming an educational judgement. This may be achieved by using Polynomial and Linear trendlines which will predict, as far as is reasonably practical, a score for consideration. Such candidates will then be considered with all other candidates who have received a TSAS applying the Admission Criteria. The Subcommittee is not prepared to upgrade children solely based on a statement made but not corroborated such as 'we expected this child to achieve a top score in the SEAG Assessment'.

D. Special Provisions

Special Provisions apply to:

1. Children whose parents wish them to transfer to a post primary school that uses SEAG from a school outside Northern Ireland
2. Children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland.
3. Children, who due to a serious medical or other problem, was, EITHER, unable to sit the SEAG OR have estimated Outcomes because they sat only one of the two Entrance assessment papers.

The existence of Special Provisions must be supported by documentary evidence. In considering claims for Special Provisions, Form SP (obtainable from the school website), which has been developed to assist parents in making such an application, should be completed and uploaded with the Transfer Application.

A panel appointed by the 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 any assessment information and may choose to assess the applicant's ability / attainment.
- b) The Board of Governors will determine, based on the totality of information available, a score for the applicant. In coming to its decision the subcommittee will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming an educational judgement. This may include comparative data (where available). Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a TSAS and the admissions criteria applied.
- c) For those applicants applying under point 3 above, independently verified information must be provided that confirms the claim of a serious problem and confirms the reason why only one or no assessment paper(s) was completed.

All decisions regarding Special Circumstances and Special Provisions are the sole responsibility of the Board of Governors of the Royal School. It is the parent's responsibility to apply on behalf of their son/daughter and to gather and present the relevant information for attachment to the Transfer Application.

In making a claim, the parents must obtain educational evidence relating to the performance of their child and in comparison, with the performance of his/her peers. Primary School Principals are in the best position to assist in the provision of this information. In providing the comparative data for the other pupils in the class, **no names should be given, except for that of the pupil** for whom the application is being made.

A Subcommittee of Governors will consider the application for Special Provision. Where this is accepted, the following procedure will apply:

- a) The School will consider any assessment information and may choose to commission an independent assessment of the pupil's ability in English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning.
- b) A Subcommittee of Governors will determine, based on all the available assessment information available, an appropriate score for the candidate.

The candidate will then be considered with all other candidates who have received a SEAG score, applying the Admissions Criteria. Where Special Provisions are accepted, the Committee will assign, on the basis of the information available, a TSAS for the child. Such children will then be considered with all other children who have received a TSAS and the Admissions Criteria applied.

All decisions of the Subcommittee will be defined as the “opinion of the Board of Governors in relation to Special Circumstances” or the “opinion of the Board of Governors in relation to Special Provisions”, whichever is relevant. It should be noted that a Special Need is not a Special Circumstance.

Duty to Verify

Please note that Department of Education guidance (Circular 2013/24) states:-

“the provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide information within the deadlines set by post-primary schools can result in the withdrawal of a place and the inability to offer a place on the part of any school nominated on the applicant’s Transfer Application”.

Applicants should note that the Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify the information contained within a Transfer Application. The provision of false 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 school to offer a place.

If you state within your Transfer Application information that is decisive in qualifying a candidate for admission, then that information will be verified.

If it is found to be incorrect, then any place offered because of it will be withdrawn.

Waiting List Policy.

- (a) If a vacancy arises and is to be filled during Year 8, the next applicant on the original transfer list rank order will be contacted. This waiting list will transfer automatically until the end of Year 10.
- (b) For applications for ‘in year’ transfer to the school (with the exception of boarding applicants) parents must submit an AP1 Form and return it directly to the school. In cases where the year group is full, applications will, at the request of the parent, be retained on a waiting list. These applications will be considered following the completion of part a (above). The Application Form for admission to boarding is available on www.royalschool.com .

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications All Preferences	Total Admissions
2022/23	100	144*	102
2023/24	100	117*	105
2024/25	100	148*	100

(*includes boarding applications)

(Where the total admissions number exceeds 100, this includes SEN pupils and/or pupils who had an Admissions or ECB Appeal upheld)

**ADMISSION CRITERIA
YEARS 9 – 12**

1. Should a place become available, the Headmaster will, on behalf of the Board of Governors, seek reassurance from objective evidence that the applicant is well-matched to the pace and nature of the curriculum offered by the school. This objective evidence will include:
 - (i) Statements of performance from the applicant’s existing school e.g. recent formal school reports, written or verbal reports from the Principal
 - and/or**
 - (ii) Statements of ability from the applicant’s previous schools
 - and/or**

- (iii) the applicants score obtained in the Common Entrance Assessment (“the SEAG Assessment”) provided by the Schools’ Entrance assessment Group (“the SEAG”).

and/or

- (iv) Other suitable indicators of performance.

2. Pupils will be admitted to the school within numerical limitations i.e.

- (i) Within the enrolment capacity of the school
- (ii) Within a numerical maximum for each year group.

This maximum will vary from Year to Year and will take account of the existing staffing structure and maximum sizes of class groupings of that year group.

In the event that places within a particular year group are limited and there are more applications than places, secondary considerations will be given to:-

- (i) Pupils who have previously sat the Common Entrance Assessment (SEAG) examination
- (ii) The pupil’s score in the SEAG examination
- (iii) Sibling’s relationships
- (iv) Special aptitudes of pupils
- (v) Free school meal entitlement
- (vi) Geographical proximity of the pupil’s home, although the school will continue its tradition of accepting pupils from a wide geographical area.

**ADMISSION CRITERIA
POST-16
(FOR ENTRY INTO THE SIXTH FORM)**

The size of the Sixth Form intake is determined by The Department of Education as 135 pupils. Pupils who are entering the Sixth Form must obtain a minimum of twelve GCSE points.

While every effort is made to allow pupils to follow their preferred subjects this depends on timetable and class size constraints, as well as an appropriate pathway of study for each pupil. It is important that the school is able to offer a Sixth Form course of study which corresponds to the realistic aspirations of the applicant and is also accessible in terms of their academic ability. Except in cases of boarding applications and/ or applications from those educated outside England, Wales or Northern Ireland, entrance to the Sixth Form depends upon performance in normal timetabled GCSEs. The advice below is designed to ensure that not only can a pupil gain a place in Sixth Form, but that they can embark on a course with a reasonable expectation of success. Applications will be supported for those pupils who by their attitude and behaviour have shown that they are likely to be successful in a post 16 course of school study.

Whether the applicant is from the Royal School or another school, the minimum requirement for entry in September 2025 will be:

1. At least FIVE subjects in GCSE (including Mathematics and English) with grade C or better, and which would allow for appropriate progression.
2. A minimum of 12 points where: A* = 5 points, A = 4 points, B = 3 points, C* = 2 points, C = 1 point
3. Generally, at least B grade level in any AS subject chosen, or in a related subject.
4. Normally, 20 GCSE points are required with a minimum of two As in Double Award GCSE Science in order to study two or more sciences to A Level.
5. In some subjects there may be sub-criteria which must be adhered to. These sub-criteria are designed to maximise a pupil’s chances of success in the subject.

*Level 2 GCSE equivalent courses and composite courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Based on GCSE performance a points total can be calculated. This allows for individual pathway guidance interviews to take place on results day. The aim of the pathways is not to prohibit choice, but to provide the best opportunity for your success.

All applicants for places in Sixth Form must provide evidence from their former school that they have a good disciplinary and attendance record. Please note that only in exceptional circumstances will new students be admitted to Upper Sixth.

N.B. ALL CRITERIA MUST BE SATISFIED

Allocation of Places:

Places in Sixth Form will be awarded to suitably qualified applicants on the following basis:

1. Pupils who undertook GCSEs at the Royal School, Armagh (were registered pupils of the school at the end of Year 12)
2. Pupils who undertook GCSEs at 11-16 schools which do not offer appropriate post 16 provision for them
3. Pupils who have been in educational provision otherwise than at school at the point when they undertook their GCSEs (e.g. home-schooled pupils)
4. Pupils who were pupils at another school with post 16 provision but who have been unable to secure a suitable study pathway in that school.

Where applicants meet the criteria for admission, but the number 135 has been exceeded an application for a Temporary Variation will be made to the Department of Education.

If a subject is oversubscribed, (as determined by the Headmaster, DE guidelines or school management), initial priority will be given to pupils for whom career or university aspirations require that subject, and those who have higher UMS scores in that subject or higher overall points score should UMS be equal.

Variations :

1. An application from a **pupil outside the Northern Ireland system** will be assessed on the academic evidence provided, using whatever comparability formula is available.
2. If there are **Special Circumstances** which can be demonstrated to have affected performance in GCSE and have not been already recognised by the relevant examination board, there may be a reduction in the basic requirement, provided criterion 4 is met.
3. If there are **exceptional pastoral circumstances**, as determined by the School, e.g. illness, bereavement or 'learning needs' then the applicant may be allowed a reduction in the basic requirement.
4. In the case of points 2 and 3 above, appropriate documentation should be provided before the end of the Trinity Term (Summer).
5. A Sixth Form Entrance Committee will be convened on the afternoon of the day the results are issued.
6. The **disciplinary and attendance records** of Royal School, Armagh students will be considered even if they have reached the academic criteria listed above. A period of suspension from school in Year 12 and/or an attendance rate below the EWO threshold of 85% will trigger such consideration and may result in a place not being made available in Lower Sixth Form.

Students applying from schools other than Royal School, Armagh within Northern Ireland:

The Department of Education may, in response to a request from a school, increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to its Sixth Form. Places that become available in this way will be allocated only to pupils who meet the basic eligibility criteria for Sixth Form study (as above) and will be allocated in the order determined by the criteria to be applied in the order set down.

What is a school of a type that is suitable for a pupil? To determine this, DE first considers all schools to be one of four types: (i) denominational (ii) non-denominational (iii) Integrated and (iv) Irish-Medium. A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 pupil will belong to one of these four types and DE will consider any other school from this same type as suitable for the pupil. DE will also consider as suitable for the pupil any school of the same type as that attended by the child in Year 12.

NOTES FOR ALL APPLICANTS:-

It is essential to note that an application to attend the Royal School, Armagh indicates that there is an acceptance of all school regulations and there is a willingness to observe them by each applicant and their parent(s) or guardian(s).