

THE DOWNS SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2020/21

Determined by the Full Governing Board – Tuesday, 12 February 2019

The admission arrangements for admission to The Downs School for the 2020/21 academic year and subsequent years are set out in this document. These arrangements take account of all relevant legislation and the School Admissions Code of Practice.

The aim is for admission arrangements to work for the benefit of all parents and children in the area, to be as simple as possible for parents to use and help them to make a decision on the best school for their children. Parents must use the application form of their 'home' Local Authority, i.e. the admissions authority of their home address, when applying for a place. Completed forms should be sent to the 'home' LA by the closing date for applications of the home LA. Parents are encouraged to use the 'on-line' application form provided by their home LA. Details of how to make an application can be found on The Downs School's website <http://www.thedownsschool.org.uk/375/admissions> and on the LA's website: <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/secondaryadmissions>

ADMISSION NUMBERS

Following a recent Net Capacity Assessment by the LA an Indicative Admission Number was reached. The governors set the admission number with regard to this Net Capacity Assessment for the school. The approved admission number for entry to The Downs School has been increased from 180 to 210 at Year 7 from September 2018.

At age 16, a minimum of 10 "additional" places will be offered in Year 12 (i.e. over and above students attending The Downs School who progress from Year 11 to Year 12).

OVER-SUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

The following over-subscription criteria in order of priority are applied for application when the school receives more preferences than places available. All preferences will be treated on an equal basis.

A Looked After Children and children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order immediately following having been looked after.

B Catchment Area Pupils

Children whose permanent home address is within the catchment area of the school is shown on our priority zone map. The catchment area is divided into Priority Zones 1 and 2 (see Map). Places will be offered to applicants in Priority Zone 1, before those in Priority Zone 2. Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings in catchment.

The catchment area is also digitalized on the West Berkshire Council interactive map <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29471> so parents can clearly see if they live in the catchment area or not. In the event that a catchment boundary runs through a property, the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) will be used to determine which school catchment area the property falls in and this will be confirmed on the West Berkshire Council school search facility. It is the child's normal permanent home address where he or she lives with his or her parents/carers and are living at the closing date for applications in the normal admissions round (31 October 2019) that is used to decide in which school's catchment area the child lives. Future addresses must not be used and will not be accepted.

Where parental responsibilities are shared, the permanent home address will normally be considered to be with the parent/carer with whom the child spends the majority of days and nights Monday to Friday; this will normally be expected to be with the parent/carer that receives the pupil's Child Benefit, where this benefit is still available.

Where there is any doubt about the split of the residence then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week.

Temporary addresses cannot be used to obtain school places, e.g. temporary addresses whilst retaining a previous permanent home will not be accepted. If parents/carers are in the process of moving from one address to another and want to use the new address for the school place allocations, evidence that they have moved and are already living in the new address will need to be provided before allocations begin. Even if a move is planned, a future address must not be used and will not be accepted.

Any child offered a school place based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information concerning a catchment area permanent home address will have their place withdrawn and a new application will be required, by which time preferred schools may be full. This may also occur after the child has been admitted to a school.

Criteria C, D, E & F apply to children whose permanent home address is not within the preferred school's catchment area.

C Siblings

Pupils with a brother or sister (including step/foster sibling) living in the same family unit who is already on the roll of The Downs School and, in relation to admissions at The Downs School's first point of entry, will continue to attend compulsory education at the school during the following academic year.

D Children from primary schools federated to The Downs School

E Children of Staff at the School

Children of staff in either of the following circumstances as certified by the Headteacher where:

- a) the member of staff has been employed at The Downs School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admissions to the school is made,
- or**
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

F All other applicants

Children with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHC) or Statements of Special Educational Needs naming a school will always be admitted at any time, above any other child including those on the waiting list. This is a legal requirement. Outside of the normal admission round the West Berkshire In-Year Fair Access Protocol will also apply.

TIE BREAKER

Priority will be given within any of the above over-subscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to The Downs School. Distances will be measured using the West Berkshire Geographical Information System, with the measuring points as specified within that system, taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG), and not by taking travelling distances. Where the last child offered a place is from a multiple birth and one or more of the siblings from that multiple birth would fall below the limit of the admission number in the ranking, all of the children will be offered a place which will exceed the school's admission number.

WAITING LISTS

Waiting lists will be maintained for all schools and year groups where necessary for children not offered a school place at their first preference school. Placement will be determined by applying the over-subscription criteria outlined above. Waiting lists will remain until the first day of a new academic year (1 September). At that time parents of pupils on existing lists will be asked to confirm in writing their wish to be placed on a newly constructed waiting list. Names will be removed from the lists if requested or if the offer of a place that becomes available is not accepted. Positions on waiting lists may change due to new applications or revised applications in respect of a change of preferred schools, and precedence is given to those subject to a direction or an admission in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Late applications are considered as detailed in West Berkshire's Co-ordinated and In-Year Admissions Scheme.

IN-YEAR APPLICATIONS AFTER THE NORMAL ADMISSIONS ROUND

The administration of applications outside the normal admission round is detailed in West Berkshire's Co-ordinated and In-Year Admissions Scheme.

ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP

Requests from parents for school places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully whether for gifted and talented pupils or for those who have experienced problems, e.g. having missed education due to ill health, etc. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, cases will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests between the parents, schools concerned (both old and preferred) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Downs School Governors' Admissions Committee. Those refused places outside the normal age group will be informed of their statutory right of appeal.

APPEALS

Any parent not offered a school place at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. This can be for a place at one or more of your preferred schools and against an alternative school place that has been allocated by this Council. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application. Appeals must be lodged by the dates set out in the Co-ordinated and In-Year Admissions Scheme for the normal admissions round or within 21 days from the date of the offer or refusal letter.

THE PREVIOUS YEARS ALLOCATIONS BY OVER-SUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR 2019/20

SEN	Looked After	Catchment	Sibling	Federated Feeder	Children of Staff	Other
2	2	184	14	2	2	4

SIXTH FORM ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2020/21

Applications should be made on the Sixth Form application form, which can be found on the following link <http://www.thedownsschool.org.uk/404/join-the-sixth-form> . Completed forms should be sent directly to Sixth Form Admissions at The Downs School.

The highest priority is Looked after Children and previously Looked after Children who meet the criteria under 1 and 2 below.

1 ADMISSION NUMBERS

At age 16, a minimum of 10 "additional" places will be offered in Year 12 (i.e. over and above students attending The Downs School who progress from Year 11 to Year 12).

2 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

At age 16 The Downs School has an open admissions policy, subject to the availability of appropriate courses and to particular requirements as published in the Sixth Form Prospectus. A student must be capable of benefiting from the programme of study.

In order to give the widest possible access for the variety of courses offered the Admission Arrangements are based on the grades achieved at GCSE as detailed below:

Detailed criteria are:

- A. Students choosing BTEC Level Two courses will be expected to have achieved 4 level 9-2 grades (or equivalent) or above at GCSE.
- B. Students choosing an Applied Level Three Pathway will be expected to have achieved at least 5 level 9-4 grades (or equivalent) or above at GCSE..
- C. Students choosing to take A levels will be expected to have achieved at least 7 level 9-4 grades (or equivalent) or above at GCSE, with students wishing to take 4 A levels being recommended to have achieved 7 level 9-6 grades (or equivalent) or above at GCSE.
- D. Individual subjects will have their own entry requirements, which are published in the Course Guide.
- E. All students will be expected to follow full time programmes of study.
- F. Entry to Year 13 is dependent upon students having successfully completed their Year 12 programmes of study.

3 WAITING LISTS

If over-subscribed a waiting list will be operated on the same criteria as for Year 7 entry. Appeals for Sixth Form entry will follow the same rules as for Year 7 entry.

4 CLOSING DATE AND LATE APPLICATIONS

The closing date for applications for school places in the normal admission round is Monday, 20 January 2020.

The Downs School will, as far as possible, accept late applications.

The full policy can be obtained from the school and it is available through the LA website at: <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/29713>

This co-ordinated and in-year scheme for school admissions for 2020/21 has been adopted by the Governing Board of The Downs School, Compton

Signed: Mr Peter Clark, Chair

Date: Tuesday, 12 February 2019