

# Admissions Policy

## For entry from 1 September 2020

### Consultation Document



#### **Background**

The Spires College, as a Trust School, operates its own Admissions Policy as set out below. This policy is the responsibility of the Governing Body of the College. It is hoped that the policy will be operated without significant year-on-year change to introduce stability into the admissions to the College. The School Admissions process is published and formulated by the Local Authority and includes common dates and application form. This is agreed by all admission authorities and is published on the LA and College websites.

As a Bilateral School, The Spires College has two distinct populations at the time of entry. These are recognised as Selective students who have passed the selection test to enter the College and Non-Selective students who have not passed the test, or who have chosen not to take it.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all prospective students are treated fairly and that the college continues to provide an educational facility to serve the local community in which it resides. To achieve this, it will work in co-operation with other Admitting Authorities within Torbay under Torbay Council's co-ordinated scheme.

#### **Admissions Committee**

The Admissions Committee consists of five members, including the College's Principal and four Governors. A minimum of three members are required to make decisions regarding admissions.

#### **Designated Area**

The Spires College wishes to serve as a community school and, as such, seeks to service a specific designated area. A map showing this area is included at the end of this document; however children from both inside and outside of this area are admitted.

#### **Planned Admission Number (PAN)**

The planned admission number into Year 7 each year is 210 students. This figure remains the same as each year group progresses through the college. While we plan to keep to this figure we reserve the right to exceed it as detailed in the DfE Code on School Admissions.

## **Ratio of Selective and Non-Selective places**

There are up to 60 selective places available in each year group. If any of these places remain following the allocation process they will be used to increase the number of non-selective places in the College. For example, if only 30 of the maximum of 60 selective places per year are awarded, the balance of 180 places will be allocated to students with applications for a non-selective place.

## **Children with Education, Health and Care Plans**

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Body to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names their school. This is not an oversubscription criterion and schools must admit such children whether they have vacancies or not. Therefore places will be allocated to these students before other applications are considered.

## **Oversubscription Criteria**

If there are more applications than available places the applications will be prioritised in the order of the following categories.

1. Looked after Children or children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order.
2. Children whose home address is inside the designated area.
3. Children whose home address is outside of the designated area.

When there are more applications than available places, categories 2 and 3 above will be prioritised in the following order.

- a. A sibling already attends The Spires College.
- b. The application is for a child of a member of staff (as per criteria set out in the School Admissions Code).
- c. All other applications.

When there are more applications than available places, categories a, b and c above will be prioritised in straight line distance order from the home address. Distance is measured in the following ways:

- ▲ When the home address is within the designated area - furthest from Churston Ferrers Grammar School first for selective or Torquay Academy for non-selective and post 16.
- ▲ When the home address is outside of the designated area - closest to The Spires College first.

In the event of applications being received for two or more children living exactly the same distance from the school, the allocation will be made by lot undertaken by the LA Admissions Manager on behalf of the College by the operation of an electronic list randomiser. This may be in the presence of a College representative.

## Selective Entry from Primary School

So that you can have a good idea whether an application for a selective place may be successful, the test takes place before the closing date for applications. You must register your child to take the test at one of the selective schools in Torbay by the published deadline. Candidates can take only one test within Torbay and, if an application is made to more than one selective school in Torbay, the selective schools will share the results.

The test consists of two CEM papers, completed on a Saturday in September. The CEM papers are supplied by Durham University and will be marked in accordance with their regulations.

The Spires College can offer up to 60 selective places in each year. Places will be offered to those students who meet the eligible score in the test as determined by the Admissions Panel. The required standard will be a score in the top 55% of candidates. This means that the percentage pass rate may vary from one year to another, depending on the abilities of the students in the local area in any one year.

If the above criteria result in over 60 selective places being filled, candidates will be grouped as follows:

Group A	Group B	Group C
The 60 highest scoring candidates who meet the eligible score in the test as determined by the Admissions Panel.	The remaining candidates who meet the eligible score in the test as determined by the Admissions Panel.	Candidates who do not meet the eligible score in the test as determined by the Admissions Panel.
These candidates will be eligible for a selective place.	These candidates will not initially be eligible for a selective place. However, if a selective place becomes available during the allocation process, it will be offered to the highest scoring candidate in group B.	These candidates will not be eligible for a selective place.

Special arrangements for the tests will only be based on support an applicant regularly receives in school. For example large-print test papers for visually impaired candidates, the use of magnifying aids, coloured filters, templates or the provision of a scribe to record the child's answers. Special arrangement requests, including additional time to a maximum of 25%, will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Special arrangements must not provide an unfair advantage over others. Requests for special arrangements should be made at the same time as a registration form is submitted and should be accompanied by a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Primary School SEND Support information. Each case will be considered on its own merit and the current school may be consulted.

An alternative test date is offered only in exceptional circumstances that are pre-arranged with the College. Exceptional circumstances include illness and circumstances that mean the candidate was disadvantaged on the day, as well as families with unavoidable work commitments that coincide with the days of the test. In these cases confirmation from the employer will be required.

In the event of a tie on score and the selective places being oversubscribed, children will be ranked in order of the over subscription criteria.

Applications for selective places where candidates do not reach the required standard to qualify for a selective place will automatically be considered for a non-selective place, alongside all applications for non-selective places.

Within fourteen days of the test, a parent/carer may submit a case that there were exceptional circumstances that may have affected a candidate's performance prior to or on one of the test days. The Admissions Panel will consider each written case before the end of November, obtaining information from the current primary school, such as assessment results, school reports and a letter of support indicating why it is considered that the candidate is of the appropriate academic ability and, where appropriate, other agencies such as the educational psychologist service. Cases based upon illness must be supported by a medical certificate or letter from a relevant medical practitioner. After considering the case the panel may decide that the candidate could have reached the standard required to gain a selective place, but for the exceptional circumstances, and that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the candidate is of the required academic standard to be awarded a selective place.

### **Late applications for Entry from Primary School and Waiting Lists**

Late applications will be considered after those received by the closing date. If the college is oversubscribed, applications that have not resulted in a place being offered will be kept on a waiting list ranked in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where a place becomes available it will be offered to the child whose application is at the top of the waiting list. The waiting list does not differentiate between selective and non-selective students and, as of the first day of the next academic year, all new and existing applications are considered as in-year admissions. When a year group is oversubscribed, waiting lists for in-year transfer applications will be kept for each year group.

### **In-Year Admissions (Years 7 – 11)**

In-year admissions are those when a student enters the College at any time other than normal transfer from primary secondary school. Applications are made to Torbay Council's School Admissions team. Information and an online application facility are available at: <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schooladmissions> or by contacting 01803 208908 for a TIPS 4 booklet.

Places offered will only be held open until the first day of the next half term or for four weeks from the date a written offer is made, whichever is latest. After a place has been offered, students will be tested to assess their ability using English and Mathematics assessments administered by the College.

### **In-Year Admissions - Selective Places in Years 7 & 8**

Once a place has been offered the following criteria will apply for placement to the selective groups:

- ▲ A score in the 11+ tests taken in Year 6 within Torbay that would have secured a selective place during the primary transfer process.  
OR
- ▲ Key stage 2 test scores of at least two 'greater depth' and one 'working at' in English, Mathematics and Science, in any combination. Where an applicant has not taken these tests, due allowance will be made, however, academic evidence will be sought.  
OR
- ▲ Secondary CATs scores of 114 average (three test minimum score of 110).  
OR
- ▲ Scores of at least 75% in each of the English and Mathematics assessments written by and taken at The Spires College as part of the admission process.

## **In-Year Admissions - Selective Places in Years 9, 10 & 11**

Once a place has been offered the following criteria will apply for placement to the selective groups:

- ▲ A score in the 11+ tests taken in Year 6 within Torbay that would have secured a selective place during the primary transfer process.  
OR
- ▲ Secondary CATs scores of 114 average (three test minimum score of 110).  
OR
- ▲ Scores of at least 75% in each of the English and Mathematics assessments written by and taken at The Spires College as part of the admission process.

If the selective allocation of 60 places in a year group is full at the time of admission, students transferring in-year will be admitted to non-selective places.

## **Fair Access Protocols**

Children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit, or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list. The Protocol aims to ensure that the needs of children are fully considered before admission to school and that they are admitted to school without undue delay. Torbay Council's Fair Access Protocol can be found at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/cs/admission-policies/>.

## **Post 16 Admissions (Sixth Form)**

The Spires College operates a Sixth Form, and requires that all students will have a personal discussion with senior staff prior to their being offered a place. This will review the applicant's intended subject choices against the courses available in the College, and the contribution of subjects for future career profiles. Applications are welcomed from the College's Year 11 population, as well as from those external to the College. All applications must be made directly to the College and can be made by students or their parents/carers.

The criteria applied to a place being offered are as follows:

- ▲ Suitability for the individual courses chosen. Course specific entry requirements apply and are published in the Sixth Form prospectus.
- ▲ Grade 4 (or equivalent) or above, including English and Mathematics, will be required. Most courses have additional subject-specific entry requirements, as published annually in the Sixth Form Prospectus. In cases where students have not studied for GCSEs, alternative evidence of academic achievement will be sought. There are no entry requirements for Vocational Pathway Study Programmes.
- ▲ Offers of places will be made subject to courses running. The College reserves the right to withdraw courses that have insufficient students or if financial implications make them unviable. In addition, entry may be refused to specific subject-groups where the practical maximum number of students will be exceeded. Negotiations for alternative courses will take place with students who are affected by this situation.

Internal students who meet the criteria and apply will be offered a place. The Planned Admission Limit for external applicants entering Year 12 is 100 students.

When there are more applications than places available the oversubscription criteria detailed on page 3 of this document will apply.

## **Definitions**

### **Residential Address**

The child's home address is taken to be the address of the person who receives Child Benefit for them (or would be eligible to) and evidence of this may be required. When over-subscribed, the College will seek proof of address such as a utility bill, council tax bill or letter from an official body such as the Benefits Agency. For entry from primary school the proof of address must show that the address was correct on 31 December of the year the child is in year 6 and for in-year admissions must be dated within the six weeks prior to the date of application. Alternatively, for in-year applications, a solicitor's letter confirming a signed contract for a house purchase would be deemed appropriate. Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown servants are entitled to provide other forms of evidence of intent to move to the area and may use a unit address. Failure to satisfy the College of residence at the address used in an application for the allocation of a place may lead to the withdrawal of the place if it has been offered.

### **Distance**

Distance will be calculated using the website [www.doogal.co.uk](http://www.doogal.co.uk), using the 'crow flies' facility on the 'driving distances' page.

The distance is measured in the following ways:

- ▲ When the home address is within the designated area - furthest from Churston Ferrers Grammar School first for selective or Torquay Academy for non-selective and post 16.
- ▲ When the home address is outside of the designated area - closest to The Spires College first.]

### **Sibling Definition**

For the purposes of this policy the definition of "siblings" is children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.

### **Multiple Birth or Same Year Siblings**

Where applications are received for multiple birth or same-year siblings, each sibling within the same year group will be offered a place, even if this exceeds the planned admission number.

### **Looked After Children Definition**

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. For the purposes of this policy 'looked after child' also refers to a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement or special guardianship order. This is in accordance with the 2002 Adoption Act.

### **Out of year applications**

Admission into a year group other than that which is usual for a child's age are not typical but applications of this kind will be considered on individual merits.

## Appeals Process

The Spires College uses the Torbay Independent Appeals Panel to hear appeals for unsuccessful applications. If an applicant is not satisfied with the final outcome of the application process and there are exceptional circumstances supporting an application for a place, then an appeal may be made. Applicants have the right of appeal and appeals heard by Torbay Independent Appeals Panel are organised by the Governance Support Team at Torbay Council. More information regarding the appeals process is available at:

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schooladmissions> or by contacting Governance Support by email to [governance.support@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:governance.support@torbay.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01803 207013. The Governance Team is based at Torquay Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR.

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<b>Adopted:</b> pending consultation	

# Map Showing Designated Area

