

Admissions Policy

For entry from 1 September 2021



Approved: November 2019

Adopted: February 2020

Review Due:

October 2020

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. . After point of entry, the number of students admitted will become the operational capacity at which the college can function and used to define if the year group is full. 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

Please note, the following criteria apply for all places, selective and non-selective. 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. The application is for a child of a member of staff in either or both of the circumstances defined on page 8 of this document.
- b. A sibling already attends The Spires College.
- 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 Torquay Academy first. Distance is measured in this way to ensure that children who live in the west of the catchment area (between The Spires College and Torquay Academy) are not ranked higher than those living to the east (between The Spires College and the sea).
- ▲ 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 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.

In order to allocate selective places 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 and will be ranked with non-selective applicants.

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.

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, as shown on page 2.

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. An example of an exceptional circumstance would be the death of a parent.

Testing Arrangements

The test is taken on Saturday 19 September 2020 and is supervised by staff from the school.

Test Times

CEM Paper 1	9 am – 10 am
Break	10 am – 10.15 am
CEM Paper 2	10.20 am – 11.20 am

CEM Tests will be marked externally in accordance with their regulations.

The CEM tests will assess verbal ability (comprehension, vocabulary and verbal reasoning), numerical reasoning and non-verbal reasoning. There will be two papers, each with approximately 45-50 minutes of timed test questions. There is a mix of content within each paper.

CEM do not produce commercially available practice material for the tests but parents can download a copy of the familiarisation booklet from the school website. This does give a feel for the appearance of the tests and the range of disciplines tested and answer formats used. The two CEM test scores will be combined.

Children who are unable to take the tests on Saturday 19 September 2020, due to illness or other significant acceptable reason, will be offered the opportunity to take the tests at the catch-up date in late September. However, this must be discussed with the school at the earliest opportunity.

Legitimate late applications after the catch up tests will be taken in early December where parents can demonstrate, with evidence, a genuine case. Parents without a genuine case will be then advised to make contact after National Allocation Day for late testing to be considered in the 2nd Round of Allocations.

Where parents have applied for a selective place without having taken the 11+ examination the student cannot be considered for a selective place on National Allocation Day.

Late applications for Entry from Primary School (main round) 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.

As of the first day of the next academic year, all new and existing main round 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.

Late applications and applications on a waiting list are not differentiated by whether they are for selective or non-selective places.

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 must be accepted by returning the registration form within ten school days of the written offer and 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 accepted, students will be tested to assess their ability using English and Mathematics assessments administered by the College and an admission meeting will take place.

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/>.

Sixth Form Admissions

The Spires College operates a fully inclusive Sixth Form. We offer study programmes at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Conditions of Admission

All students seeking admission to the Sixth Form are required to have a discussion with senior staff prior to their being offered a place. The purpose of this meeting is to review the applicant's intended subject choices against the courses available at the College and to consider the contribution of subjects to future career profiles.

All Level 3 programmes are two-year, full-time programmes. Our Vocational programmes are, initially, one-year, full-time programmes but many offer students the opportunity to progress up to Level 3.

Offers of places will be made subject to courses running. The College reserves the right to withdraw courses that have insufficient student numbers or if financial implications make them unviable. In addition, entry may be refused to courses where the practical maximum of students will be exceeded. Negotiations for alternative courses will take place with students who are affected by such situations.

Offers of places on Level 3 study programmes will be conditional on meeting academic entry requirements.

Academic Entry Requirements

There are academic entry requirements for admission onto Level 3 study programmes. This is to ensure that we accept students onto programmes on which they will have a reasonable chance of success.

- ▲ For admission onto a Level 3 Academic study programme, students will need to have achieved a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade 5 or above, including English and Mathematics. Course specific entry requirements, as described in the Sixth Form Course Guide, will also apply.
- ▲ For admission onto a Level 3 Applied study programme, students will need to have achieved a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including English and Mathematics. Course specific entry requirements, as described in the Sixth Form Course Guide, will also apply.

There are no academic entry requirements onto Level 1 or Level 2 vocational study programmes.

Any student admitted to the Sixth Form who has not achieved, at least, a Grade 4 in GCSE English and/or GCSE Mathematics, will be required to continue to study these subjects as part of their Sixth Form study programme.

Educational Progression Requirements

Students' Sixth Form study programmes must demonstrate educational progression. Students will be admitted onto programmes which do not demonstrate educational progression only in exceptional circumstances.

Age Requirements

The Spires College Sixth Form is a school-based Sixth Form. As such, admission to the Sixth Form will be to the year group which is usual for a child's age:

- ▲ For admission to Year 12 – aged 16 years on 31st August 2021
- ▲ For admission to Year 13 – aged 17 years on 31st August 2021

Admission into a year group other than that which is usual for a child's age is not typical but applications of this kind will be considered ~~on individual merits.~~ by our Sixth Form management team where there are exceptional circumstances that demonstrate this is in the best interests of the young person .

Funding Eligibility Requirements

Students seeking admission to The Spires College Sixth Form must meet the funding eligibility requirements as set out in the relevant *ESFA Funding guidance for young people*.

The Application Process

Applications are welcomed from the College's Year 11 population, as well as from those external to the College. Applications can be made by students or their parents/carers.

The College holds a Sixth Form Open Evening in November, attendance at which is recommended for all applicants. The date is available from College and advertised on the College website.

Applications should be received by the advertised deadline. Late applications will be considered against the same criteria as above providing that there is good reason for not meeting the published deadline.

Capacity

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

Where there are more applications than places available, the oversubscription criteria detailed on page 2 of this document will apply.

Definitions

Residential Address

The residential/home address used to prioritise applications is the one where the child lives at the time of application (for Primary to Secondary Transfer this will normally be the closing date for applications). Where a child lives under the care of separated parents, the address of either parent may be used as long as it can be proved that the child lives at that address for part of the school week. Torbay Local Authority, as co-ordinators of the scheme, will make the final decision about the address to be used.

In the event of oversubscription, checks will be made to ensure that the given address is correct, usually by requesting documents, such as council tax statements, utility bills, benefit statements or tax / universal credit statements. Telephone bills and bank statements will not be accepted. Should there be a concern that an address may be fraudulent or misleading, additional information may be requested or a visit made to the address to check that it is genuine. In these instances, the college will adopt Torbay Council's Address of Convenience Protocol, available to view on Torbay Council's website. If the address is found to be fraudulent, the offer of a place may be withdrawn. If the child concerned has already begun attending the college, the amount of time that they have been attending will be taken into consideration.

Where an applicant is a member of the UK forces or a crown servant returning from overseas, official proof of a posting to the area will be required as stated in the Schools Admissions Code.

If a family seeking a place as part of the Primary to Secondary Transfer moves home on or before 4 February 2021, or if they have exchanged contracts on a residential property purchase by that date, the new address will be used as the residential address for the purposes of the application. If a family moves on or before 4 February 2021 but does not declare this change to Torbay Council and the child is allocated a place at the college that, based upon the new address, they should not have been, this place may be withdrawn if the college is oversubscribed.

Distance

Distance will be calculated using the website 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 Torquay Academy first. Distance is measured in this way to ensure that children who live in the west of the catchment area (between The Spires College and Torquay Academy) are not ranked higher than those living to the east (between The Spires College and the sea).
- ▲ 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 at the same home address, 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.

Applications from members of staff

This oversubscription criteria regarding children of members of staff applies where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or they were recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. This would be a post that the school has had difficulty in filling indicated for instance by a nationwide or international recruitment drive and/or where the post was not filled at the first attempt.

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. Applications for a place should be made in the normal way (TIPSB form via Torbay Council) and accompanied by a letter to the Principal detailing why a place out of year is being sought. Applicants will need to give specific consent for the letter to be shared with the college along with the application form. In these circumstances, there is no right of appeal if the application for an out of year place is refused but one in the correct year group is offered.

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 or by telephone on 01803 207013. The Governance Team is based at Torquay Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR.

Map Showing Designated Area

