



## VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST

### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR YEARS 9 - 12 AND POST-GCSE 2024

#### YEARS 9-12 ADMISSION

##### 1. Definitions

**Applicant** means the parent or guardian who completes and submits an application form on behalf of the Candidate.

**Parent** means a person who at the date of application has legal responsibility for the Candidate.

**Candidate** means the child identified on the application form as seeking to gain admission to the College.

**Child of the Family** means

- 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;
- A situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual;

The Candidate should be a child of the family as at the date of application.

**Child Looked After** means a Candidate who, at the date on which they submit their post-primary Transfer Application, or at any time up to 4.00 pm on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, are in the care of a Trust or who are provided with accommodation by a Trust. Accommodation may be in a residential home, residential school, foster placement or in a family placement with a relative or occasionally at home.

**Eldest Child of the Family** will include the eldest or only girl in a family. Eldest sibling twins (or other multiples) will be treated as joint eldest. In circumstances where a family has not had the opportunity to enrol a daughter older than the Candidate in the College, such as in cases where the elder daughter has already completed their post-primary education, or could not attend mainstream school (for example, they attend a special school), or where a family has relocated to Northern Ireland and the elder daughter attended post-primary school outside of Northern Ireland, a Candidate will be treated as the Eldest Child of the Family.

**Entitled to Free School Meals** means a Candidate who, at the date on which they submit their application form has communicated within their application that they are listed on the Education Authority register as being entitled to Free School Meals.

#### Admissions Criteria

1. Admission to Years 9-12 will be governed by the availability of places within that year group, class sizes including practical class sizes and the College's planned allocation and usage of staff, accommodation and other resources. Admission to the College will be based on the Candidate's ability to benefit from the academic and creative life of the College, as assessed by the application of the criteria below.
2. The following criteria will be applied in the order stated to determine the admission of pupils into Years 9-11:

- 2.1 If the number of Candidates who are assessed by the Board of Governors as having the ability to benefit from the academic and creative life of the College exceeds the number of available places the following criteria will be applied:
- (i) Candidate with proven academic ability as demonstrated by achieving a score in Vocabulary and Mathematics on or above the national average (100) in a recognised standardised test sat at Victoria College Belfast; and
  - (ii) Candidates who have shown by the academic progress and positive attitude to date that they will benefit from the academic provision available at Victoria College Belfast. Evidence will be sought from reports from the previous school attended which must accompany the application.
- 2.2 If the number of applicants with proven academic ability, academic progress and positive attitude exceeds the numbers of available places then the following criteria shall apply in the order stated:
3. In the event of being oversubscribed with Candidates for any year group the following criteria will apply:
- i. Candidates who, at the date of application, were previously enrolled in the Preparatory Department of the College;
  - ii. Candidates who, at the date of application, have a Child of the Family currently enrolled in the Secondary Department of the College;
  - iii. Candidates who are a Child Looked After or entitled to Free School Meals;\*
  - iv. Candidates who, at the date of application, are the Eldest Child of the Family eligible for admission to the College in September 2024;\*
  - v. Candidates who, at the date of application, have another Child of the Family accepted for the Secondary Department of the College for the forthcoming academic year;
  - vi. Candidates who, at the date of application, have another Child of the Family attending any other single sex post-primary school or have another Child of the Family accepted to attend a single sex school for the forthcoming academic year;\*

\*This is subject to satisfying verification requirements as set out below.

Following the application of all of the above criteria, should more than one candidate tie for the remaining place(s), the following tie breaker will be used. For the avoidance of doubt, this is to be used as an ultimate criterion after application of the above criteria and not in the event of oversubscription in any one main criterion.

**Tie-Breaker:** Candidates will be ranked for acceptance on the basis of a computer-based process which will make use of the data as entered on the Application form. The process is carried out by means of a computer program which, for each child, generates a ranking number using the details from the Application form as the seed for a random number generator. The ranking number generated, for any given child, is dependent only on the candidate's data (as entered on the Application form) and is not affected by the details of any other child. Although the process is repeatable, and the results may therefore be subsequently verified, it is not possible to predict, in advance of running the program, what the result will be for any given set of details. Children with the lowest ranking numbers will be given places up to the number of places available.

**Verification:**

Verification letters must be written on headed notepaper and signed by a principal, a medical practitioner, a solicitor, a member of the clergy, a police officer or an elected representative. The verifier must not be a member of the family of the Candidate and they must have known the Candidate for at least two years.

## POST-GCSE/SIXTH FORM ADMISSION

The Board of Governors of the College recognises the demands of Sixth Form study and will consider applications from those Candidates who have achieved an academic profile that adequately equips them for A-level study and will make a positive contribution to the life of Victoria College. Candidates should demonstrate their ability to fulfil these criteria by providing an academic profile and general school record as described below.

### YEAR 13 ENTRY

1. Priority for entry to Sixth Form courses will be given to pupils already enrolled at Victoria College. All pupils enrolled in Year 12 at the College who meet the following criteria will have a right to a place in the Sixth Form.

#### 1.1 Academic Profile

The essential minimum criteria for entry to Year 13 are as follows:

- i A minimum of 7 GCSEs at grade C or 4 or higher to include English and Mathematics.
- ii In the first instance Candidates with 14 points or higher will be admitted. Thereafter if places are available Candidates will be admitted on a descending scale to a minimum of 10 points. GCSE points are allocated as shown in the table below:

CCEA Grades	English Exam Board Grades	GCSE Points
A*	9	4
A	8 /7	3
B	6	2
C*	5	1.5
C	4	1

NB For a short course GCSE the points awarded in that subject are halved.

- iii Candidates must study a minimum of three AS subjects. Candidates wishing to study four AS-levels are required to gain over 24 points.
- iv Candidate should display a high level of competence in the AS subject chosen. If the AS chosen was taken at GCSE, then a B grade is a minimum requirement (except in Mathematics where the minimum requirement is grade A, and in Biology, Chemistry and Physics where the minimum requirement is grade A or Double Award Science AA). In the event of a class being oversubscribed, priority will be given to those Candidates who have taken the subject to GCSE level and the grade attained. In the case of a subject which is not offered at GCSE, the grade in an allied subject will be the determining factor.

#### 2. Attitudes and Behaviour Record:

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make a positive contribution to the College by satisfying the following criteria:

- 2.1 Behaviour: Not more than one suspension in Years 11 and 12.

#### 3. Criteria for any extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission into Year 13 (Sixth Form)

The Department of Education (DE) may, on request, increase the number of pupils that the College can admit to Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to Candidates who meet the basic eligibility criteria for Sixth Form study (as above - ref 1.1) and shall be allocated in the order

determined by the criteria to be applied in the order set down.

- Pupils who have most recently completed Year 12 in Victoria College.
- Candidates from other schools where admission to an extra place in Victoria College has been agreed by DE.

The Department's policy on extra Sixth Form places is generally to grant places to a school to extend its ability to admit returners, who meet the College's Sixth Form admissions criteria, to Year 13. The Department also grants extra Sixth Form places to schools for young people from other schools who otherwise would not be able to pursue their post-16 course choices at a suitable school without undertaking an unreasonable journey.

The key test applied by the Department when deciding whether or not to award additional places to the enrolment number of a school for external Candidates seeking a place in that school's Sixth Form is whether or not a Candidate can pursue their post-16 course choices at a suitable school, with places available, without undertaking an unreasonable journey (defined as a journey that cannot be taken within one hour or is further than 15 miles).

To determine the type of school that is suitable for a Candidate, DE first considers all schools to be one of 4 types: (i) denominational (ii) non-denominational (iii) integrated and (iv) Irish-medium. A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 Candidate will belong to one of these 4 types and DE will consider any other school or school from this same type as suitable for the Candidate. DE will also consider as suitable for the Candidate any school from the same type as the type of school that the child attended in Year 12.

#### **4. Special Consideration**

Special consideration will be given to Candidates under the following circumstances:

- 4.1 A medical or other problem that may have temporarily affected a Candidate's academic performance. Applications for Special Consideration should be supported by appropriate independent documentary evidence.
- 4.2 If a Candidate fails to meet criterion 4.1 above for a reason which the Principal considers to be substantial and sufficient to allow a judgement that the Candidate would be likely to benefit from the academic courses provided and be able to contribute positively to the life of the College.

## **ENTRY TO REPEAT YEAR 13**

Pupils who meet the following criteria will be considered eligible to repeat Year 13:

Pupils who -

- i have attended Year 13 in Victoria College in the previous academic year;
- ii have extenuating circumstances (i.e. medical or other problems which may have affected their performance in Year 13);
- iii are recommended by the Principal as being able to benefit from repeating Year 13 at the College.

In exceptional circumstances a final decision to admit a pupil to repeat Year 13 may be referred to the Board of Governors.

Applicants should note that examination and other fees applicable during the year to be repeated must be paid by the parents/guardian in advance of the Candidate being admitted to the year to be repeated.

## **WAITING LIST POLICY**

Should a vacancy arise after places have been finalised, all applications for admission to the relevant year group that were initially refused, new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. This waiting list will be in place until the 30<sup>th</sup> June of the year following application.

A Candidate's name will be automatically added to the list and the College will contact Applicants in writing if a Candidate gains a place in the College by this method. Applicants are asked to contact the College if they wish a Candidate's name to be removed from the list.

It should be noted that all those who have applied previously, but who have failed to obtain a place in the College, will have their application held open until 30 June of the year following application when their application will be deemed to have lapsed.