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Whitburn Church of England Academy

Sixth Form Admissions Policy 2024

Preface - Vision and values

‘But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete eagerness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving’ (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Our vision is rooted in this biblical teaching and is expressed through our school motto of ‘Excellence for All’. At Whitburn C of E Academy we embrace Jesus’ promise of *‘life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10)* and believe in this vision of human flourishing for all, permeated by key elements of wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

As Christians believe we are ‘created in the image of God’ (**Genesis 1:26f**), Whitburn C of E Academy, as an Anglican school, is unequivocal in our view that a good education must educate the **whole** person; we strive to ensure that all young people and adults in our community develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally and socially.

We act in accordance with the belief that God wants us to excel both in our individual character and in our actions. This means seeking to be the very best we can be in all aspects of our lives, grounded in Whitburn’s Christian ‘Be Values’ that are integral to our school community.

Light, a universal and powerful spiritual and divine symbol, is one that we embrace at Whitburn C of E Academy and, in harmony with our vision and values, we encourage all to *‘let your light shine before others’*. (**Matthew 5:16**)

Whitburn Church of England Academy aims to develop its spiritual ethos in accordance with Christian principles and values. The Academy will work in partnership with the Church at Parish, Deanery and Diocesan level and under the guidance of the Church of England. We aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality and encouraging an understanding of the meaning and significance of a spiritual dimension in our lives.

We will support the development of moral values and of a rich and fulfilling spiritual life for all. It will support those of Christian faith within the context of Christian belief and practice and will respect and encourage those of other faiths and no faith. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

The Academy’s Vision and Values can be found here:

<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/about-us/academy-ethos.html>

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Introduction

The Whitburn Church of England Academy Trust Board are the admissions authority for the school. The Academy has a Sixth Form capacity of 240 students. The maximum number of Year 12 students admitted for any given year is determined by the number of Year 13 students in that academic year.

The Academy is required by the School Admission Code 2021 to set a planned published admission number (PAN) for external applicants who wish to join our sixth form in year 12. We welcome and encourage applications from external applicants and can offer a minimum number of 10 places to external applicants joining Year 12. This figure is a minimum and in previous years we have often been able to offer more places to external applicants where the number of internal students transferring into Year 12 is less than the overall capacity figure for the year group. The entry requirements are identical for external applicants as they are for internal and are set out below.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Whitburn Church of England Academy will always be made conditional offer provided they meet the required entry requirements.

The academic admissions criteria are set out below:

The academy provides A Level courses of study and some vocational courses, (see Prospectus for details) for sixth form students, the entry requirements are laid out below:

For a programme of study consisting of A Levels only:

- Applicants must achieve at least eight GCSE grades at 9-1 or Level 2 Technical Award at distinction or merit.
- Applicants must achieve at least five GCSE passes at grades 9-5 or Level 2 Technical Award at distinction or merit, including English and Mathematics, and at least a grade 5 in each subject to be taken at A Level (see detailed course entry requirements listed in the Sixth Form prospectus as some subjects differ from this due to the level of academic demand they require).
- Students who do not achieve Level 4 in English and/or Maths *may* be offered a place if they meet the requirements to study other courses, but they would have to re-take English and/or Maths GCSE.
- In the event of oversubscription in individual subjects, or to the year group, GCSE average point score will be considered. Those who applied by the deadline and met the criteria above and who achieve the highest Average Point Scores for GCSE will be given priority when filling classes. We advise against students only focusing on those GCSE subjects they wish to progress to A Level as neglecting some GCSE subjects will negatively impact Average Point Score.

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For a programme of study consisting of A Levels *and* vocational courses:

- Applicants must achieve at least eight GCSE grades at 9-1 or Level 2 Technical Award at distinction or merit.
- Applicants must achieve at least four GCSE passes at grades 9-4 or Level 2 Technical Award at distinction or merit, including English and Mathematics, and at least a grade 5 in any subject to be taken at A Level (see detailed course entry requirements listed in the Sixth Form prospectus as some subjects differ from this due to the level of academic demand they require).
- Students who do not achieve Level 4 in English and/or Maths *may* be offered a place if they meet the requirements to study other courses, but they would have to re-take English and/or Maths GCSE.
- In the event of oversubscription in individual subjects the GCSE average point score will be considered. Those who applied by the deadline and met the criteria above and who achieve the highest Average Point Scores for GCSE will be given priority when filling classes. We advise against students only focusing on those GCSE subjects they wish to progress to A Level as neglecting some GCSE subjects will negatively impact Average Point Score.

Details of the entry requirements and courses offered are available in the Sixth Form Prospectus which may be obtained directly from the website.

It should be noted that the availability of the courses is dependent upon the number of applicants and the financial sustainability of the course. We will contact applicants at the earliest opportunity – usually shortly after Easter – if it becomes clear that a course is not viable.

Continuation Requirements

It is envisaged that all students admitted to Year 12 will continue until the end of Year 13. Students intending to leave after Year 12 should talk to the Head of Sixth Form at the earliest opportunity to discuss possible AS entry, which may or may not be possible depending on coverage of the AS content.

The following criteria must be met in order to secure progression to Year 13:

- Students must achieve at least a D grade in any subject in which they wish to progress to Year 2 in the internal mock exams which take place at the end of Year 12. This is to ensure students have a reasonable chance of success in the full A level exam.
- Students must make a concerted effort to develop skills of independence such that they are seen to be managing independent study periods effectively.
- Students must demonstrate their commitment by maintaining a minimum 90% attendance.
- Students must meet our high expectations, uphold the ethos of the Academy and adhere to the terms of the learner agreement.

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- Students will be treated as individuals and all circumstances will be considered when decisions are taken about continuation in Sixth Form.

Oversubscription Criteria

Students who have attended the academy in the previous academic year (Year 11) and who satisfy the specified entry requirements for the courses available will be offered a place in the sixth form.

In the unlikely event that the school receives more external applications than can be accommodated in Year 12 from students who meet our entry criteria for our courses, the following oversubscription criteria will be used:-

1. “Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order (*see note 1*) including children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (*see note 2*) and who satisfy the academy’s entry requirements for the courses available.
2. Students who have a sibling link and are residing at the same address (brother or sister including adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings, and long term fostered children) attending the academy during the academic year of intended admission to Sixth Form (*see note 3*)
3. Other children who live the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using South Tyneside Council’s Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the Academy receiving higher priority (*See note 4*)

The above distance measurement will also be used as a ‘tiebreaker’ within each criterion if necessary. Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using South Tyneside Council’s Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the Academy receiving higher priority will be used. The Academy will seek proof of residency.

Final tiebreaker

Where two or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places, the tiebreaker will be a random allocation and will be by the drawing of lots to determine the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness the School Admissions Team will administer the random allocation system overseen by an independent adjudicator in accordance with the random allocation procedure.

In determining admissions, priority would be given to those applications where the application form is received by the published deadline date.

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Once a place at the Academy has been offered, the Academy will require proof of identity to support the application. Where documents may not be available for students arriving from overseas, the Border Agency may be contacted to verify your details.

Note 1:

By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. An adoption order is one made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A ‘child arrangements order is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A ‘special guardianship order’ is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A).

Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order).

Note 2

Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child’s parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

If it becomes necessary to decide between applicants within the same criterion, the distance tiebreaker described above will be used.

Where two or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places, the tiebreaker will be a random allocation and will be by the drawing of lots to determine the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness the School Admissions Team will administer the random allocation system overseen by an independent adjudicator in accordance with the random allocation procedure.

Note 3:

By sibling we mean a younger brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent’s/carer’s partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. The younger sibling must be attending Whitburn Church of England Academy during the academic year of intended admission to Sixth Form, the Trust Board will consider this as a sibling link. It is helpful if students make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

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Note 4:

The above distance measurement will also be used as a ‘tiebreaker’ within each criterion if necessary.

A student’s home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child’s only or main residence, and is either:

By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child’s parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the Local Authority to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided.

If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to residency), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

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We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the school must be informed.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Withdrawing Offers of a School Place

When considering your application, only the address of the parent/carer with whom the student normally resides will be taken into account (a parent/carer means any person who holds parental responsibility, **and** with whom the child normally resides). We reserve the right to seek proof of your address and it should be noted that an offer of a place may be withdrawn if information supplied by you on your application is intentionally misleading or fraudulent (for example, a false claim to residence). Where a place is withdrawn, your application will be considered afresh, and the right to appeal offered if a place is refused.

Parental Responsibility

Who is a 'parent' in relation to education legislation? Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines the term 'parent' as:

- All natural parents married or not
- Any person who has got 'parental' responsibility (we will require documentary evidence)
- Any person without being a natural parent or having 'parental responsibility' who has care of the student (we will require documentary evidence)

Shared Parental Responsibility

When considering the application, the Governing Body will use the address of the parent where the student resides for the majority of the school week. This will apply even where parents have shared responsibility for the student for equal parts of the week. Documentary evidence will be required (**See note 4**).

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How and When to Apply

Applications must be made via the online application form which goes live on the website early in the Autumn term; a copy of the Sixth Form prospectus can be found on the website. Application forms must be fully completed **by 12 noon on Wednesday 31st January 2024**. Any applications received after this will be treated as late applications and will be dealt with after those received on time.

Offer Date

A provisional offer of a place will be made and this will be subject to confirmation that the required academic entry requirements have been met.