

**METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST**

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**Website:** [www.methody.org](http://www.methody.org)

**Principal:** Mrs J Lendrum BA PGCE MEd PQH(NI)

**Chair of Board of Governors:** Rev Dr J Unsworth

**Voluntary Grammar School**

**Co-Educational**

**Non-Denominational**

**Age Range:** 11-18

**Admission No:** 240

**Enrolment No:** 1810

**OPEN EVENING INFORMATION**

**An open night for pupils of P6 and P7 and their parents will be held in the school on Thursday 11 & Friday 12 January 2024 - 6.30pm – 9.00pm** (there will be a presentation by the Principal in the Assembly Hall at 6.30pm, 7.30pm and again at 8.15pm). The prospectus will be available on the College's website [www.methody.org](http://www.methody.org).

**CAPITAL FEE:** £140 per annum.

**RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL**

The responsibility for selecting applicants for places on the basis of the following criteria is delegated by the Board of Governors to an Admissions Sub-Committee, which includes the Principal. These criteria have been approved by the Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast (referred to herein as 'the College', see note 2 below for further explanation). Any reference herein to the term the Board of Governors includes any Committee or Sub-Committee appointed by the Board of Governors for the purposes of applying the Admissions Criteria set out herein.

There is a separate Year 8 Admissions Process for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is operated by the Education Authority.

**ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**ENTRY TO FORM 1 (YEAR 8) 2024 – 2025**

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria, the Board of Governors will consider late applications received by 4pm on 4 March 2024 to be equal to punctual applications received by 12 noon on 22 February 2024. When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or uploaded with the Transfer Application.

**Section 1. Introduction:**

- 1.1 The Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast intends to apply academic criteria to the applications received and so will accept the Total Standardised Age Score (referred to herein as the score) awarded by the School's Entrance Assessment Group (referred to herein as SEAG) in the Entrance Assessment.
- 1.2 SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil who only takes one paper (i.e. either Paper 1 or Paper 2 but not both) will not have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such pupils will, however, have their "single paper" marked and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have the designation "e" (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, e.g. Total Standardised Age Score TSAS 196e; Band 4e. **Such pupils will only be considered for admission by the Board of Governors under Special Provisions.** If only one assessment was taken because of illness, or other unforeseen circumstances, a claim under Special Provisions should be submitted, which should include the estimated score for the SEAG paper sat, along with additional evidence of academic ability/attainment. The Board of Governors will also give due consideration to other claims for Special Circumstances or Special Provisions as explained in Section 3 and Section 4 of this policy.
- 1.3 The candidate's unique pupil number and the score in the SEAG Entrance Assessment should be entered in the online Transfer Application. Parents/Guardians must also upload the Statement of Outcomes issued by SEAG to their child's online Transfer Application.

*The score awarded in the SEAG Entrance Assessment will be used as follows:*

Applicants will first be placed in rank order based on their results in the Entrance Assessment. Scores will range from 138 – 282 and higher scores will precede lower scores. Applicants will then be sub-divided into bands of 5 marks. Applicants who have claimed Special Circumstances and/or Special Provisions which have been accepted will be placed into a band by the Board of Governors (see Sections 3 and 4 below). The bands used by the Board of Governors will be as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	278 - 282
2	273 - 277
3	268 - 272
4	263 - 267
5	258 - 262
6	253 - 257
7	248 - 252
8	243 - 247
9	238 - 242
10	233 - 237
11	228 - 232
12	223 - 227
13	218 - 222
14	213 - 217
15	208 - 212
16	203 - 207
17	198 - 202
18	193 - 197
19	188 - 192
20	183 - 187
21	178 - 182
22	173 - 177
23	168 - 172
24	163 - 167
25	158 - 162
26	153 - 157
27	148 - 152
28	143 - 147
29	138 - 142

**Please note the Board of Governors does not consider the order in which Parents/Guardians list schools on the online post-primary Transfer Application as part of their Admissions Criteria. All applications are treated as equal.**

**Applicants who will be resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the College will be selected for admission before any such applicants not so resident.**

**Section 2. Admissions Criteria for entry of pupils to Form 1/Year 8 in September 2024**

The number of places available is limited to the Admissions Number set by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; this is 240 places. The cut-off for admission will therefore be the 240th place. If the number of applications is greater than the Admissions Number determined by the Department of Education, the following criteria (to include sub-criteria) shall be applied in the order listed below until the point where the admissions number is reached.

**2.1** Those applicants in the bands down to and including the 240<sup>th</sup> place based on the applicant’s performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment.

In the event of oversubscription in the band containing the 240th place then the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order listed to all applicants within the oversubscribed band:

- 2.1.i Applicants who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSME) (see note 1 below for further explanation);
- 2.1.ii Present members of the College in its Preparatory Department (see note 2);
- 2.1.iii The children of Methodist Ministers (see note 3);
- 2.1.iv Those with sibling(s) who is/are at present enrolled in the Secondary Department of the College or has/have already been offered a place (see note 4);
- 2.1.v If, following the application of the above criteria and sub criteria, it is not possible to identify for admission the exact number of children equivalent to the admissions number (in the event of pupils being tied for the final place(s) on the basis of the sub-criteria) then children will be ranked for acceptance based on a computer-based process (see note 5 below for further explanation).

In the event that there are fewer applicants complying with a particular sub-criterion than there are places available or remaining, those applicants complying with that sub-criterion will be admitted and the next sub-criterion will be applied to the remaining applicants.

In the event that there are more applicants complying with a particular sub-criterion than there are places available or remaining, those applicants complying with that sub-criterion will go forward to be considered under the next sub-criterion and those not complying with that sub-criterion will be eliminated.

If, following the application of criterion 2.1, all the available places have not been filled, the Board of Governors will consider for admission any pupils without a SEAG standardised score. Allocation of these remaining places will be made by applying criteria 2.1.i to 2.1.v.

### **Section 3. Procedure for Special Circumstances:**

#### **3.1 Methodist College has academic performance as its first criterion.**

The Board of Governors will consider medical or other problems which may have affected performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment and which are supported by documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These 'medical or other problems' are commonly referred to as 'Special Circumstances'.

Parents/Guardians who wish to apply to the College under Special Circumstances should complete the SC Form, obtainable from the College website, and upload it with appropriate documentary evidence to the online post-primary Transfer Application. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to provide the evidence as detailed in the SC Form.

**Please note, if a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Special Access arrangements were granted, the Board of Governors may take into account the fact that the applicant was granted Special Access arrangements for those matters. (Section D Access Arrangements within the SC Form).**

#### **3.2 Details of Medical or Other Problems**

Where it is claimed that an applicant's performance in the SEAG Entrance Assessment has been affected by a medical or other problem, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to set out in the SC Form precise details of the problem and upload evidence to corroborate its existence.

Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the applicant only at the time of the Entrance Assessment, the Board of Governors will give greater weight to evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the assessment.

Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the Parent/Guardian should upload appropriate evidence.

It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

#### **3.3 The following Educational Evidence will be considered:**

##### **3.3.1 The score awarded in the SEAG Entrance Assessment**

##### **3.3.2 The results for the applicant of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, with the**

exception of diagnostic tests which will not be accepted, and the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics in Years 5 and 6 (see note 6 below).

3.3.3 The results (without names) for other pupils in the applicant's Year 7 class of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics in Years 5 and 6, and where available, the respective SEAG scores.

It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to provide the educational evidence. Where such information is unavailable for good reason, the Governors reserve the right to make a decision based on the information available.

3.4 The Board of Governors will consider the application for Special Circumstances. Where Special Circumstances are accepted, the Board of Governors will determine, based on the totality of information available, a band for the applicant. In coming to its decision the Board of Governors will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming an educational judgement. This may include comparative data (where available). Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a SEAG score and the Admissions Criteria applied.

#### **Section 4. Procedure for Special Provisions:**

4.1 Special Provisions will apply for:

- a) children whose Parents/Guardians wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland;
- b) children who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland;
- c) children, entered for the SEAG Entrance Assessment, who because of unforeseen and **serious** medical or other problems were unable to participate in the Entrance Assessment;
- d) **For entry to the College in September 2024 only** - children, who because of serious problems were unable to register and participate in the SEAG Entrance Assessment;
- e) children, entered for the SEAG Entrance Assessment, who only completed either paper 1 or paper 2 and received an estimated grade.

It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the SEAG Entrance Assessment, with the exception of those applicants who take up residence in Northern Ireland after the start of Year 7 or those applying under section 4.1c and 4.1d.

Parents/Guardians who wish to apply to the College under Special Provisions should complete the Special Provisions Form (SP Form), obtainable from the College website. This should state the precise reason why they believe the applicant is eligible for consideration under Special Provisions and provide appropriate independent documentary evidence. Any educational evidence as detailed under Special Circumstances above that might assist the panel to determine an appropriate band should be included. A copy of the SP Form and all the documentary evidence should be uploaded to the online post-primary Transfer Application.

For those pupils whose Parents/Guardians wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, applications for Special Provisions should be received by the College by 4 March 2024. (see note 7 below).

4.2 The Board of Governors will consider the application for Special Provisions. Where Special Provisions are accepted, the following procedure will apply:

- a) The Board of Governors will consider any assessment information, with the exception of diagnostic test results, and may choose to assess the applicant's academic ability/attainment.
- b) The Board of Governors will determine, based on the totality of information available, a band for the applicant. In coming to its decision the Board of Governors will use whatever data it deems appropriate and helpful in forming an educational judgement. This may include comparative data (where available). Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a SEAG score and the Admissions Criteria applied.
- c) For those applicants applying under section 4.1d, independently verified information must be provided that confirms the claim of a serious problem. It will be up to the Board of Governors to determine whether the claim is valid and has been appropriately verified.
- d) For those applicants applying under section 4.1e, information must be provided that confirms the reason why only one assessment paper was completed.

### **DUTY TO VERIFY**

Those making applications should note that the information contained within an application that qualifies the child for admission will be verified. The Board of Governors therefore reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any Transfer Application. Those making applications should also note that the provision of false information or incorrect information, or the failure to provide verifying documents according to the required deadline, may result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the Board of Governors to offer a place.

### **WAITING LIST POLICY**

The Board of Governors operates a separate waiting list for Form 1/Year 8. All applications for admission to Form 1/Year 8 that were unsuccessful in obtaining a place in the College will be automatically added to the waiting list. New applications and applications where new information has been provided will also be added to the waiting list. The Form 1/Year 8 waiting list will be in place until 30 June 2025. Please contact the College if you wish your child's name to be removed from the list. Should a vacancy arise after the completion of the Transfer Procedure and should there be more applications than places available, the procedure outlined above in the Admissions Criteria for entry of children to Form 1/Year 8 will be followed. The College will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the College by this method.

### **Notes:**

1. "entitled to Free School Meals" will mean children who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their Parent/Guardian has completed their online post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including 4 March 2024, no later than 4pm.
2. The College has two constituent parts: the Preparatory Department and the Secondary Department.
3. Methodist Ministers must be in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland and provide verification from the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
4. Sibling is defined as "Children who, at the date of application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school". DE definition of the "child of the family" covers the following:
  - 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; or,
  - a situation where for example an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual.**Parents/Guardians claiming the sibling criterion must include the name, date of birth and tutor group of the sibling currently attending the College.**
5. The random selection process referred to in criterion 2.1.v above is carried out by means of a computer program which, for each applicant, generates a random number. The result, for any given applicant, is not affected by the details of any other applicant. Applicants with the lowest random number will be given places up to the number of places available.
6. Parents/Guardians can obtain information about the educational attainment of their child by contacting or writing to the Primary School Principal.
7. Parents/Guardians of children who wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, must complete the online Transfer Application process, in advance of the Transfer Office deadline of 4 March 2024, no later than 4pm, beyond which any new/additional preferences received by the Transfer Office will not be processed until after 18 May 2024.
8. Anyone requiring further information about the Admissions Criteria or the application of the Admissions Criteria should contact the Principal or Admissions Officer of the College.

**When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or uploaded with the online Transfer Application. Parents/Guardians should ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the College’s Admissions Criteria is stated on the online Transfer Application or uploaded to it.**

### Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
<b>2021/22</b>	240	599	240
<b>2022/23</b>	240	420	240
<b>2023/24</b>	250 <sup>+</sup>	347	251*

<sup>+</sup> Includes a Temporary Variation

\* Includes 1 application upheld on Appeal

### Criteria for Admission to Forms 2 – L6

The criteria for admitting pupils to places in Forms 2 to Lower Sixth have been approved by the Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast. The application of the criteria is delegated to an Admissions Panel consisting of the Principal, the Vice Principal (Pastoral), Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Admissions Officer. Consideration will be given to any medical or other problem that may have temporarily affected a student’s academic performance. This needs to be supported by appropriate documentary evidence. A pupil will be admitted only where their admission will not prejudice the efficient use of resources.

### Entry to Forms 2 to 4

Applications should be made to the school using the College’s application form on the Admissions section of the College website.

Following receipt of an application, the College will advise Parents/Guardians as to the next steps to be taken. It should be noted that those who have made an application, but a place in the College is not available, will be placed on a waiting list.

The Admissions Panel will consider the following evidence of academic ability, if available:

1. A Cognitive Ability Test assessment set by the College and;
2. The two most recent school reports;
3. Any other appropriate evidence of academic ability and/or potential.

The following criteria will be applied progressively in the order set down below:

1. Applicants who have sat a Cognitive Ability Test, as directed by Methodist College with a standardised result greater than or equal to 105 and whose most recent reports from their present school (and previous schools, if applicable) satisfy the Principal on past school record and achievement, including attendance, behaviour and punctuality. (A satisfactory attendance rate would be 95% or higher). In the case of applicants whose attendance may have been affected by clearly documented medical or other problems, the Principal is empowered, in exceptional circumstances, to consider this. Each case will be carefully assessed by the Principal and will necessarily take into account appropriate documentary evidence, medical or otherwise. In such a case the decision of the Principal will be final.
2. Applicants will be rank ordered based on their Cognitive Ability Test.
3. The College will only admit pupils up to a maximum of 256 per year group in Junior and Middle school.

Please note that new pupils will not be admitted to Form 5/Year 12.

### Entry to Sixth Form

The academic requirements for entry into Sixth Form are as follows:

1. A minimum of 6 GCSE subjects at Grade ‘C’ or above (all taken by the end of Form 5).
2. Students are expected to take three subjects in Sixth Form. This means that for the majority of students, entry to Lower Sixth will require them to have achieved a minimum of 3 B Grades and 3 C Grades at GCSE including English Language and Mathematics.

3. Students are required to meet the Subject Entry Criteria, as outlined in the Options Booklet, for each subject they wish to take at A level.
4. Students may request to take a 4th subject if they:
  - Intend to apply for a university course that requires 4 A Levels or
  - Intend to study Medicine, Veterinary Studies, or Dentistry
  - Are studying Mathematics and Further Mathematics at A Level or
  - Have another compelling reason to study an additional subject.

It is anticipated that all students will progress to Upper Sixth. However, if a student is significantly underachieving in the Lower Sixth Year, then a meeting will be arranged with the Head of Sixth Form and/or the Vice-Principal Curriculum to discuss and identify alternative pathways of progression.

Pupils coming from an education system which does not use GCSE/IGCSE will have to provide evidence of having achieved at an equivalent standard. The Board of Governors will make the final decision on whether alternative examinations are deemed to be at an equivalent standard. They may also have to complete an Entrance Assessment set by the College.

Should the number of applicants mean that the school's enrolment number would be exceeded if they were all admitted to the Sixth Form, the following criteria will be applied progressively in the order set down below:

1. Those pupils who were at Methodist College in Form 5 and who meet the above entry criteria.
2. Those pupils who were at Methodist College in Form L6, who need to repeat the year due to significant pastoral or medical issues.
3. In rank cumulative GCSE score order, those pupils from other Post Primary schools who have completed an application form by the date of formal application and who meet the above entry criteria, and are able to be coursed subject to availability, until the school's enrolment number is reached.

Please note that new pupils will not be admitted to U6/Year 14.