

Admissions Policy 2025/2026

Birkenhead High School Academy
86 Devonshire Place
Prenton
Merseyside
CH43 1TY

Principal: Mrs R Mahony

Admission Number:

Nursery	26 F/ T
Reception	56
Year 7	135
Year 12	100

I. Background

1.1 Birkenhead High School Academy is a non-denominational all-through school for girls aged 3 to 19 years old and specialises in the teaching of music and mathematics. The Academy admits an all-ability intake and 10% of girls at Year 7 are selected on their aptitude for music. It serves the local and wider community, and welcomes applications from parents both within and outside the Wirral area. The Academy builds on high aspirations, inclusion and excellence.

1.2 The Academy is sponsored by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), and funded in partnership with government.

1.3 This document sets out the admission arrangements for the Academy in accordance with Annex B to the Funding Agreement between the GDST Academy Trust and the Local Authority. Any changes to the arrangements set out in this document must be approved in advance by the GDST Academy Trust, Wirral Local Authority, WASH. Obligations in this document are to be treated as if imposed by the Funding Agreement. This annex may be amended in writing at any time by agreement between the GDST Academy Trust and the Local Authority.

1.4 The GDST Academy Trust will act in accordance with, and will ensure that the Independent Appeal Panel is trained to act in accordance with, all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families ("the Codes") as they apply at any given time to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. For this purpose, reference in the Codes or Law to "admission authorities" shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the GDST Academy Trust.

1.5 The GDST Academy Trust will take part in the Wirral's Admissions Forum and have regard to its advice; and will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority and the local in-year fair access protocol.

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1.6 Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct the Academy to admit a named girl to the Academy on application from a local authority. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the Academy.

1.7 While Birkenhead High School Academy is its own Admissions Authority, it will follow the Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admission arrangements for Reception and Year 7 Admissions arrangements for Nursery and Sixth Form are managed directly by the Academy.

2 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Admission number

2.1 The agreed admission numbers for the Academy for the academic year 2018-2019, and for subsequent years (subject to any change approved by the Secretary of State), are as follows:

Nursery	26 full-time equivalent
Reception	56
Year 7	135 minus those pupils eligible to transfer from the Academy's own Year 6.
Year 12	100 minus those pupils eligible to transfer from the Academy's own Year 11.

2.2 Birkenhead High School Academy may set higher admission numbers as its Published Admission Numbers for any specific year. Before setting an admission number higher than its agreed admission numbers, the Academy will consult with primary and secondary schools in the Wirral. Girls will not be admitted above the Published Admission Number except for good reason. Any such admission shall be reported to the Secretary of State.

2.3 In the case of twins applying for entry into Birkenhead High School Academy, should one be allocated a place the other will automatically be offered a place.

3 Arrangements for admission to the Nursery

Process of application

3.1 Applications for Nursery places at Birkenhead High School Academy are not part of the Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admissions arrangements and should be made direct to the Academy on the Academy's nursery application form. Applicants should reach the age of **3** during the year **1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025**.

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3.2 The application form should be completed and returned to the Academy by **1 December 2024**.

Consideration of applications for entry into Nursery

3.3 The agreed admissions number is 26 full-time equivalent (FTE) places.

Oversubscription procedure

3.4 Where Birkenhead High School Academy is oversubscribed in Nursery the Academy will allocate places using the following criteria which are listed in priority order:

- a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) or were previously in public care, as defined in the School Admissions Code 2014 on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy.
- b) Girls who will have a sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered living permanently at the same address, who will continue to be enrolled at Birkenhead High School Academy at the time of the admission.
- c) Girls whose parent/s are currently Teaching, Administrative, Support Staff at Birkenhead High School Academy and have been employed for over two years.

3.5 Where in category b) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.

4 Arrangement for admission to Reception

Process of application

4.1 Applications for places at Birkenhead High School Academy in Reception will be made in accordance with Wirral Children's Services co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Parental Preference Form, provided and administered by Wirral Children's Services.

4.2 The agreed admissions number for Reception is 56.

4.3 Applications for places for Reception can be made for girls who turn **5** between **1 September 2025** and **31 August 2026**. Parents of girls in the Nursery must apply for a place in Reception using the Parental Preference Form. Applications should be sent to Wirral Local Authority by the closing date set out in the Wirral composite Admissions Prospectus.

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4.4 All girls will be offered places in Reception to start in September. However, parents and guardians of girls reaching compulsory school age between March and August can defer admission until the following January, if preferred. Nonetheless, applications must be made on the Parental Preference Form on the dates set out above.

4.5 Where fewer applications than places are received, the Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. If the Academy is oversubscribed it will allocate places in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.7 below. Girls with statements of special educational needs will be admitted where the Academy is named in the statement.

Oversubscription procedure

4.6 Where Birkenhead High School Academy is oversubscribed in Reception the Academy will allocate places using the following criteria which are listed in priority order:

- a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) or were previously in public care, as defined in the School Admissions Code 2014 on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy.
- b) Girls at the Academy's Nursery;
- c) Girls who will have a sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered living permanently at the same address, who will continue to be enrolled at Birkenhead High School Academy at the time of the admission.
- d) In the case of twins applying for entry into Reception, should one be allocated a place the other will automatically be offered a place.
- e) Girls whose parent/s are currently Teaching, Administrative, Support Staff at Birkenhead High School Academy and have been employed for over two years.

4.7 Where in categories b), c) and d) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.

4.8 In the event of oversubscription in Reception, the above procedure will be open to scrutiny by an appropriately qualified external consultant appointed by the GDST Academy Trust Board.

5 Arrangements for admission to Year 7

Process of application

5.1 While Birkenhead High School Academy is its own Admissions Authority, applications for places at the Academy for Year 7 will be made in accordance with Wirral Children's Services



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co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Parental Preference Form, provided by the relevant local authority.

5.2 In addition, parents or carers must complete the Admissions Form on the school website, provided by the Academy if they wish their daughter to sit the Music Aptitude Test which will be held online.

5.3 Birkenhead High School Academy has an agreed admission number of 79 pupils in Year 7. The Academy will accordingly admit 79 pupils in the relevant age group each year if sufficient applications are received. Girls already on roll at the Academy in Year 6 will be able to automatically progress to Year 7.

5.4 The total year group for Year 7 will be 135. If fewer girls transfer from Year 6, the Academy will admit over the admission number up to the overall size of the Year 7 group.

5.5 The Academy will consider all applications for places. Where fewer applications than places are received, the Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. If the Academy is oversubscribed it will allocated places in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Oversubscription procedure

5.6 Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admissions number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of girls with statements of Special Educational Needs where the Academy is named in the statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out in paragraphs 5.7 to 5.9 below.

5.7 In accordance with its first specialism, Birkenhead High School Academy will select 10% of the places available based on their aptitude for learning music ("the Music criterion"). An appropriate assessment for aptitude for learning music will be carried out by the school. The seven places will be filled by those applicants who are assessed to have the greatest aptitude for music. Should there be a tie for last place(s) available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Where the Academy is oversubscribed the successful Music criterion applicants will not be allocated a place until after all those girls in public care (Looked After Children) have been allocated a place.

5.8 All remaining places will be based on a random allocation.

5.9 Places will be allocated in the following order:

- a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children) or were previously in public care, as defined in the School Admissions Code 2012 on the date at which the relevant applicants for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;

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- b) Girls who will have a sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered living permanently at the same address, who will continue to be enrolled at Birkenhead High School Academy at the time of the admission.
- c) Girls whose parent/s are currently Teaching, Administrative, Support Staff at Birkenhead High School Academy and have been employed for over two years.
- d) In the case of twins applying for entry into Year 7, should one be allocated a place the other will automatically be offered a place.
- e) Where in category b) and c) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated on a random basis to girls applying from across the Wirral and beyond.

6 Arrangements for admission to post-16 provision

Process of application

6.1 Applications by external applicants for Sixth Form places at Birkenhead High School Academy should be made direct to the Academy on the Academy's application form. Girls in the Academy's Year 11, will automatically progress to the Academy's Sixth Form provided they meet the entry requirements set out in paragraph 6.3 below.

Consideration of applications for entry into Sixth Form

6.2 The Academy has an agreed admission number of 100 pupils to Year 12, minus those eligible pupils progressing from the Academy's own Year 11. The Academy will accordingly provide for the admission or progression of 100 pupils to the Sixth Form if sufficient requests for progression or applications for entry are received. If the admission number 100 is met through internal transfers, no external applicants will be admitted.

Entry requirements

6.3 Individual subjects may have particular requirements for the grades obtained at GCSE and these will be detailed each year in the information supplied to prospective girls. However, if the Sixth Form is not full, and a girl does not meet the grade requirement for a particular subject, a range of alternative courses available within the Academy's Sixth Form curriculum will be offered.

6.4 The Local Governing Body shall have discretion to take account of serious illness which has adversely affected an individual applicant's performance in applying the academic entry criteria.

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6.5 Admission to the Sixth Form is also subject to the availability of places in a girl's intended subject choices. However, if particular subjects are full but the Sixth Form is not, a range of alternative courses available within the Academy's Sixth Form curriculum will be offered.

Internal applicants

6.6 Girls who are already on roll at BHSA, are entitled to transfer into the Sixth Form provided they meet the appropriate standards for entry. All girls will be offered a course discussion to help them make the appropriate choices.

External applicants

6.7 Girls who do not attend BHSA, should submit an external application form as soon as possible. Late applications will be considered if places are still available, although subject choices may be limited because some courses may already be full.

6.8 External applicants will be offered a course discussion. Offers of places will be conditional upon the entry requirements for courses selected being achieved.

Oversubscription procedure

6.9 In the event of there being more external applicants to the Sixth Form than available, applications will be considered as follows. After the admission girls with statements of Special Educational Needs where the Academy is in the statement, any remaining available places will be allocated in the following order to girls who achieve the entry requirements:

- a) Girls who are in public care (Looked After Children), or were previously in public care, as defined in the School Admissions Code 2012 on the date at which the relevant applications for admission are made, and who a local authority has confirmed will continue to be looked after by it (in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989) at the time they are admitted to the Academy;
- b) Girls who will have a sister, including step, half, adopted or fostered living permanently at the same address, who will continue to be enrolled at Birkenhead High School Academy at the time of the admission.
- c) Girls whose parent/s are currently Teaching, Administrative, Support Staff at Birkenhead High School Academy and have been employed for over two years.
- d) Girls who wish to follow subject courses that are not fully subscribed.
- e) Where in categories b), c) and d) there are more applicants than there are places available, places will be allocated on a random basis. Any remaining places will be allocated to girls on a random basis across the Wirral and beyond.

6.10 In the event of oversubscription in Sixth Form, the above procedure will be open to scrutiny by an appropriately qualified external consultant appointed by the GDST Academy Trust Board.

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7. Casual admissions i.e admission to all year groups except Nursery, Reception, Year 7 and Year 12

7.1 Should girls leave during the course of an academic year, or between academic years, places will be offered to external applicants. If there are more applicants than places the Academy will apply the oversubscription criteria set out above.

7.2 Notwithstanding the above, the Academy may refuse admission to particular applicants in the specific circumstances described in paragraph 3.10 (children who have been permanently excluded two or more times) of the statutory School Admissions Code or any like provision in any subsequent Code.

8. Operation of waiting lists for admission – Reception and Year 7

8.1 Where in any year the Academy receives more applications for places in Reception and Year 7 than there are places available, a waiting list will operate between March and the end of the academic year for which they applied. This list will be maintained by the Academy, and all unsuccessful applicants will automatically be placed on the waiting list unless a parent or guardian requests otherwise.

8.2 Those children not allocated a place will automatically be placed on a waiting list. Should a place become available all names on the waiting list will be put in for a random allocation by the Registrar and one witness and the successful applicant's parents/carers will be contacted to see if they wish to take up the place.

8.3 When, and if, places become vacant they will be allocated to girls on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in paragraph 4.6 for Reception and 5.9 a) to d) for Year 7.

No waiting list will be operated for years other than Reception and Year 7.

9. Arrangements for the Independent Appeal Panel

Parents or carers will have the right of appeal (except in the case of Nursery places – see below) to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of Birkenhead High School Academy or if children in year 11 of the Academy are refused progression to the Sixth Form. The Appeal Panel will be independent of the Academy. The arrangements for appeals will be in line with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families as it applies to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. The determination of the Appeal Panel will be made in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code and is binding on all parties. The Academy will prepare guidance for parents or carers about how the appeals process will work and provide a named contact who can answer any enquiries about the process.

There is no right of appeal for refusal to offer a nursery place.

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10. ANNUAL PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING ADMISSION RANGEMENTS

Consultation

Birkenhead High School Academy will consult by 1 March each year on its proposed admission arrangements:

- a) Wirral Children's Services;
- b) The admission forum for the Wirral;
- c) Any other admission authorities for primary and secondary schools located within the relevant area for consultation set by Wirral Children's Services;
- d) Any other governing body for primary and secondary schools (as far as not falling within paragraph c)) located within the relevant area for consultation; and
- e) Affected admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas.

11. Publication of admission arrangements

Birkenhead High School Academy will publish its admission arrangements each year once these have been determined by:

- a) copies being sent to the statutory consultees;
- b) copies being sent to primary and secondary schools in the Wirral;
- c) copies being sent to the offices of Wirral Children's Services;
- d) copies being made available without charge on request from the Academy; and
- e) copies being sent to public libraries in the area of the Wirral for the purposes of being made available at such libraries for reference by parents and other persons.

The published arrangements will set out:

- a) the name and address of the Academy and contact details.
- b) a summary of the admissions policy, including oversubscription criteria (including any arrangements for admission to post-16 provision);
- c) a statement of any religious affiliation;
- d) numbers of places and applications for those places in the previous year; and
- e) arrangements for hearing appeals.