



Barnard Castle School

ESTD 1883

Admissions Policy

This is a whole school policy.

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Action	Responsibility	Date
Reviewed	Headmaster (DJC)	September 2025
Approved	Headmaster (DJC)	September 2025
Next Review	Headmaster (DJC)	September 2026

Principles of Admission

Barnard Castle School welcomes applications from pupils of all backgrounds who will benefit from, and contribute to, the life of our community.

Our admissions process is designed to be open, fair and transparent. The School shall not discriminate in its admission of a Student based on the following grounds: Gender of the Student or Applicant; civil status of the Student or Applicant; family status of the Student or Applicant; sexual orientation of the Student or Applicant; religion of the Student or Applicant; disability of the Student or Applicant; race of the Student or Applicant. We expect all pupils and their families to support the School's ethos, which is rooted in a Christian foundation but inclusive of all faiths and none.

In offering places, we seek to admit pupils who:

- can access and benefit from the curriculum;
- demonstrate commitment to learning and personal development; and
- will contribute positively to the wider life of the School.

Admission is at the discretion of the Headmaster. The Headmaster shall decide on the maximum number of places to be offered for enrolment each academic year, mindful of the need to ensure overall student numbers do not exceed levels appropriate to the capacity of the school building and safety considerations arising from its design. In determining its activities and programmes for any school year the school must have due regard to the teaching, management and administrative resources and the accommodation, equipment and funding available to it.

Admissions Protocol and Entry Criteria

The Admissions Protocol and Entry Requirements are reviewed annually.

1. Senior School: Sixth Form

- Applicants are normally required to have a minimum of seven GCSE passes (grades 9–4) or equivalent, and have met the grade entry requirements for their A Level subjects.
- In addition to academic attainment, preference may be given to pupils demonstrating talents in art, drama, music or sport.
- The Headmaster may admit pupils who would benefit from continuing their academic studies for one or two years, provided they can access the Sixth Form curriculum effectively. Such status will be reviewed each term.

Entrance Day:

The Entrance Day usually occurs in late January or early February prior to entry. Reasonable adjustments may be made for applicants with identified needs and formally identified needs (see General Notes).

2. Senior School: Years 7–10

- The Headmaster will determine the number of places available each year, considering boarding/day balance and gender distribution.
- All registered applicants are required to sit the Entrance Examination, normally in late January. Later examinations may be arranged in special circumstances.
- Assessment is based on:

- Entrance examination results;
- Previous academic performance;
- References from the current school;
- Interviews with the pupil and parents/guardians;
- Evidence of wider interests and achievements;
- Any other relevant information brought to the attention of the Headmaster.

Admissions Criteria:

- Entrants must be able to access the Barnard Castle School curriculum independently and show the ability or potential to achieve good GCSE passes (grades 9–4) or equivalent, particularly in Mathematics and English.
- Applicants should demonstrate a genuine commitment to learning.
- Preference may be given to pupils with talents in other areas (art, drama, music, sport).
- Additional factors may include boarding status, siblings already in the School, date of registration, and family links with the School.

Entrance Examination – Reasonable Adjustments:

The School will make reasonable adjustments in its Entrance examinations to support candidates with formally identified needs, such as extra time or, where indicated, a reader or scribe. These arrangements apply to formal examinations only (external public examinations and some internal examinations). They do not extend to routine classroom assessments or regular summative testing, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and the School will not routinely provide separate rooms, readers, or scribes for such assessments.

3. Prep School (Years 3–6)

- Applicants are encouraged to attend a taster day and may stay in the Junior Boarding House.
- Assessment includes observation in class and social settings, as well as a Maths and English test.
- Supporting references from the current school will be requested.
- Admissions criteria include:
 - Ability to access the curriculum;
 - Academic performance in assessment;
 - References;
 - Gender balance and boarding/day mix;
 - Presence of siblings;
 - Family connection to the School;
 - Date of registration.

4. Pre-Prep (Reception–Year 2)

- Entry to Reception is normally determined by date of registration, with consideration also given to gender balance and siblings in the School.
- For Years 1 and 2, the Headmistress of the Prep School will determine available places annually.
- Admissions criteria include:
 - Ability to access the curriculum;
 - Supporting references or information provided by parents;
 - Balance of numbers within year groups;



- Date of registration.

General Notes

The following points apply to all entry points:

Disclosure of Information

Parents are required to disclose, at the time of application, any known special educational needs, disabilities or learning difficulties that may affect their child's education. Failure to provide such information may result in the withdrawal of an offer or, if subsequently discovered after admission, the termination of the Parent Contract with a loss of fees.

Reasonable Adjustments

The School will make reasonable adjustments in its Entrance examinations to support candidates with formally identified needs, such as extra time or, where indicated, a reader or scribe. These arrangements apply to formal examinations only (external public examinations and some internal examinations). They do not extend to routine classroom assessments or regular summative testing, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and the School will not routinely provide separate rooms, readers, or scribes for such assessments.

Admissions Panel

In cases where an applicant is borderline in terms of academic suitability, and the Entrance Examination results and interview performance suggest that they may not be able to access the School's curriculum, or where consideration is required regarding the level of provision available to support a student's specific educational needs, the School will convene an Admissions Panel. The Panel comprises the Headmaster, the Deputy Head Academic, the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Head of Academic Support, and the Registrar or International Registrar. The Panel carefully considers all available information and makes decisions based on the best interests of the student. These decisions also take into account the best interests of the wider Barney community.

Ethos and Behaviour

All pupils and parents are expected to support the School's ethos, rules and standards of behaviour. A failure to do so may lead to the withdrawal of an offer or, in serious cases, the termination of the Parent Contract.

Offers and Acceptance

Completion of a Registration Form does not guarantee the offer of a place. Letters of offer will normally be sent within two weeks of the Entrance Examination, or as soon as possible for other entry points. Parents will be given a clear deadline by which to accept an offer.

Waiting Lists

Where places are oversubscribed, the School may operate a waiting list. Priority will be given in line with the admissions criteria. A place on the waiting list does not guarantee admission.

Discretion

The final decision on admission rests with the Headmaster.

