

THE ROYAL BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION

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Principal: Ms J Williamson MA (Oxon) NPQH, C.F.

Chair of Board of Governors: Mr R M Howard BSc, FCA.

Voluntary Grammar School

Boys Grammar

Age Range: 11-18

Admission Number: 150

Enrolment Number: 1050

OPEN DAYS:	Saturday 10 January 2026	9.30am-12.30pm
	Thursday 29 January 2026	4.00pm-5.00pm (tours only)

To Parents/Guardians naming The Royal Belfast Academical Institution as a preference on your child's Transfer Application.

Exam Test Results

Please ensure that you upload your son's SEAG result letter/slip with his online Transfer Application.

Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision

If you are making a claim for your child to be considered under Special Circumstances or Special Provision (and these are called "special cases" in the Admissions Criteria) please note that you are required to:

- Upload along with your online transfer application, relevant information required by the School as referred to in the Admissions Criteria in "Special Cases", Notes 1-6. A Special Cases Form is available on the School Website.

FEES £1740 – 2025/26 (2026/27 tbc)

It is the policy of the Board of Governors that no boy who is offered a place at the Main School should be unable to take up that place because of the financial circumstances of his parents or guardians. Accordingly the Board of Governors operates a discretionary annual means tested Bursary Scheme which may provide for a boy's fees to be paid in whole or in part.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admissions Criteria for entry into Year 8 in 2026

The Board is responsible for the Admissions Criteria set out below. The Board in applying those criteria may delegate that responsibility to a sub-committee appointed by the Board for that purpose. Only boys may apply for admission to the Main School, and in the event that the Main School has more applicants than it has places, it will apply the criteria set out below in selecting those applicants to whom it will offer places.

The Board will consider the outcome of a boy's performance in the assessment organised and conducted by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group ("SEAG"). On the Transfer Application parents should provide details of the candidate number issued to their son by SEAG when he was registered for the assessment.

In these criteria:

"alternative

academic evidence"

means any or all of the following:

- such objective evidence of the applicant's primary school test results in English/Irish and Mathematics (i.e. standardised tests, eg PTE/PTM/CAT) from the beginning of the Key Stage 2 period (i.e. P5) as the parents or guardians of the applicant produce to the School
- such comments of the principal of the applicant's primary school on the pupil's academic achievements in comparison with the other members of the pupil's P7 class as are produced to the School
- a report from an accredited educational psychologist
- any accredited assessments of the applicant's ability in English/Irish, Mathematics and verbal reasoning

NOTES:

(a) It is emphasised that the onus is on the parents or guardians to ensure that the information referred to in (a) to (d) in the definition of “alternative academic evidence” above is provided to the School. Failure to provide such information may adversely affect the School’s ability to assess into which Band the applicant should be placed.

(b) The School will give such weight as it considers appropriate to such alternative academic evidence as is provided to it.

“the Board”	means the Board of Governors of the School.
“SEAG Assessment”	means the Entrance Assessment conducted by SEAG 2025.
“Band 1”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 1 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.
“Band 2”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 2 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.
“Band 3”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 3 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.
“Band 4”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 4 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.
“Band 5”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 5 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.
“Band 6”	means a group of those boys allocated to Band 6 in the Entrance Assessment Outcome provided by SEAG.

NOTES:-

As evidence of a boy’s score in the SEAG Assessment, parents should attach the original SEAG Outcome to the online Transfer Application.

“sibling” means:	<p>In the case of a boy applying for admission to the Main School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) a child born to one or both of the boy’s parents/guardian, or(b) a child who has been adopted by one or both of the boy’s parents/guardian, or(c) a child living in the same household as the boy and the child is treated by one or both of the boy’s parents as if the child had been born to one or both of the parents/guardian.
“eldest boy” means:	<p>A boy who at the date of his application is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) the eldest male child of the family.(b) in the case of a multiple birth all the male children born at that birth shall each be treated as an eldest male child of the family.(c) a male child who is more than 7 years younger than his next older male sibling, and(d) a male child whose only older male sibling has to be educated at home or attends a special school.
“special cases” means:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) a claim that an applicant’s performance in the SEAG Assessment has been affected by a medical or other problem or circumstance and independent evidence of its existence is provided to the School; or(b) a claim that an applicant’s performance in the SEAG Assessment has been affected by the fact that he has received more than half his primary school education outside Northern Ireland; or(c) a claim that an applicant who had applied to take the SEAG Assessment was unable to take either one or both of these assessments because of a medical or other problem; or

- (d) the fact that an applicant did not take up residence in Northern Ireland until after 19 September 2025; or
- (e) a claim that a boy has been disadvantaged because his parent/guardian is or was a member of the Armed Forces, present and past.

“Armed Forces”

means the Army, Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom and the Reserves of those establishments, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

“Inchmarlo”

means the preparatory department of the School situated at Cranmore Park, Belfast for boys between the ages of 5 and 11.

“Main School”

means the secondary department of the School situated at College Square East, Belfast for post primary boys.

“the School”

means the Main School together with Inchmarlo.

NOTES:

- 1** *Parents or guardians who wish to make a claim that their son or ward is a special case should obtain the appropriate form from the School website, complete it and upload it with the appropriate documentary evidence to the online Transfer Application to be submitted via the Education Authority application portal.*
- 2** *Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the boy only at the time when any of the tests were taken by him, parents or guardians must provide evidence that the boy was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness.*
- 3** *Where the problem is a medical one which prevented the boy taking at least one of the assessments making up the SEAG Assessment, parents or guardians must forward to the School evidence that the boy was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness who has certified that by reason of such illness the boy was unable to participate in one such assessment.*
- 4** *Where the problem or circumstance is of a non-medical nature, parents or guardians should provide precise details of the problem and append any appropriate credible evidence to corroborate its existence.*
- 5** *Where a boy was granted special access arrangements in connection with his participation in the SEAG Assessment and the boy's claim for special circumstances is based on the same problem for which special access arrangements were given, that fact shall be taken into account by the Board when considering if the applicant is entitled to claim for special circumstances.*
- 6** *SEAG results are given by SEAG placing a candidate in one of six bands. SEAG also provide a Total Age Standardised Score (SAS) based on each candidate's results in both the English/Irish and the Mathematics components of the SEAG assessment. Candidates will be placed in a Band by SEAG according to the candidate's SAS with the highest scores being allocated to Band 1, and so on.*

1.1 The School will admit 150 boys to the Main School, admitting

- 1.1.1 boys in Band 1 before boys in Band 2,
- 1.1.2 boys in Band 2 before those in Band 3,
- 1.1.3 boys in Band 3 before those in Band 4,
- 1.1.4 boys in Band 4 before those in Band 5,
- 1.1.5 boys in Band 5 before those in Band 6.

- 1.2 Where a boy has asked to be treated as a special case and the Board on the evidence produced to it has concluded that the boy is entitled to be so treated, the Board shall make an assessment of the academic ability of that boy taking into account the SAS obtained by the boy in the SEAG Assessment test and, using such alternative academic evidence as is available to it, shall accord to that applicant an estimated SAS and shall place that boy in the Band appropriate for that estimated SAS.
2. Where a selection has to be made between boys within a Band to determine whom should be admitted to the School, priority will be determined by applying, in order, the criteria set out in clause 3.
3. The following are the criteria to be applied for the purposes of clause 2:
 - 3.1 An applicant who is a pupil of Inchmarlo;
 - 3.2 An applicant who has, or has had at any time, a sibling attending the Main School;
 - 3.3 An applicant who is the only or eldest boy of his family;
 - 3.4 An applicant selected by computerised random selection.

WARNING

If the Board of Governors becomes aware of

- (a) any material irregularity in the application made by the applicant to the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group in connection with the prescribed test, or
- (b) any falsification of any documents submitted to the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group in connection with the prescribed test, or
- (c) any material breach of the conditions on the part of the applicant or his parents or guardians relating to the prescribed test.

it reserves the right to reject the application to the School of such applicant.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any applicant's online Transfer Application.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which is false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

WAITING LIST POLICY

Should a vacancy arise after 11 May 2026 all applications for admission to Year 8 that were initially refused, new 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 25 June 2027. Please contact the School if you wish your son's name to be removed from the list.

APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2023/24	150	187	150
2024/25	150	196	150
2025/26*	150	211	160*

**The Total Admissions for year 2025-2026 includes all Year 8 children admitted to the school including those who have a statement of special educational needs; and also includes additional places (Appeals Process).*

ADMISSIONS TO YEARS 9 – 11

If there are places available in Years 9, 10, or 11, the School will wish to be satisfied that applicants:-

1. have favourable comments as to their a) academic attainment and progress (have reached and are sustaining a standard which is compatible with the demands and requirements made upon the year group which they hope to enter); b) behaviour; and c) attendance.
2. have the ability and aptitude to benefit from the education provided at RBAI.
3. A Cognitive Ability Testing (CATS) and interview may be part of the admissions procedure.

PROGRESS AFTER ADMISSION

RBAI expects pupils to maintain a satisfactory level of progress and achievement throughout their career at the School. Once admitted to the School, a boy must maintain academic progress in line with the School's expectation that admitted pupils will gain at least five GCSE grades C or above and 12 points or equivalent. If a pupil's progress at any stage in the years 8 - 12 drops below this minimum level he and his parents will be warned about the situation, and if his progress does not improve sufficiently by the end of the following term he may be advised that education at RBAI will no longer be in his best interests, and his parents will be required to withdraw him from the School.

ADMISSIONS TO SIXTH FORM

Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form will normally require a minimum of 12 points (A* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C* = 1 ½ points, C = 1 point) and undertake 3 AS or equivalents. Pupils are generally expected to have achieved at least a Grade B or a high Grade C* at GCSE level in the subjects they wish to continue with in the Sixth Form. If a subject is oversubscribed criteria may be enhanced. Returning to the Sixth Form is also dependent upon a pupil's disciplinary record, an average attendance of 95%, and the professional judgement of staff that a pupil has the self-motivation to follow a post-16 course. Credit may also be given to the contribution a pupil has made to the co-curricular life of the school. Progression to A2 requires students to have achieved a minimum of 3 D grades. A pupil will only be considered to repeat Year 13 under exceptional circumstances.