Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust

Thorns Collegiate Academy – Admissions Policy Intake – 2028/29

Committee and Date Approved	Trust Board-
Category	Statutory
Review Cycle	Annually

Contents

Introductory statement 3
Our visions and values 3
Admission number(s) 3
Oversubscription criteria 4
Tie-break 4
Admission of children outside their normal age group 5
Waiting lists 5
In year applications 5
Appeals 6
Notes 7

Introductory statement

Thorns Collegiate Academy (TCA) is a 11-16 Secondary School supported by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust. It aims to provide a high-quality education for local children and prepare them for further education or employment in a safe and welcoming environment.

Our inclusive admissions process will at all times be open, transparent and fair, and will meet the requirements of the national Schools Admissions Code, the Appeals Code, and Admissions Legislation.

Our visions and values

Our mission at TCA is to develop a generation of learners who aim higher, see further, and are concerned for all. They will learn in a way that encourages both independence and collaboration in a technology-rich environment to enable them to succeed in an ever- changing world. We have three core beliefs:

- We believe that every pupil will have access to a whole education underpinned by academic rigour.
- We believe that every pupil should be equipped for today, tomorrow and their future lives, through learning cutting-edge skills and the ability to discover the world and beyond.
- We believe that every pupil should be safe, happy, ambitious for themselves and respectful of all.

All of this is underpinned by a set of strong values that are central to the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust Family of schools. They are: **Innovate, Inspire and Collaborate**

Admission number(s)

The school has a Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 150 pupils for entry in Year 7 from September 2028.

The school will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applicants than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year group are received, the Academy Trust will offer places at the school to all those who have applied.

In accordance with the law, children with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be admitted to the school where the Local Authority (LA) has specifically named TCA as the most appropriate placement.

Application process

As part of the coordinated admissions arrangements scheme, **parents MUST complete an online registration form provided by their home LA by 31 October 2027**. In completing

this form TCA must be chosen as one of the 6 preferences on the LA form.

Preference forms received after the closing date will be considered where the LA identifies that exceptional circumstances apply.

Preference forms received after the places have been offered will be kept on file and form the basis of the 'Applications to Transfer to Year 7'. Those who are offered a place at the Academy will be informed on 1 March 2028 by the home LA.

Those that are not offered a place at TCA will be informed on 1 March 2028 and will be offered a place at an alternative school by the home LA.

Oversubscription criteria

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an EHCP naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.[1]

2. Priority will next be given to the siblings of pupils attending the school at the time of admission. Sibling is defined in these arrangements as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.

3. Children of staff who have been employed at the school for a minimum of two years at the date of application or have been recruited to fill a vacant position at the school for which there is a demonstratable shortage. (For the purposes of this policy, staff means any person directly employed by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust or the Academy on a permanent or fixed-term contract, including teaching and support staff, whether employed on a full-time or part-time basis. Agency workers, contractors and consultants are not regarded as staff for the purposes of this criterion).

4. Priority will next be given to children living closest to the school. Distance is measured in a straight line from the child's home to the school's main entrance.[2]

Tie-break

If a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, random allocation will be undertaken by the LA (or another body that is unconnected from the Academy Trust) as a tie

[1] A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions as defined by section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making the application for a school place.

[2] Measured from the Local Land and Property Gazetteer address base for the property.

break to decide who will be admitted.

Random allocation will not be applied to multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets, etc.) from the same family tied for the final place; we will admit them all and exceed the PAN.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. To do so parents should include a request with their application, specifying why admission out of normal year group is being requested.

When such a request is made, Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the Principal and any supporting evidence provided by the parent.

Waiting lists

If the Academy is oversubscribed and children have been refused admission because other applicants have a higher priority for admission under the published admission criteria, then those applicants who are unsuccessful may request to be placed on the waiting list. This will be maintained by the LA. Children placed on the waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the Academy's published admissions criteria. For schools located in the Dudley Borough, waiting lists will normally operate until the end of the Academic year.

The Academy does not maintain waiting lists for mid-year applications.

In year applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the normal admission round and the child will be admitted where there are places available. To apply for a place other than the normal intake into Year 7, parents must apply using the in-year application form available on LA's website (Changing Schools (dudley.gov.uk)).

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out for the normal round of admissions, will be applied.

Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application in writing from the LA and, where the decision is to refuse their child a place, have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Appeals

The Governing Body of TCA has contracted the appeals function to Dudley LA.

If you are unhappy with the school allocated to you (even if it was your first preference) and you wish to appeal, contact the LA's Admission and Appeals Service for an appeal form. Before deciding to appeal, you may wish to contact the Advisory Centre for Education (0808 800 5793) who will provide you with free, impartial advice.

If you choose to exercise your right of appeal, arrangements will be made for you to attend an appeal hearing. The Appeals Panel is independent of the LA and TCA and is arranged by Democratic Services of the Council. The Panel will consist of 3 or 5 members. There will also be someone representing TCA and a clerk from Democratic Services in attendance. At the meeting, you will be invited to say why you would like your child to go to TCA rather than the one offered. An explanation about why a place at TCA has been refused will be given.

You cannot appeal for TCA if you did not list it on your common application form. The LA recommends that you accept the school that has been offered to you even if you decide to appeal for TCA. By accepting the school offered, you will guarantee a school place for your child. If you refuse the place, you are likely to be reducing the options which may be available to you. Accepting the place will have no bearing on the outcome of your appeal.

Appeal hearings will normally be held within 40 school days of the deadline for submitting an appeal i.e during the late Spring and early Summer Terms. Families will be given 10 days notice of an appeal hearing date and time. Appeals for heavily oversubscribed schools can last up to two weeks. You will be notified of the decision no later than five school days after the last hearing unless there is good reason why the decision has been delayed.

The decision of the Panel is binding on parents, the LA, and schools. The Council, Councillors and even Members of Parliament are unable to change its decision. If you think that the appeal process has been conducted unfairly you can complain to the Department for Education.

All arrangements for allocation of school places and for appeals will be in line with the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education.

Notes

Home address:

The home address is where a child normally lives. Where a child lives with parents with shared parental responsibility, each for part of a week, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents stating the pattern of residence. If a child's residence is split equally between both parents, then parents will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. If no joint declaration is received where the residence is split equally by the closing date for applications, the home address will be taken as the address where the child is registered with the doctor. If the residence is not split equally between both parents, then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week.

Sibling:

'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, a half brother or sister, a legally adopted brother or sister or half-brother or sister, a stepbrother or sister or other child living in the same household as part of the same family who, in any of these cases, will be living at the same address at the date of their application for a place.