

**Birches Head High School**  
**ADMISSION POLICY FOR 2011/12**

**General Principles**

Birches Head High School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive Foundation/Trust school based close to the city centre (Hanley). As a Foundation/Trust school the Governing Body is the admission authority. The main principle of admission to Birches Head High School is to maintain the character of the school as a comprehensive school, providing for the needs of young persons within the 11-16 age range who live within Birches Head and surrounding area.

The School will endeavour to provide places for pupils who live outside the Birches Head and surrounding area whose parents wish them to attend Birches Head High School, provided that they can be accommodated within the admission limits.

Students will be admitted at the age of 11+ without reference to ability or aptitude using the criteria below.

The school participates in the Local Authority Co-ordinated Scheme operated by Stoke on Trent City Council and all deadlines within that scheme should be adhered to by applicants. Details of the Co-ordinated Scheme can be found below.

This policy is written having due regard to the Schools Admissions Code 2009 ("the Code") and in accordance with the Code, gives top priority to applications on behalf of children in public care and prohibits the use of unfair selection criteria.

**Application Procedures**

Applications must be made using the Common Application Form (CAF) which will be made available by the Local Authority. Applications must be made direct to the Council by the deadline specified by them (normally the end of October of the year preceding admission).

All places will be offered by the Council, on behalf of the Governing Body, within the secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme operational in Stoke on Trent's Council area. Allocations will be notified by the Council in accordance with their procedures.

**Stoke on Trent City Council Co-ordinated Scheme**

Stoke on Trent City Council manages admissions to secondary schools for all the children who live in the City of Stoke-on-Trent and it uses an equal preference system. Parents are asked to name three schools as preferences. Their preferences may include community schools, voluntary aided schools, foundation schools, trust schools or maintained schools in other local authority areas. Parents may not name independent schools.

The Council is the admissions authority for the community schools in the City. The admissions authorities for the aided and foundation and trust schools are the governing bodies of those schools. The admissions authority for community schools in other areas is the Local Authority for that area.

Every admissions authority publishes its own admission arrangements and will consider each preference for individual schools in accordance with those arrangements. They will not take account of the order of preferences made by the parent. This means that it will not matter whether Birches Head High School has been named as a first, second or third preference. When it has received all applications for places for the schools in Stoke-on-Trent the Council will forward **all** applications which name Birches Head High School as one of the preferred schools to the school governors. The governors will then categorise the applications into four groups as determined by the oversubscription criteria described below.

The Council will then offer each child a place at their highest preference school for which they are eligible. If the child is eligible for a place at all three schools which the parents have named as a preference, the child will be offered a place at their first preference. If the child is eligible for a place at their second and third preference, the child will be offered a place at their second preference.

If children are not eligible for a place at any school which their parents have named as a preference, the Council will allocate to the child a place at the nearest appropriate school where there are places available after all other parents' preferences have been met.

### **PAN**

The determined Published Admission Number (PAN) for 2011/12 is **150** and is based on the current net capacity of the school.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Under the Code, the School must admit children with a statement of special education needs that names the School. This requirement is not part of the oversubscription criteria below. The School must admit such children whether it has places or not.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available (the Published Admission Number) the Governing Body will use the following oversubscription criteria to determine those applicants to be offered a place (these are similar oversubscription criteria used by Stoke on Trent City Council for Community Secondary Schools):

Birches Head High School Governors will prioritise places in the following order:

1. children who are in public care (children in public care includes children provided with accommodation under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989);
2. children who have older brothers or sisters/siblings\* at the school at the time that they will start; and
3. children who live nearest to the school as determined by a straight line measurement from the front door of the child's home address to the main entrance of the school.

The Governors will also consider any reasons put forward by parents in support of their preference. These reasons should be supported with evidence wherever possible. If the reasons concern the child's health or social wellbeing, the evidence should be provided

by a medical practitioner or other social care professional. If the governors consider that the reasons for a place at a particular school are sufficiently strong based on the protocol as described in appendix 1, it will place the child on the school list above those whose position is based upon the distance criterion.

If the last eligible child is a twin, triplet or child of any other multiple births, the governors will allocate places to the siblings even if that means exceeding the admission number.

#### **\*Definition of older brothers or sisters**

Siblings (brothers or sisters) are considered to be those children who live at the same address and either:

- have one or both natural parents in common or
- are related by a parent's marriage or related by parents living as partners at this address
- are adopted or fostered by a common parent

Children not adopted or fostered or related by a parents' marriage or with one natural parent in common, who are brought together as a family by a same sex civil partnership and who are living at the same address, are also considered to be siblings.

#### **We do not include 'cousins' within our definition of sibling.**

Where a child lives part of the week with one parent and part with another member of the family, the 'home address' will be considered to be the residence where the child spends at least four nights of the week each week.

Having considered all the preferences for the school, the governing body will provide to the Council a list of children in each of the three categories as defined above. The council will then apply the distance criteria to the children in category 3 and produce a list in descending priority order for the school, taking account of the criteria for admission to this school set out above.

#### **Tie Breaker**

In the event of oversubscription in any category above, priority will be determined by the proximity of the child's home to Birches Head High school using a straight-line distance from the main entrance of the school in Birches Head Road, to the main door of the residence, with those living nearest to the school being given priority.

Apartments in the same block will be treated equally with the measurement taken to the main entrance to the block. If after applying the distance tie-breaker there are more applications than places available from the apartment block furthest away, a further tie-breaker of random allocation will be used for the applications from this block.

#### **Home Address**

Proof of residence may be required under the co-ordinated scheme. The offer of a place may be withdrawn if proof of residency is not met.

## **Ethos**

The ethos of our school is based on the values of Respect, Inspire, Challenge, Honesty. We expect all our students to commit to these values and to pursue excellence in all that they undertake. All students and their parents/carers are required to sign the school's home-school agreement and all students are required to wear the school uniform.

## **Waiting Lists**

Under the co-ordinated scheme the Council will maintain a waiting list until the end of the Autumn term. The school will continue to maintain a waiting list for subsequent terms.

Applications for inclusion on a waiting list must be made on the school's appropriate form and they will be ranked according to our oversubscription criteria as described above. Before being offered a place at the school parents will be invited to engage in a discussion to ensure that the Ethos of the school is understood and accepted and sign an agreement to uphold the school values. We have to admit any pupil who is the subject of a 'direction' by the Council or allocated to us according to the local Fair Access Protocol and any such pupils take precedence over the waiting list.

We also maintain waiting lists for all 'full' year groups.

## **In Year Admissions**

Admissions for all year groups will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. The Council will administer a co-ordinated scheme and applications should be made direct to the Council on the Stoke-on-Trent Council's Transfer Request Form. If the transfer request is not related to a change of address, the form must be signed by the child's present Head teacher.

## **Appeals**

If you are not offered a place at our school you have the right to appeal to an independent panel. Appeal papers will normally be sent out with offer letters to all those parents who were offered a school lower on their preference list than Birches Head High School. Please ensure that these are headed with the school name and address and are returned to the Clerk of the Appeal Panel at the school. The closing date on the appeal application form must be adhered to. If you are in any doubt please contact the school and we will send you appeal forms.

All appeals should be heard by the same panel and it is difficult to slot in late applications. Appeals will be heard before 6<sup>th</sup> July or the first working day afterwards if the 6<sup>th</sup> is a weekend.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis during the period of school reorganization taking place across the City.

## **Appendix 1 Medical Need**

The evidence should come from at least one registered health professional and should set out the particular reasons why Birches Head High School is the most suitable school. Evidence pertaining to the need of the child to attend Birches Head High School because of an aptitude or interest in a specialism will not be considered under these criteria. The evidence must be included with the application form.