

BRYMORE ACADEMY ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

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BRYMORE ACADEMY

Admission Arrangements

Applicable to 2020/21 Academic Year

Introduction

Brymore is an academy sponsored by Bridgwater College and as such, Bridgwater College Trust is the Admissions Authority, however the admission arrangements are administered by The Local Advisory Board. They are responsible for Year 7 admissions to Brymore each September, admissions during the course of the academic year and for arranging independent admission appeal hearings in the event that an application should be unsuccessful.

Rationale and Ethos

It is important to understand the overriding philosophy that enables students to derive so much benefit from the experience that is 'Brymore'. Brymore is a state boarding academy for boys aged 11 to 17. Academic performance is not used as a selection criterion; neither is experience or expertise in any particular practical field.

Boys with appreciable motivation and interest in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, technology or sport would benefit significantly from the specialised curriculum offered at the school. As such Brymore does attract students who are genuinely interested in the delivered curriculum (in its widest sense).

All boys, we believe, irrespective of their interests, benefit from the structure and discipline that the practical learning and boarding environment brings. All boys attending Brymore are described as either full time 'boarders' or 'out-boarders', who are day pupils expected to periodically board. Full boarders stay at the school full time (they may go home on a Saturday from 4.00 pm and return on Sunday by 9.00 pm or Monday by 8.30 am), while out-boarders board when on farm duty. This is normally for one week each term. Both boarders and out-boarders have access to the boarding accommodation of the academy.

Admission process

Entry is normally made at Year 7 when the student is 11 years of age. Applicants for full boarding places are considered in terms of their suitability to board and strictly against the published Over-subscription Criteria which form part of the Brymore Admissions Arrangements for 2020/21.

All boarders (including out-boarders) will be interviewed only to establish their suitability for boarding. A report and an assessment of each boy's suitability will be obtained from the Headteacher of his current school. The interview will take place following a discussion with parents. In addition all applicants will complete a simple questionnaire. This process is two-way and is used to supplement the information contained in the brochure/website and explains more about the unique nature of Brymore, but also allows candidates the opportunity to extend and enhance the information about them received by the Academy. Assessment of suitability will be made from this evidence.

Applicants for places as an out-boarder are only considered in terms of their suitability to board and against the published Over-subscription Criteria which forms part of the Brymore Admissions Arrangements for 2020/21.

All applications for admission, and any supplementary information forms, must be submitted to the home Local Authority by the closing date of 31st October 2019, and will be considered under the Equal Preference with Ranking system of allocation. The Local Authority (LA) will forward all applications to the academy and the Local Advisory Board will rank them against the oversubscription criteria set out below. This list will then be returned to the LA under the co-ordinated admissions scheme and they will make a single offer of a place on 1st March 2020.

The application can be made 'on line' electronically, or alternatively the Local Authority Admissions & Entitlements Team will make available on request the 'Transferring School - A guide for Parents' booklet, which contains the same information about the Somerset Admissions procedure as can be found at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions where there is also a school place application form.

The published Admission Number

The published Admission Number for statutory age children for first admission to the school in September 2020 is 70. This is the maximum number of places that can be legally provided at this point of entry and is split as 30 places for full time boarders and 40 places for out-boarders. In addition, for admission to Year 12, there are 5 full boarding spaces and 5 out-boarder spaces. In-Year admissions are accepted as long as the PAN has not been reached.

Published Over-subscription Criteria

Full time boarding

These over-subscription Criteria will be applied to full time boarding applications and places will be allocated up to the published admission numbers which apply to the year of entry (Year 7).

All students who are first assessed as eligible and suitable for boarding will be allocated a place in ranked order strictly against the following published over-subscription Criteria up to the published Admission Number.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which names Brymore Academy will automatically be given a place against Admission Number before any further places are allocated as follows:

1. Looked after children ⁽¹⁾ and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted ⁽²⁾ or became subject to a residence order ⁽³⁾ or special guardianship order ⁽⁴⁾. See full definition below.
2. Children of members of the UK Armed Forces who qualify for Ministry of Defence financial assistance with the cost of boarding school fees. An official government letter of confirmation will be required.
3. Boys who meet the requirements for boarding places and who have a specific boarding need (please see boarding need defined below).
4. Boys without a statement of Special Educational Needs, identified with a sensory, physical or medical disability (High Needs Pupils), where a multi-agency professional team has identified the schools as the nearest accessible school.
5. Boys with an older sibling attending the school at the time of admission and who live at the same address.

6. Children of staff employed at Brymore Academy (Children of staff at the school either where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage).
7. Boys living furthest from the school as determined by straight line measurement.

Criterion ⁽⁴⁾ enables schools to plan with SEN Officers for the school entry of children with physical, medical or sensory impairments, where significant capital works (eg, accessible toilets, changing space, and access to classrooms) are required. The lead time on these projects mean that school place outcome dates are too late for work to be completed in time for school entry in September. However, with the support of this criterion plans can be actioned with certainty early in the year.

Out-boarders

These Over-subscription Criteria will be applied to Out-boarder applications and places will be allocated up to the published admission numbers which apply to the year of entry (Year 7).

All students will be allocated a place in ranked order strictly against the following published over-subscription Criteria up to the published Admission Number.

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which names Brymore Academy will automatically be given a place against Admission Number before any further places are allocated as follows:

1. Looked after children ⁽¹⁾ and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted ⁽²⁾ or became subject to a residence order ⁽³⁾ or special guardianship order ⁽⁴⁾. See full definition below.
2. Boys without a statement of Special Educational Needs, identified with a sensory, physical or medical disability (High Needs Pupils), where a multi-agency professional team has identified the schools as the nearest accessible school.
3. Boys with an older sibling attending the school at the time of admission and who live at the same address.
4. Children of staff employed at Brymore Academy (Children of staff at the school either where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.)
5. Boys living nearest the school as determined by straight line measurement.

Procedure for Applications

Where possible a visit to the school should be made prior to making an application. The best time to visit the school is while the student is in Year 6. This can be done by telephoning the Academy and making an appointment. Prospective students and their parents will be shown around by a current student during a normal school day (including Saturday mornings). As members of staff will be teaching, if parents wish to speak to someone (the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator [SENCo] for example) then this should be discussed when booking the visit.

All boarders will be interviewed formally to assess their suitability for boarding. Following a tour of the school with current students, parents will be invited to discuss their application with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The prospective student will then be interviewed separately. The discussion will focus on the boys' experience of being away from home, experience of living with others, the implications of boarding and his desire to be a boarder.

Alternatively, the school Open Day and Country Fair is held on the last Saturday in June each year which reflects our commitment to the local rural community. Members of staff are available for discussion throughout the day, as are current and past students, parents and governors. You may like to obtain a School brochure to support your visit, from the school office or by post. Open days are also held in September where there is a chance to see Brymore operating 'normally.'

Boarding Need

Children with a 'boarding need' include;

- a) Children at risk or with an unstable home environment and children of service personnel who have died while serving or who have been discharged as a result of attributable injury; or
- b) Children of key workers and Crown Servants working abroad (e.g. the children of charity workers, people working for voluntary service organisations, diplomatic service or the European Union, teachers, law enforcement officers and medical staff working abroad) whose work dictates that they spend much of the year overseas; or
- c) Children of key workers and Crown Servants who can demonstrate high levels of mobility in this country or abroad; or
- d) Children of key workers and Crown Servants of key workers and Crown Servants who can demonstrate that shift work is a key element; or
- e) Children with parents in the private sector or self-employed who can demonstrate that shift work or long hours are key elements; or
- f) Children who live in rural isolation, where parents can demonstrate that a boarding environment would benefit the child's social development; or
- g) Children who live in an area, where parents can demonstrate that, the child is at risk of physical or emotional harm and where attending as a boarder at Brymore would safeguard and promote the child's social development.

Suitability for boarding

The following information will be taken into account during the suitability for boarding interview and a shared view will be sought. A supplementary information form (SIF) must be completed in order to provide this information. The form can be downloaded at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions or be made available upon request from the school.

- Whether the applicant would be able to cope with and benefit from a boarding environment
- Whether the applicant has any previous experience of staying away from parents/guardians
- Whether the applicant has any experience of sharing a room with other children/communal living and whether the applicant shows an understanding that in a boarding environment he would be expected to take into account the needs of others and to compromise
- Whether the applicant has thought about the implications of boarding for example, what he would like most about boarding school and what he would miss most about home.
- Whether a boarding place is what the child wants and is not simply the wishes of a parent/guardian
- Whether there are any medical reasons why boarding would not be appropriate which could not be met by reasonable adjustment to the boarding accommodation, routine and practice within a schools responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act and other responsibilities.

The Admissions Code allows the admissions authority, as part of the boarding assessment process to consider health and safety implications. It is unlikely that students will be considered suitable to board if they have a serious proven record of:

- Arson
- Sexual misconduct
- Extreme physical violence
- Drug/alcohol misuse

Definitions of Terms

Siblings

For the purposes of Admissions, a sibling is defined as a child living at the same address as a half or full brother, an adoptive brother or children of the same household.

Parent or parent/guardian

Natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law).

Looked after children

- (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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.
- (2) Under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. See Section 46 (adoption orders).
- (3) Under the terms of the Children Act 1989. See Section 8 which defines a 'residence order' as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.
- (4) See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Home Address

The home address is important as school places are allocated on the basis of the home address of each child. A child's home address is considered to be where the child spends the majority of their time with the person(s) who have care of the child.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required, together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned. Places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless house moves have been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or the signing of a formal lease agreement. The Advisory Body reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim of residence.

Please note that the Local Advisory Body is unable to allocate a place to anyone moving into the country from abroad prior to their arrival in the county. A requirement would therefore be proof of residency as stated above. The only exceptions are children of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants (including Diplomats).

It should also be noted that an address used for childcare arrangements cannot be used as a home address for the purpose of applying for a school place. A fraudulent claim to an address may lead to the withdrawal of the offer of a place. The Admissions & Entitlements Team, County Hall, Taunton and Brymore must be notified of any change of address during the admissions procedure.

Issues relating to shared residency arrangements

Difficulties in allocating a place at the Academy can arise where shared residence arrangements for the child are in place and parents/carers submit applications to the Academy and another school. Therefore where separated parents issue separate applications for their child the Local Authority (on behalf of Brymore) can only offer one place. In this situation the Local Advisory Board requires parents to resolve matters between themselves. If an agreement cannot be reached parents may wish to seek legal advice. The Local Advisory Board will not become involved in private disputes. It is recognised that there may be situations where parents cannot ultimately reach an agreement between themselves and it is, therefore, necessary for the Local Advisory Board to take a decision. Where this is the case the Local Advisory Board will try to establish where the child spends the majority of their time and prioritise the application made by the parent living at this address.

Each parent will be required to write to the Local Advisory Board and inform them of the number of days each week the child spends with them. Where the child spends equal time with both parents the Local Advisory Board may ask for additional information including evidence of which parent/carer is in receipt of child benefit, and/or the name of the GP surgery at which the child is registered. When the Local Advisory Board has received all the necessary information from both parents a decision will be reached based on the evidence provided.

Distance Measurements

For the purpose of measuring home to the Academy distance, all calculations will be measured using a straight-line measurement from the address point of the home to the address point of Brymore using the LA's GIS mapping system. (Address Point is a dataset that uniquely defines and locates residential, business and public postal addresses in Great Britain. It is created by matching information from Ordnance Survey digital map databases with more than 27 million addresses recorded in the Royal Mail). In the case of multi-level dwellings such as flats, the staircase will be included in the distance measurement.

Equal Preference with Ranking allocation method

This approach requires the Local Authority to rank all applications against the published over-subscription criteria for the school concerned and where schools are over-subscribed, places will be allocated up to the published admission number in strict priority order. Where more than one school can be offered, the highest ranked preference will be allocated.

Tie-Breaker

If there are not enough places to satisfy all the applications under any one criterion, priority will be given to those living nearest the school (straight line measurement) for out-boarders and those furthest away from the school (straight line measurement) for full time boarders. Where two distances are equal and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, priority will be determined by independent drawing of lots.

Appeals

Applicants whose Academy place application is turned down have the legal right to appeal against the decision to refuse admission. Bridgwater College Trust will arrange for the appeal to be heard by a fully independent group. Details concerning how to appeal are explained in the decision letters sent out when a place is refused.

Waiting list

Where an application has been refused due to lack of places and not due to unsuitability for boarding, the child will be placed on a waiting list. This will be kept in order of over-subscription criteria by the Local Advisory Board, and will be maintained until the end of the academic year to which the application applies. Where places become available within the Admission Number they will be allocated to the highest ranked eligible child on the maintained list. Children who are the subject of a direction by a Local Authority to admit or who are allocated to the school in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocols, will take precedence over those children on a waiting list.

Supplementary information form (SIF)

In order for children to be considered as suitable for boarding, applicants will need to complete the attached SIF, which must be submitted along with the school place application.

Multiple-birth applications

In the case of multiple birth applications, the published admission number for the school concerned will be increased at the point of allocation to ensure multiple birth siblings can be allocated places at the same school (sibling definition applies).

In-year Admissions

Applications for a place during the academic year must be made directly to the school office, by completing the in-year application form. A copy can be downloaded from the Academy website or collected/sent from the Academy office, or from the Local Authority. The Headteacher will invite applicants for a tour and an interview purely to assess suitability for boarding. Applicants will receive a written response within 10 school days following the interview. Where an Academy place is offered it will be held open for 14 school days and applicants will need to confirm acceptance within this time.

Applications for Retained or Accelerated application

The Local Advisory Board will consider applications for delayed or accelerated entry in cases where parents would like their child to be admitted to a year group either side of the chronological age year group. The reasons for the request must be fully explained on the appropriate SIF and included with the school place application form.

Sixth Form

Admissions to sixth forms are conducted in line with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and arrangements specific to the school are detailed on the website. For external applications interviews to assess suitability for boarding will take place. A meeting may also be held to discuss options and academic entry requirements for particular courses. This meeting would not form part of the decision making process on whether to offer a place. Applications must be made directly to the school using the common application form or the application form supplied by the school and returned no later than the application closing date specified. All academic qualifications are taught at Bridgwater College and all applicants must also satisfy the admission criteria for the College.

Parents or children will have the legal right to appeal against any decision to refuse a young person entry to a sixth form. This may include a refusal for any reason, e.g. there is no place available within the published Admission Number, or where a parent or student believes there may be an administrative error regarding the application procedure or entrance requirements.

