

STRATHEARN SCHOOL

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Principal: Mrs N Connery MEd BA PQH(NI)

Chair of Board of Governors: Mrs L Mallon LLB

Voluntary Grammar School

**Non-denominational
Girls' Grammar**

Age Range: 11-18

Admission No: 120

Enrolment No: 810

OPEN MORNING

Saturday 06 January 2024 - 9.15am – 12.30pm. By invitation through Primary Schools and on School website

To: Parents/Guardians naming Strathearn School as a preference on their daughter's Transfer Application.

Entrance Test Results

Strathearn School intends to use the Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS) ("the Score") as awarded by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG). The Score in the SEAG assessments and SEAG Candidate number should both be entered in the relevant section of the Online Transfer Application. The original notification received from SEAG indicating your daughter's SEAG Score should be uploaded to the Online Transfer Application.

Special Provisions and/or Special Circumstances

If you are making a claim for your daughter to be considered under Special Circumstances or Special Provisions, please read carefully the information given in the relevant sections below and act accordingly.

School Fee

The Strathearn School Fee is £365 per pupil for the academic year of 2024/25.

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL

The Admissions Criteria given below have been drawn up and approved by the Board of Governors; their application has been delegated to the Principal.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA YEAR 8 2024-2025

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 30 January 2024 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 22 February 2024 at 12.00noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 22 February 2024 and up to 4 pm on 4 March 2024 will be treated as a late application.

Strathearn (the 'School') is an all girls grammar school offering a wide-ranging curriculum of academic courses. The School will initially consider only those applicants who have taken the assessment papers provided by the Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG). The School will use the Score as awarded by SEAG to an applicant subject only to the consideration by the Board of Governors of those applicants claiming Special Circumstances or Special Provisions as explained below. Information on SEAG is available from the School or the SEAG website www.seagni.co.uk.

The Score in the SEAG assessments and the SEAG Candidate number should both be entered on the Transfer Application. The original notification received from SEAG indicating your daughter's Score should be uploaded to the Online Transfer Application. This information will be verified by the School.

Strathearn will **not** use as a criterion the position of preference given to the School by the applicant on the Transfer Application. Therefore, a girl who has listed Strathearn as a second or subsequent preference school will be considered in the same way as those who have placed Strathearn first on the list.

Girls resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the School will be selected for admission before any girl not so resident.

- 1 The first 110 places from the admissions total of 120 will be allocated to girls on the basis of the rank order of their respective Scores; those achieving higher Scores being allocated places before those with lower Scores. If more than one girl is eligible for the 110th place because they have equal Scores, then all such girls will be allocated places up to the School's admission number, using, if necessary, the criteria listed in 4 below.
- 2 Following the allocation of places as described in criterion 1, a pool (the 'Pool') will be established, and the remaining places (if any) shall be allocated from the Pool.

The Pool will consist of at least 15 girls identified on the basis of the rank order of their respective Scores. The Pool will include all girls who achieved the three next highest Scores. If the number of girls achieving these Scores is less than 15, then all girls achieving the fourth next highest Score shall be included in the Pool and, if necessary, the fifth next highest Score and so on, until the Pool consists of at least 15 girls.

Once the Pool has been established, girls from the Pool will be allocated to the remaining places on application of the criteria listed in 4 below.

- 3 If, following the application of criteria 1 and 2 above, all the available places have not been filled, the School will consider for admission any girls who have not taken the SEAG assessment. Allocation of the remaining places will be made by applying the criteria listed in 4 below.
- 4 If as specified above, the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, or point 3 above applies, the following further criteria will then apply, in the order stated:
 - (i) girls enrolled in the School's Preparatory Department as of 1 September 2022;
 - (ii) girls with a child of the family¹ currently enrolled in the School's Secondary Department (details to be supplied) or accepted for enrolment in September 2024;
 - (iii) girls who are the eldest child of the family² in September 2024 (details to be supplied);
 - (iv) girls with the highest Scores;
 - (v) girls who are entitled to Free School Meals³;

¹ for the purposes of the Admissions Criteria, the phrase "child of the family" covers: a child born to a married couple or to a couple in a civil partnership; a child born to a co-habiting couple; a child born to a single parent; a child of either/any of those people by a previous marriage, civil partnership or relationship; a child living with a couple who has been treated as a "child of the family" whether there is a civil partnership or not; a child living with an individual, who has been treated as a "child of the family"; an adopted or fostered child; a situation where, for example, an orphaned cousin is being brought up with a family or individual. (DE Circular 2023/15, Annex 2)

² eldest child [eligible for admission]" will mean the eldest or only girl in the family, with each twin or each multiple being regarded as an eldest child. The 'eldest child' criterion will also apply in the case where a family has not had the opportunity to enrol an elder daughter, such as the case where the elder daughter has completed her post-primary education, could not attend a mainstream school (e.g. attends a special school) or where the family has relocated to Northern Ireland. (DE Circular 2023/15, Annex 2)

³ entitled to Free School Meals" will mean girls who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their parent or guardian has signed their post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including, Monday 4 March 2024 no later than 4pm.

- (vi) girls with a child of the family who has attended the School's Secondary Department (name and date of attendance to be supplied);
- (vii) girls with a child of the family currently enrolled in Years 8 to 14 or accepted for enrolment in September 2024, in Campbell College (details to be supplied);
- (viii) if more than one girl is eligible for the final place, priority will be given to the girl whose home is closer to the School. Distance will be measured in a straight line using an Ordnance Survey web distance measurement tool from the front door of the girl's home to the front entrance of the School's main administrative building. Home will be taken to mean the girl's address appearing at the commencement of the Transfer Application Form.

The School emphasises that it is the responsibility of the applicants to notify the School on the Online Transfer Application where the above criteria apply, and to furnish relevant details.

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.

To this end, the School will adhere to the Department of Education's verification procedures (DE Circular 2013/24) which state:

'The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide information within the deadlines set by schools can result in the withdrawal of a place and the inability to offer a place on the part of any school nominated on the applicant's online Transfer application'

'If you state within your application that your child is currently registered as Free School Meal Entitled, and that claim is decisive in qualifying her for admission, then that information will be verified. If it is found to be incorrect, then any place offered because of it will be withdrawn.'

Special Circumstances

Strathearn School has academic performance as its first criterion, subject only to the consideration of medical or other problems which may have affected performance in the SEAG assessments, and which are supported by documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. These 'medical or other problems' are commonly referred to as 'Special Circumstances'.

Please note, if a claim for the consideration of Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Special Access arrangements were granted for an applicant, the School will take into account the fact that the applicant was granted Special Access arrangements for those matters.

Parents who wish to apply to the School under Special Circumstances should complete Form SC obtainable from the School and attach it with appropriate documentary evidence to the online Transfer Application, as detailed below.

- **Details of Medical or Other Problems**

Where it is claimed that an applicant's performance in the SEAG assessments has been affected by a medical or other problem, it is the responsibility of the parents to set out in the Form SC precise details of the problem and append evidence to corroborate its existence.

- Where the problem is a medical one of short term duration which affected the applicant only at the time of the SEAG assessments, the School will give greater weight to evidence that the applicant was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the illness at the time of the assessments.

Where the problem is of a non-medical nature the parents should append appropriate evidence. It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

- **Educational Evidence**

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide the educational evidence as detailed in the Form SC. This should include (where they exist):

- a) the Score awarded in the SEAG assessments;
- b) the results for the applicant of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 and the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics in Years 5 and 6;
- c) additional comparative information from the Primary School for other pupils in the applicant's Year 7 class (without names) and which should include the results of any standardised tests conducted in Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, the results in any end of year tests in English and Mathematics in Years 5 and 6, and, where available, the respective SEAG scores;
- d) any other relevant material.

A panel of Governors will consider the application for Special Circumstances and where accepted, the panel will determine a score for the applicant. In determining a score, the panel will consider all of the academic information presented, and, if necessary, comparative data collected by the School. Such applicants will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a SEAG score and the admissions criteria applied.

Special Provisions

Special provisions will apply for:

- a) applicants whose parents wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, including applicants who are children of serving Armed Forces Personnel, past and present;
- b) applicants who have received more than half their primary education outside Northern Ireland;
- c) applicants, who because of unforeseen and **serious** medical or other problems were unable to sit any of the SEAG assessment papers, or where the child received an estimated score because they only sat one of the two SEAG assessment papers.

Note: It is expected that all those seeking admission should sit the SEAG assessments with the exception of those applicants who take up residence in Northern Ireland after the start of the Year 7.

Parents who wish to apply to the School under Special Provisions should contact the School as soon as possible. In addition they should complete Form SP, obtainable from the School' stating the precise reason why they believe their daughter is eligible for consideration under Special Provisions and provide appropriate independent documentary evidence, including any Educational Evidence as detailed under Special Circumstances above, that might assist the panel determine an appropriate score. A copy of Form SP and all the documentary evidence should be attached to the online Transfer Application.

For those applicants whose parents wish them to transfer from schools outside Northern Ireland, applications for Special Provisions should be received by the School by Monday 4 March 2024, not later than 4pm.

A panel of Governors will consider the application for Special Provisions. Where Special Provisions are accepted, the following procedure will apply:

The School will consider any assessment information and may choose to commission an independent assessment of the applicant's ability in English and Mathematics. A panel of Governors will determine an appropriate score for the applicants. In determining a score, the panel will consider all the academic information available, and, if necessary, comparative data collected by the School. The applicant will then be considered with all other applicants who have received a SEAG assessments score and the admissions criteria applied.

Waiting Lists.

Strathearn School operates a waiting lists policy. For Year 8, all applications for admission to Year 8 that were initially refused will be automatically added to the waiting list. New applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will also be added to the waiting list. This waiting list will be in place until the end of the following academic year, that is, the end of Year 8. Please contact the School if you wish your daughter's name to be removed from the list.

Should a vacancy arise after the day placement notification has been issued from the Education Authority, the published criteria will be applied to the waiting list to select the next candidate for admission.

Waiting lists are also maintained for other Years and applications should be made in writing using the form available on the School website or from reception.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No	Total Applications <i>ie. All preferences</i>	Total Admissions
2021/22	120~	212	125*
2022/23	120	157	122*
2023/24	120	171	121*

~Includes a Temporary Variation

*Includes statemented pupils, those admitted under appeal or at the direction of the 'Exceptional Circumstances Body'

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO FORMS 2-5

Years 2-5 ADMISSION

- Admission to Forms 2-5 will be governed by the availability of places within that year group, class sizes including practical class sizes and the School's planned allocation and usage of staff, accommodation and other resources. Admission to the School will depend on the applicant's ability to benefit from the academic and creative life of the School.
- In the case of applicants from other post-primary schools, the Board of Governors will give preference to girls on the basis of academic achievement. Academic achievement will be judged with reference to the transfer grade/score (if there was one) and evidence of academic achievement and pastoral information from the current school's reports.
- In the event of being oversubscribed with applicants for any year group the following criteria will apply:
 - Academic Record (SEAG assessment / AQE / GL Score, examination results, current school's reports)
 - Applicant attended the Preparatory Department of the School
 - Sister of the applicant attends or attended the School
 - Applicant is the first born girl in the family
 - Sister of the applicant is accepted for the secondary department of the School for the forthcoming academic year

The Admissions Criteria have been drawn up and approved by the Board of Governors; their application has been delegated to the Principal.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO POST 16 (Sixth Form)

Strathearn will give preference to pupils on the basis of academic achievement. Academic achievement will be judged with reference to:

- the grades achieved in GCSEs*
- the relevance of the subjects taken
- information from recent school reports.

The minimum required for entry into the Sixth Form will be seven passes in relevant GCSE subjects at grades A to C with at least four passes at grade B (English Examination Board Equivalent 6) or better. Relevant subjects will include no more than one Short Course GCSE and exclude Learning for Life and Work.

If there are more girls who are eligible than there are places available, places shall be awarded in the following order:

1. Applicants with the highest total GCSE point score in relevant⁴ GCSE subjects – an applicant's GCSE point score will be calculated on the basis of grades in full course GCSE and no more than one Short Course GCSE (excluding Learning for Life and Work) as follows:

English Examination Boards	CCEA / WJEC	Point Score Full Course	Point Score Short Course
9	A*	4	2
8/7	A	3	1.5
6	B	2	1
5	C*	1.5	0.75
4	C	1	0.5

2. In the event of a tie, priority will be given to the girl whose home is closer to the School. Distance will be measured in a straight line using an Ordnance Survey web distance measurement tool from the front door of the girl's home to the School's Reception. Home will be taken to mean the girl's address appearing on the Application Form.

Applicants applying from outside Northern Ireland and who are seeking a Boarding Place at Campbell College must satisfy the School that their academic achievement is equivalent to the standard set out above. In addition, pupils for whom English is an additional language must complete a CEFR B2 Level assessment for entry into Sixth Form. A score of 60% is required for the candidate to be considered.

The Admissions Criteria have been drawn up and approved by the Board of Governors; their application has been delegated to the Principal.

Criteria for any extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission into Sixth Form (Year 13).

The Department of Education may, at the School's request, increase the number of pupils that the School can admit to its Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to pupils who meet the basic eligibility criteria for sixth form study (as above) and shall be allocated in the order determined by the criteria to be applied in the following order:

1. Pupils who have most recently completed Year 12 in Strathearn.
2. Pupils who are applying from outside NI and who are seeking a Boarding place at Campbell College.
3. Pupils from other schools where admission to an extra place at Strathearn has been agreed by the Department of Education.**

⁴ Relevant Subjects are those offered at AS/ A2 Level in Strathearn School, and / or deemed by the School to provide suitable preparation to undertake an AS/A2 level course offered in Strathearn.

****DE circular 2023/15** Parents should note how the Department of Education (DE) will, in response to a school's request, increase the school's enrolment number in order to allow an extra post-16 pupil to enrol. DE will first check whether there is another school or schools of a type suitable for that pupil within an hour's journey of where the pupil lives. If there is, DE will then check whether this other school or schools may provide all of the post-16 courses that the pupil wishes to pursue. If these checks find that no other suitable school may provide all of the post-16 courses that the pupil wishes to pursue - then DE will agree a school's request for an extra place.

The Nearest Suitable School: the important point that must be clear in relation to this recommended criterion is that it is the Boards of Governors of a post-primary school who determine whether or not their school, in respect of an **applicant's residence**, is the nearest school of its type to the applicant. For the purposes of this criterion, and in line with transport eligibility policy, the guidance recognises six types of school: denominational grammar, non-denominational grammar, maintained secondary, controlled secondary, Irish-medium and Integrated.

A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 pupil will belong to one of these 6 types and DE will consider any other school or schools from this same type as suitable for the pupil. DE will also consider as suitable for the pupil any school from the same type as the type of school that the child attended in Year 12.

Requirements for Upper Sixth (Year 14)

Pupils will be admitted to Upper Sixth (Year 14) who have shown by their academic progress and positive attitude to date that they will benefit from the educational provision available in Strathearn in Sixth Form.

Appeals Procedure

If a pupil does not meet the entry requirements and wishes to make an appeal and/or claim special circumstances, she may make an appeal to the Board of Governors. This appeal should be supported by documentary evidence of a medical or other appropriate nature. When considering such appeals, the Governors will take account of a pupil's commitment to the school (e.g. attendance and behaviour) as one of the criteria they use in arriving at a decision.