



The Blackpool Sixth Form College

*Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

## **Admissions, Liaison and Marketing Policies and Procedures**

### **Admissions Policy**

Aim: To set out the key principles and procedures for college admissions and for the marketing of the college in the Fylde Coast and beyond

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## **Admissions Policy**

### **1. Aims and introduction**

This policy applies to all applicants to the Blackpool Sixth applying for post-16 courses. It sets out the college's key criteria for admitting students and the key processes and procedures involved.

### **2. Statement of principles**

- i) Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.
- ii) All offers of places on courses are conditional (unless explicitly stated in an offer letter) and subject to the college being able to meet each applicant's individual support and study programme needs.
- iii) Fair, effective and timely procedures exist for handling queries, appeals and complaints relating to the admission of students.

### **3. Study programmes and entry requirements**

Blackpool Sixth offers the following study programmes and sets minimum entry requirements for each programme. These programmes and their entry requirements are reviewed annually by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team and are published in our printed prospectus and on our website at the start of each academic year. All study programmes are full-time only and equivalent to three A levels for level 3 and to four GCSEs for level 2. Details of entry requirements are provided on the website and in the prospectus for the relevant year of entry.

#### **3.5 Specific subject requirements**

The college endeavours to keep its entry criteria as simple as possible and the key criteria are those for entry to a particular study programme which are set out in sections 3.1 to 3.4 above. However, it is acknowledged that it is necessary to set some specific minimum entry criteria for some of our courses. These are stated in the courses section of our website.

#### **3.6 GCSE English and maths requirements**

It is a national requirement that any students taking post-16 courses who do not have passes at a 4 or above in English language and maths, re-take these courses as part of their study programme.

### **3.7 Entry criteria for students with qualifications from outside England and Wales**

If an applicant holds, or is due to hold, qualifications from a country other than England or Wales, the college will work out a GCSE equivalence for the qualifications and will make its conditional offer or enrolment offer on that basis.

### **4. Expectations of applicants**

The college will expect that applicants:

i) Provide accurate and up-to-date information at all stages of the application and enrolment process. Any student found to be providing fraudulent or false information may have any offer made withdrawn and their place at college may be in jeopardy if they have already commenced a study programme.

ii) Applicants must provide information at application or enrolment stage, regarding any criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings and about any prosecutions pending, bail conditions or involvement with the Youth Offending Team. There are questions about this on the application form and the enrolment form. If they indicate that any of the above apply then the Head of Student Services will carry out a risk assessment as detailed in the Managing Students policy. The outcome of the risk assessment will determine whether or not the applicant can be admitted to the college and if they can, what safeguarding measures need to be put in place.

iii) Applicants should inform the college if they have been the victim of bullying or harassment that may be relevant to college. There is a question about this on the application and enrolment forms. If they indicate that this applies to them, then the Head of Student Services will obtain more information so that any safeguarding implications can be explored and measures put in place to keep the applicant and other students safe.

iv) Applicants should inform the college about any additional learning support needs or medical conditions. There is a question about this on the application and the enrolment form and the Additional Learning Support team will follow up all such disclosures.

v) Applicants should inform the college if they are Looked After Children. There is a question about this on the application and enrolment form. An Additional Support worker will follow up any such disclosure.

vi) Applicants in Year 11 should provide predicted grades for their GCSEs and equivalent qualifications and list any qualifications already obtained.

vii) Applicants who have already completed Year 11 when they apply to the college must provide details of their GCSE or equivalent qualifications when they apply.

These will be checked at enrolment.

viii) At enrolment, all applicants will need to provide proof of identity in the form of either: a current passport or the long version of their birth certificate.

## **5. Criteria for offering places**

### **5.1 The criteria to be applied when deciding whether or not to offer an applicant a place at the college are:**

i) Students must be under 19 years of age on 31 August in the teaching year when they would commence their study programme.

ii) The applicant should be committed to continuing with their education for the full duration of the study programme.

ii) The applicant should meet the entry requirements for their chosen study programme and for individual courses within the study programme (see section 3 above). In some cases the 'exceptional enrolment' procedure may apply and an applicant may be admitted to the college without meeting the standard entry criteria for the study programme in full (see Appendix A).

iii) The applicant's study programme should be at a higher level than the student has previously achieved or, in the case of the Route3 Programme, represent progression over the course of the study programme as whole.

iv) Where students are assessed to have a high level of support need, then all parties must be assured that the appropriate level of support can be provided and funded.

v) In circumstances where the available places for a given course are exceeded at enrolment and the college is unable to arrange additional provision, preference will be given to applicants who applied before the initial deadline of 1st March.

vi) Blackpool Sixth reserves the right to close a course if there are insufficient student numbers for the particular course. The college will inform applicants for such a course as soon as possible and will offer the most suitable alternative.

vii) Blackpool Sixth reserves the right to decline an application from any applicant who has previously been involved in the college's disciplinary process or who is felt to be unlikely to complete their chosen study programme.

viii) Blackpool Sixth does not at present apply any criteria giving preference to applicants from particular geographical areas or attending any particular schools.

## **5.2 Students who wish to re-enrol having not completed a study programme at the college**

Students who are applying to re-join the college having previously enrolled but having not completed their study programme will be considered on a case by case basis. Such students must complete an application form and state that they have previously enrolled at the college. They will be interviewed as soon as possible after submitting the form, usually with the involvement of an Assistant Principal.

Students who have previously enrolled and who are seeking to re-join the college may have specific conditions applied to any offer of a place, for example, the requirement to meet a certain level of attendance. Such conditions will be put in a contract to be signed at enrolment.

## **5.3 Applicants transferring from another institution**

The college will consider on an individual basis applications from students who are seeking to transfer from any post-16 institution or an apprenticeship programme. Entry to the college will be dependent on there being sufficient room on the courses the student wishes to take and will also be subject to satisfactory academic references being received. The college would also need to be clear that progression to the syllabi offered by the college would be practical in terms of successful outcomes for the student.

## **5.4 Applications from non-UK citizens**

The college is able to accept applications from prospective students who are not UK citizens but who already have the legal right to be resident in the UK e.g. because of their parents' immigration status. The college cannot however accept applications from students who would need to apply for a student visa to study at the college.

## **5.5 Accommodation**

The college does not arrange accommodation for students. Any student coming to study at the college and requiring accommodation would need to make a private arrangement (or have their parents/carers make such an arrangement). As such the college would not be a 'regulated activity provider' under the Keeping Children Safe in Education regulations Statutory Guidance 2018 and would not make any type of DBS or other check on the accommodation and indeed would not be entitled to do so.

## **5.6 Private fostering**

In accordance with safeguarding requirements, admissions staff will inform the

college's safeguarding team urgently if they believe that a student being enrolled into the college may be living in a 'private fostering' arrangement i.e. living away from close family members and not under local authority care. The safeguarding team will then inform the local authority through the usual channels. 'Private fostering' only applies to young people under 16 or to young people over 16 with disabilities. As the college does not enrol under-16s, it is only the disability consideration which will apply.

### **5.7 Exceptional enrolment protocol**

Blackpool Sixth is committed to equality and will consider students' individual circumstances before making an offer of a place. It is recognised that some applicants, due to exceptional circumstances, may not have the opportunity to undertake GCSE exams in the standard way and consequently may not be expected to achieve the minimum entry requirements for either a level 2 or level 3 programme of study. The process for dealing with exceptional enrolments is outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

## **6. Applicants with support needs**

### **6.1 Additional Learning Support**

The college has an Additional Learning Support service which seeks to support students who have disclosed a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition which may affect their studies. The service aims to remove any potential barriers to learning to help students develop their personal skills and confidence to become as independent as possible in their learning and help them achieve their learning goals, personal goals and further study/employment aspirations.

### **6.2 Assessment of support needs**

In the case where an additional need has been disclosed, the college will work closely with the student, their parents/carers and relevant agencies such as their high school or local authority in order to identify what support is most appropriate.

The Additional Learning Support team will follow up a disclosure of an additional support need from the standard application form with a further information form in order to obtain more detail about the student's needs and existing support arrangements.

Applicants and their parents/carers are also provided with opportunities to inform the college about any support they may need either face-to-face at open events, enrolment or other admissions events or via the Learn Alert email or via telephone.

Any student who declares a learning need, disability or medical condition which may

affect their learning will receive an assessment of their needs by a member of the Additional Learning Support team. An Individual Support Plan and on course support will be agreed and implemented. The plan will be reviewed and amended as necessary during the student's period of study at the college.

### **6.3 Children Looked After**

Applicants are asked on the application form if they are looked after by the local authority. A designated member of the additional learning support team and other members of the pastoral support team will work with such students (and with their key workers) to ensure that they are given the support they need to make a successful transition to college.

### **6.4 Fitness to Study**

The college's Fitness to Study policy covers the assessment of students' capability to engage with their study programme whilst encountering difficulties due to physical or mental ill-health or home circumstances. The college will make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure wherever possible that the student is able to remain in learning and succeed on their chosen study programme. This policy can apply to both prospective and current students.

## **7. Admissions process**

### **7.1 Application**

All prospective students are required to complete a standard application form to be considered for a place at the college. The college strongly promotes on-line application because of the consistency and efficiency this allows. On request, paper application forms in the standard format will be provided.

The initial published deadline for the receipt of applications is 1st March. All applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible prior to this deadline so that interviews can be arranged in as efficient and timely way as possible. However, applications will still be considered after the initial deadline as it is acknowledged that some applicants do make late decisions about their post-16 destination or change their initial plans and there are students who relocate to the area after the initial deadline has passed. Please note that late applicants may not be offered their first choice subjects.

### **7.2 Interview**

All applicants who are eligible for consideration for a place at the college on the grounds of age (over 16 and no older than 18 on the 1st September of their year of entry) and residency or immigration status (UK/EU/EEA national or nationals of other countries who do not require a visa to study in the UK) will receive an admissions



interview. In the case of very late applicants i.e. those applying to us in August prior to entry in September, the interview may be conducted as part of the enrolment process.

In the case of students at partner high schools, this interview will generally be carried out in school through arrangement with the school in question. Non-partner school applicants will be interviewed in college.

Interviews are generally conducted by members of the Admissions and Liaison team. However, in some circumstances, another member of staff may attend e.g. a member of the additional learning support team.

Interviews are generally carried out with small groups of applicants from the same school (3 or 4) and they cover:

- Checking of the information on the form
- Discussion of individual course choices
- Offer of place at the college
- Key dates e.g. enrolment and further opportunities to find out about the college and its courses

By special arrangement and wherever felt necessary or appropriate, individual 1:1 interviews can be arranged. These are most often used in cases where the application needs particularly sensitive handling and where the presence of other applicants may be a hindrance to the discussion required. Examples of such situations are: 'non-standard' applications where the applicant has already left school, applicants who have high level additional needs which require the presence of a member of the Additional Learning Support team.

***Note for 2020-21: Due to the ongoing Coronavirus restrictions, it is not currently possible to run face-to-face interviews. Instead, alternative means such as email and phone are being used to provide advice and guidance to applicants relating to their application.***

### **7.3 Offer of a place**

It is our standard practice to make a conditional offer of a place at the college towards the end of the admissions interview. It will be made clear by the interviewer that the offer is dependent on the applicant meeting the minimum entry requirements for the relevant course programme and that entry to specific courses may also be dependent on obtaining minimum grades in certain specified GCSE or equivalent qualifications.

In the case of non-standard applications i.e. those not coming directly from school,

the decision whether or not to offer a place may require referral to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (usually either the Deputy Principal or the Assistant Principal, Vocational). In such cases, the applicant will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible after the interview.

#### **7.4 Enrolment**

The culmination of the admissions process is new student enrolment which is held on GCSE results day and the day after. Applicants who have been offered a place at the college will be invited to attend enrolment at a designated appointment time.

Enrolment has three main stages:

- Entry of GCSE or equivalent results data on the college database
- Discussions with each curriculum department who offer the courses which the applicant wishes to take, leading to finalisation of the course programme
- Checking of data and confirmation of enrolment

The Admissions and Liaison team, supported by Pastoral Mentors and the FYi Futures team will provide more general advice at enrolment, especially for applicants who have not met the entry criteria for the courses they wish to take or who are very unsure of their choices.

Applicants who cannot attend the designated enrolment days but who do still wish to enrol with the college will be required to write a letter to the Principal explaining why they cannot attend on those days and requesting an 'provisional enrolment'. The applicant will need to come in person to the college as soon as they are able to before the start of the term in order to complete their enrolment.

**Note for 2020-21:** *Due to the ongoing Coronavirus restrictions, the college may need to conduct a remote enrolment process using online means and phone where necessary.*

#### **7.5 Late enrolment**

The college will continue to admit students after the enrolment days at the discretion of the Principal. If maximum capacity is reached, then the college will make this public and will initiate a waiting list for places at the college. Beyond the end of September, further enrolments will be highly exceptional due to the amount of missed work which the student will need to make up. After this point applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will only be admitted with SLT approval.

## **7.6 Admissions enquiry handling**

Enquiries regarding admissions come through the following channels:

Phone calls – these are handled initially by Reception and then transferred to a member of the Admissions and Schools' Liaison team.

E-mails to [admissions@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk) are responded to by the Admissions team.

Personal visits – these are arranged on request, especially for prospective students and their parents who are from out of the area or where special circumstances pertain.

In the case of all of the above, it is our policy to respond to enquiries within a maximum of three working days in term time and within five working days outside term-time.

## **8. Appeals**

Applicants have the right of appeal against any decision taken during the application and enrolment process. In the case of an appeal against a decision made relating to the offer of a place or admission at enrolment, the applicant will be asked in the first instance to make this appeal in writing to the Head of Admissions, Liaison and Marketing (HALM). However, any appeals made against a decision made by the HALM will be referred to the Deputy Principal or the Principal. The HALM will respond to the appeal within 5 working days.

## **9. Equality and diversity**

In accordance with the college's policies on equality and diversity, the college's admissions service is fully committed to fair and equal treatment for all applicants regardless of age (though in the context of being a 16-19 only institution), disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation.

The college's marketing communications materials and its advertising will strive to actively present the college as a diverse community. The marketing team will also strive to follow best practice in the accessibility of its materials to students/others with disabilities or other specific needs.

The Admissions team also works closely with the Additional Learning Support team in meeting the needs of students with additional needs which may affect their learning and their participation in college life. Information on applicants' needs is captured through their application forms and also through contact with school

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and transition reviews for statemented students.

It is mentioned in the prospectus and the key admissions letters that the Additional Learning Support team can be contacted directly by prospective students and their parents/carers in order to discuss their needs and how they can be met.

The college will ensure that modifications to admissions arrangements and programmes of study are made as far as is reasonable in order to meet the needs of students with additional needs.

## **10. Other related policies**

Equality and diversity policy

Fitness to study policy

Managing students policy

Safeguarding policy

SEND policy

## **Annex A: Exceptional enrolment protocol**

*Aim: To ensure consistent and fair admission for students may not have the opportunity to undertake GCSE exams in the standard way.*

### **Exceptional enrolment protocol (where minimum college entry requirements are not met)**

#### **1. Rationale**

Blackpool Sixth is committed to equality and will consider students' individual circumstances before making an offer of a place. It is recognised that some applicants, due to exceptional circumstance, may not have the opportunity to undertake GCSE exams in the standard way and consequently may not be expected to achieve the minimum entry requirements for either a level 2 or level 3 programme of study. This policy outlines the reasonable adjustments that will be made for applicants in this position.

Exceptional enrolment requests are most often made for the following reasons (this is not an exhaustive list and other individual circumstances could be considered):

- A diagnosed long term physical illness preventing access to enough learning in school
- A sudden serious illness or injury preventing completion of GCSE examinations
- Prolonged diagnosed mental health issues preventing regular attendance at school
- Attendance at an alternative educational provision
- Home-schooling, perhaps due to a history of bullying in a previous school
- Previous history of school refusal preventing educational progress

#### **2. Exceptional enrolment procedures**

- a) Any member of staff who suspects that a student may be eligible for an exceptional enrolment must inform the Head of Additional Learning Support. This can be done at any point in the admissions or enrolment process.
- b) Once a student has applied to study at college, a meeting will be held with the applicant and their supporters (parent(s)/carer(s), social worker, school staff), the Head of Additional Learning Support and member(s) of the Additional Learning Support (ALS) team. The purpose of this meeting will be to:
  - i) establish if the circumstances warrant an exceptional enrolment

- ii) identify the students' needs and aspirations
  - iii) identify potential study programmes that maximise the chances of success
  - iv) agree next steps in terms of transition such as allocating a key worker, further visits/taster events, meeting with key staff, completing subject-related tasks, completing initial assessments and agreements about information sharing.
- c) The applicant will be allocated a member of the ALS team, who will act as their key worker throughout the admissions and enrolment process.
  - d) The Head of Additional Learning Support will discuss the exceptional enrolment with an Assistant Principal and the transition will be agreed.
  - e) An ALS Administrator will share information with schools and other professionals to gather information about predicted grades and support needs.
  - f) The applicant and parent(s)/carer(s) will be sent a letter confirming the transition plan and any specific requirements of the potential exceptional enrolment.
  - g) The transition plan will be personalised to the applicant and designed to ensure that the application to study at the college, and the study programme, is in their best interests and maximises chances of success.
  - h) The Head of Additional Learning Support will liaise with the Head of Department for each of the proposed subjects to agree the work to be completed and initial assessment to be undertaken prior to enrolment in August. The work and assessment should allow the Head of Department to make an informed judgement on the applicant's chances of success.
  - i) Prior to enrolment, the Head of Additional Learning Support will carry out a pre-enrolment interview with the applicant, to discuss the results of any assessments taken, a suitable programme of study, including the number/combination of subjects to be taken. In exceptional circumstances this may be a reduced or bespoke programme.
  - j) The proposed programme of study must be agreed with a member of the enrolment quality team.
  - k) A student has the right to appeal any decision made regarding their exceptional enrolment. Appeals must be made in writing to The Deputy Principal within 5 working days of any decision.
  - l) Following enrolment, the student will be issued with a support plan, completed by their key worker, detailing support and actions to be taken by the student to ensure success.
  - m) The Head of Additional Learning Support will review the progress of all students who have enrolled on an exceptional enrolment each half term.