



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 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 a range of 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. Details of entry requirements are provided on the website for the relevant year of entry.

3.1 Specific course 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. 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.

3.2 GCSE English and maths requirements

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

3.3 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. The college may in some cases need to carry out its own assessments of students' prior attainment, especially in English and maths.

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 the 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 may 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 the 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 on all such disclosures.

v) Applicants should inform the college if they are young people in care. 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 their birth certificate. Applicants who have not been resident in the UK for three years prior to enrolment will be required to provide evidence to show that they meet the eligibility criteria for funding based on their residency status in the UK.

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 unless they have an Education Health and Care Plan and then can be considered up to age 25. The college generally cannot admit students who are under 16 years of age at the start of their studies with us. In cases where the student will turn 16 early in the academic year they start, they may be admitted at the discretion of the Principal if they have completed the appropriate level of study either in the UK or abroad.
- 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 Foundation Programme, represent progression over the course of the study programme as a 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 rejoin the college, having previously enrolled but not completed their study programme, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such students must inform the Admissions Team. They will be interviewed as soon as possible after informing the admissions team, usually with the involvement of a member of SLT.

Students who have previously enrolled and who are seeking to rejoin 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. It is by exception that this will be possible during the academic year. 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.

5.3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Course Credit

The college is committed to recognising prior learning (RPL) where an applicant can demonstrate successfully achieved elements of a qualification that are relevant to their chosen study programme. This process is applied to applicants seeking to join the college for their second year or partway through a course.

i) RPL allows the college to assess and grant credit for academic components already completed at other post-16 institutions or accredited providers, in conjunction with awarding organisations. Examples of such prior learning include, but are not limited to, individual BTEC units, T Level elements, or a certificate in a relevant subject area.

ii) For applicants transferring from another institution (as per Section 5.3), the college will use the RPL information to determine if the prior learning ensures that progression to the college's syllabi would be practical in terms of successful outcomes for the student.

iii) RPL information will be reviewed by the Head of Admissions, Liaison and Marketing (HALM) in consultation with the relevant Director of Curriculum and will be used to inform the decision on whether the applicant is able to join the requested study programme.

iv) The final decision regarding the recognition of prior learning and the subsequent offer of a place rests with the college.

5.4 Applications from non-UK/Republic of Ireland citizens

The college is able to accept applications from prospective students who are not UK or Republic of Ireland citizens but who have the right to remain in the UK. As part of the enrolment process, the college will ask all non-UK/Ireland citizens to provide evidence of their immigration status. The college cannot 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 Electively Home Educated (EHE) applicants

The college welcomes applications from students who have been electively home educated. To ensure that all students are placed on a programme of study that is both accessible and offers a realistic prospect of success, the following criteria apply:

i) All applicants, including those from an EHE background, are expected to meet the published minimum entry requirements for their chosen programme. The college does not offer external GCSE entries. Support for arranging GCSE examinations as an external candidate is widely available online.

ii) We expect all applicants to have followed a broad and balanced programme of study at Level 2 (Key Stage 4), which must include GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Language. This breadth ensures the student has developed the necessary study skills, literacy, and numeracy required for success in their chosen study programme.

iii) Where an applicant does not hold formal GCSE qualifications, the college requires the submission of verified evidence of their current academic level. This must be in the form of official documents or certificates for alternative Level 2 qualifications, or validated reports and predicted grades issued directly by a registered provider or distance learning centre.

iv) As part of our commitment to safe and supported transition, EHE applicants will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Pastoral or Safeguarding team. This is to ensure the college can provide the necessary support for a successful move from a home setting to a formal learning environment.

v) In cases where an EHE applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances and may not meet the minimum entry requirements, they may be considered for the

'exceptional enrolment' procedure, as outlined in Section 5.7 and the Appendix A: Exceptional Enrolment Protocol.

5.7 Private fostering

In accordance with safeguarding requirements, all 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.

5.8 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 on a disclosure of an additional support need from the standard application form with a further information form to obtain more details 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 als@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk 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 Young People in Care

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 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 online 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 the application can be assessed in as efficient and timely a manner 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 courses, with priority given to those who applied before the deadline.

7.2 Assessment of applications

All applicants who are eligible for consideration for a place at the college on the grounds of age (over 16 and no older than 19 on the 31st August of their year of entry) and residency or immigration status (UK/Ireland) will have their application assessed.

This will be done firstly through a check of the completeness of the information given, and also whether any follow-up is required before proceeding, e.g. checking of safeguarding-related disclosures.

Once the initial check is done, the student will be invited to attend a Course Discussion evening at college. This will be a discussion of the application with the student to assist them with their course programme and with other questions relating to joining the college.

The outcome of the Course Discussion will be one of the following:

- a conditional offer of a place based on the information provided
- a request for additional information from the applicant, e.g. predicted grades, further course choices, further information about additional learning needs or cases where the applicant has indicated experience of bullying/harassment or has a criminal conviction
- a request for a further discussion of the application and proposed study programme.

In cases where additional information is sought, the aim will always be to reach the point where a conditional offer of a place at the college can be given to the applicant. However, the college will always reserve the right to refuse an applicant an offer of a place under the terms of this policy (see section 5.1 above).

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

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 the Deputy Principal or the Vice Principal, Curriculum). 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 following working day.

Enrolment is conducted through face-to-face meetings with applicants carried out in the college by curriculum staff, supported by the admissions team and other support staff. Applicants will be invited to attend an enrolment appointment following receiving their GCSE results.

The key aim of enrolment is to agree on a study programme which fits the students' needs based on their qualifications. Evidence of the applicants' qualifications will be required in order to complete the enrolment.

If the college is unable to offer an applicant a suitable study programme, they will be signposted to alternative provision elsewhere, as well as to external advice and guidance.

The enrolment process will also cover the following elements:

- Checking identity evidence
- Checking and updating the new student's personal information
- Acquiring a photo for the college membership card
- Signposting bursary and travel support
- Informing the student about the induction arrangements
- Taking any disclosures not already made of any medical or additional learning needs

If an applicant informs the college that they are not able to attend enrolment in person, for an unavoidable reason, they will be asked if they can send a proxy to enrol for them who will need to bring any necessary results evidence. This could, for instance,

be a parent/carer, another relative or a trusted family friend. Applicants will be told that the best option is always to attend enrolment in person so that they can make any necessary adjustments to their study programme following the receipt of their GCSE results. Applicants who are not able to attend in person or make a proxy arrangement will be treated as late applicants (see section 7.5 below).

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 on the enrolment section of our website 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 - the Admissions team will respond to these
- Personal visits – these are arranged on request, especially for prospective students and their parents/carers 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 ten 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 against a decision made by the HALM will be referred to the Deputy/Vice 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 advertising will actively strive to present the college as a diverse community. The marketing team will also strive to follow best practices in making its materials accessible to students/others with disabilities or other specific needs.

The Admissions team also works closely with the Additional Learning Support team to meet the needs of students with additional needs that 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 the high school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and transition reviews for statemented students.

The prospectus and key admissions letters state that the Additional Learning Support team can be contacted directly by prospective students and their parents/carers 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 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

Appendix A: Exceptional Enrolment Protocol

(Where minimum college entry requirements are not met)

1. Rationale

Blackpool Sixth is committed to equality of opportunity and will consider applicants' individual circumstances when making decisions about enrolment. It is recognised that some applicants, due to exceptional circumstances, may not have had the opportunity to undertake GCSE examinations in the standard way and therefore may not be expected to meet the minimum entry requirements for their chosen programme of study.

2. Eligibility

For all applicants, including those who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), exceptional circumstances are defined as unforeseen events or factors that actively prevented the applicant from completing or sitting planned formal examinations (e.g. sudden, severe illness, bereavement, or sudden school closure). Exceptional enrolment will not be considered if the applicant, as part of their planned EHE provision, made a decision not to pursue or enter the necessary formal level 2 qualifications.

3. Exceptional Enrolment Procedures

- a) If it is identified that an applicant is not able to achieve the minimum number of level 2 qualifications to meet the entry requirements for any of the college programmes of study, the Admissions, Liaison, and Marketing (ALM) team will contact the applicant to verify that their circumstances meet the eligibility of an "exceptional enrolment".
- b) Where the ALM team confirms that an applicant meets the criteria for exceptional enrolment, the Head of Learning Support and Inclusion will be informed and the applicant will be asked to complete an Additional Information Form to gather further information about their exceptional circumstances.
- c) On receipt of the completed Additional Information Form, the applicant and their parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Leadership Team, usually a Vice Principal or Director of Curriculum and/or Head of Additional Learning Support) to have a discussion about the applicant's individual circumstances, support needs and the likelihood of success on the programme they have applied for.
- d) In some circumstances, the applicant may be required to provide further information to support their application/exceptional circumstances or take part in further assessments which will support the college in making an informed judgement about the applicant's potential for success.

e) Once all information has been provided, a panel, which must include a Vice Principal and/or a Director of Curriculum **and** the Head of Learning Support and Inclusion, will make the decision on whether:

- to offer a place on the proposed study programme.
- to offer a place on a modified/alternative study programme.
- to refuse the application for exceptional enrolment.

f) Applicants and their parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed of the decision in writing.

g) Applicants have the right to appeal any decision regarding exceptional enrolment. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Progression) within five working days of the decision.