



# The Castle School

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## School Admission Arrangements for 2017/18 Academic Year

### Part 1 - General Information

#### **1.1 About our School**

The Castle School is an 'outstanding' school (OFSTED 2009) with a record of high attainment and achievement that has been sustained over a number of years. We foster a supportive, family atmosphere and a strong sense of belonging for every student. Our aim is for every child to achieve, participate and belong, and this is at the heart of everything we do at The Castle School. We have been for some years now not only at the top of the performance tables in Somerset but in the top 5% of schools nationally for academic achievements. We believe in the absolute moral responsibility we have for equipping students with the best possible exam results; we know that this opens doors for students and equips them with outstanding attitudes and a strong moral foundation.

Equally important is nurturing every student's potential beyond the curriculum and we aim that every child participates in enrichment activities. This success is not simply the result of the outstanding teaching at The Castle School, but the strong family ethos and sense of belonging that we engender. The Arts are an essential part of our school; we know that the UK leads in the creative industries and we have an outstanding reputation in all the Arts at both regional and national level. We are equally proud of our sporting reputation and many of our students to compete at regional and national level in a huge range of sports. We invariably win a good number of county cups and regional leagues as a school.

The Houses, (Balmoral, Buckingham, Caernarvon, Lancaster, Sandringham and Windsor) are the lifeblood of the School and ensure that every child has a strong sense of identity and belonging. They play a major role in ensuring that we never lose sight of the individuality of each child and that no child is invisible at The Castle School.

The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority and is responsible for all admission decisions. For this purpose, the governors operate an Admissions Committee consisting of at least three governors.

The Castle School has formed The Castle Partnership Trust and expects families to apply for a place at the school within the Trust that is in their catchment area. For example, if a child lives within the Court Fields School catchment area, it is expected that the family would apply for a place at Court Fields School.

Somerset Local Authority (LA) is responsible for coordinating all normal entry school place applications for maintained schools across Somerset. Therefore, these admission arrangements should be read in conjunction with the LA's published coordinated admissions scheme which is available at [www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions) or by contacting the Admissions and Entitlement Team at Somerset County Council.

## 1.2 Contact Details

The Castle School  
Wellington Road  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA1 5AU

**Telephone:** 01823 274073

**Fax:** 01823 274080

**E-Mail:** [office@castle.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@castle.somerset.sch.uk)

**Website:** [www.castleschool.co.uk](http://www.castleschool.co.uk)

## 1.3 The Published Admission Number (PAN)

Statutory PAN applies for the year of entry (year 7) and this indicates the number of places available. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, the governors may increase the PAN from time to time without further consultation. Any change will be clearly notified on the school website and appended to these admission arrangements.

The statutory PAN set for the 2017/18 academic year are:

Year 7 **240** (an admission limit of **237** applies for years 8 –11)

## 1.4 Relevant Documents

**(Please refer to this information before applying for a school place)**

School Admission arrangements must comply with The School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code published by The Department for Education [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk).

Important documents published by Local Authorities are also relevant to some areas of school admissions procedure. Applicants are strongly advised to contact their 'home' Local Authority (the Local Authority area in which your child lives) or access the Local Authority website and ensure that they read and understand this information before proceeding with an application for a school place. Related documents of particular importance are:

- The Local Authority Coordinated Admissions Scheme (this applies to starting and transferring school for the first time)
- The Local Authority Secondary Admissions Guide
- The Local Authority Fair Access Protocol

- The Local Authority School Transport policy
- Free School Meal Entitlement.

## **Part 2 - Over Subscription Criteria**

- 2.1** The School Admissions Code requires the governors to admit any children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Needs naming The Castle School, before the consideration of any other applications, for which the following procedure will apply:
- 2.2** Where there are more applications than there are places available within the required year group, the governors will consider all applications received against the following oversubscription criteria. This will enable the governors to rank children according to priority and identify those children who could be allocated a place. Where there are fewer applications than places available within the PAN for year 7, no child would be refused. Places will be allocated strictly in accordance with the National Equal Preference with ranking allocation method.
- 2.3 Over Subscription Criteria**
- 1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children.** (A Looked After Child is a child who is in the care of a Local Authority or being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions at the time of making an application to a school. Previously Looked After Children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so when they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.)
  - 2. Children living in the designated catchment area with a sibling attending The Castle School at the time of application** (see sections 6.6 and 6.14).
  - 3. Children of staff employed at The Castle School** (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.)
  - 4. Other children living in the designated catchment area at the time of application** (see sections 6.14).
  - 5. Children living outside the designated catchment area with a sibling attending The Castle School at the time of application** (see sections 6.6 and 6.14).
  - 6. Children not satisfying a higher criterion.**

## **2.4 Tie Breaker:**

In the event of oversubscription within any of the criteria listed above, preference will be given to applicants who live closest to the school, as measured in a straight line by a Geographical information System (GIS) method from the address point of the school site to the address point for the student's home. Where two distances are equal and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, priority will be determined by independent drawing of lots.

## **Part 3 – Transferring School to Year 7 for the First Time**

- 3.1** The following information should be read in conjunction with the 2017 Coordinated Admissions Scheme published by the Local Authority in which area the child subject to the application lives (the home Local Authority). Additionally, applicants should read the information contained in the Local Authority's admissions guide for parents, which will explain the admission application process in detail. These documents should be available on the home Local Authority's website or upon request to that Local Authority.
- 3.2** Parents must submit their application form for a child to transfer from primary to secondary education in September 2017 directly to the home Local Authority, to arrive no later than 23.59 hours on 31 October 2016. Applications after this date may be considered late and at a disadvantage compared with applications that were on time. Applications may be made using the 'Common Application Form' electronically (on line) or by completing a paper application form available from the home Local Authority. If parents know that they are going to move into the area during the Year 6 for their child, they do not need to wait until they have actually moved (if this is after the offer of places on 1 March 2017) but will need to provide evidence of their new address.
- 3.3** Where appropriate, the home Local Authority will transfer application forms to the Local Authority in which area the preferred school is located. Applications received for The Castle School will be forwarded to the Governing Body Admissions Committee whose members will rank every application according to these published admission arrangements.
- 3.4** Parents can apply for a place after the closing date of 31 October 2016, but their application will not be considered until after all of the applications that were received on time.
- 3.5** The governors' ranking decisions will be notified to Somerset Local Authority in accordance with the authority's 'Coordinated Admissions Scheme' timetable and the home Local Authority will then inform parents of individual decisions on 1 March **2017** by email or letter post.

## **Part 4 - Admission to Any Year Group During the 2017/18 Academic Year (In-year Admission)**

- 4.1** Applications can be submitted at any time during the academic year, by completing the governors' in-year application form and returning this directly to the School Office. The

governors will not consider any applications received during school holiday periods until school resumes. The application form is available to download from the school website, or a copy can be provided upon request at the school office.

- 4.2** The Governors' Admissions Committee will consider applications on a weekly basis with a 4pm deadline every Friday and applicants will receive a response within 10 school days. If a place is offered it will be held open for 10 school days, during which time applicants will need to confirm acceptance of the offer and arrangements made to start attending. Where the request is for the student's chronological age year group and there is a place available, the decision will normally be to admit the child concerned and applicants will be notified of this in writing (see 6.12).
- 4.3** Where the governors have more than one application to consider at any one time for the same year group, they may need to apply the 'published oversubscription criteria' in order to determine a priority for admission where insufficient places exist (see Part 2 – Oversubscription Criteria).
- 4.4** Where the requested chronological age year group is oversubscribed, the governors will carefully consider whether an additional student might still be admitted to the school without impacting on the available resources or affecting the delivery of education. Normally the decision will be to refuse admission if the year group is full and, where this is the case, will be notified in writing of the reasons for refusal and about how to appeal against the governors' decision (see Part 5 of these arrangements).
- 4.5** All Local Authorities are legally required to operate a Fair Access Protocol across their area – all schools and academies are required to co-operate with that protocol. This ensures that all children who are vulnerable, unable to access an appropriate school place under the standard admission arrangements for the area have an admissions safety net. It is for the LA to consider whether the child should be considered under the LA's Fair Access Protocol. Applicants are advised to read the Local Authority 'Fair Access Protocol' document before completing an in-year application form. This document can be downloaded and/or read on the Somerset County Council website.

## **Part 5 - Appeals Procedure**

- 5.1** Parents have the legal right of appeal to an independent appeal panel against the governors' decision to refuse a place at The Castle School, for a child in their care, providing a formal application for a school place has been submitted and a decision letter sent out on behalf of the Governing Body explaining the reasons for refusal. Full details explaining the appeal application process will be enclosed with the decision letter.
- 5.2** An appeal timetable will be published on the school website. This sets out the timeframe for the various stages in the appeal process and includes statutory dates by which appeals must be heard.

- 5.3** For appeals at the normal round of admissions to Year 7 appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. For in-year admissions in any academic year, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

## **Part 6 – Important Information**

### **6.1 Waiting Lists**

The governors operate waiting lists for year groups 7 - 11. Where a child is formally refused admission to any year group, parents may request that his/her child's name is placed on the appropriate waiting list. Waiting lists will be re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever a child joins or leaves the waiting list. If a place becomes available within the Published Admission Number or other admission limit, this will be offered for the highest ranked child at that time. It is possible that a child's name could go down on a list as well as up, as other children may meet a higher oversubscription criterion.

### **6.2 Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. When such a request is made, the academy trust will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the Headteacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows:

- The parent/carer is required to make an application for their child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time.
- The parent/carer is required to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group and attach supporting evidence as necessary. The Governing Body has the right to request further evidence that may be required.
- The Governing Body will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.
- The Governing Body will write to the parent with the outcome and set out clearly the reasons for their decision.
- One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

### **6.3 Multiple Birth Applications (for example twins)**

Where the last place within the Published Admission Number is allocated to a multiple birth application, a place(s) will be allocated to any siblings above the Published Admission Number at the point of allocation. This will ensure that multiple birth siblings can be allocated places at the same school (sibling definition still applies).

This includes situations whereby admitting a multiple birth siblings would breach the Infant class size legislation of a statutory limit of 30 infants (key stage 1 children) per qualified teacher.

#### **6.4 Children from Overseas**

Governors will not make a decision that could influence whether the child is allowed to enter the United Kingdom. The governors' Admissions Committee will consider applications submitted on behalf of children from overseas in accordance with European Union Law, or Home Office rules for non-European Economic area nationals. However, governors will not allocate a place to anyone moving into the country from abroad prior to their arrival in the county. Proof of actual residency will be required (see section 6.9). The only exceptions are children of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the local area. In these circumstances, an official letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address will be acceptable.

#### **6.5 Looked After Children**

A Looked After Child is a child who is in the care of a Local Authority or being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions at the time of making an application to a school. Previously Looked After Children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so when they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

#### **6.6 Siblings**

For the purpose of school admission, the governors' definition of a sibling is 'a child living at the same address as a half or full brother or sister, an adoptive brother or sister, a step-brother or sister, or children of the same household at the time of application'. For applications to transfer from primary to secondary school, siblings must be on roll at The Castle School between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017. For applications at any other time (in-year admissions) siblings must be attending The Castle School at the time of application.

#### **6.7 Children of Staff at the School**

Children of staff at the school either where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

#### **6.8 Parent**

A 'parent' in education law includes natural parents, whether they are married or not and a person other than the natural parent(s) who has parental responsibility or care of a child or young person. Having 'care' of a child or young person means that person who looks after the child and with whom the child lives, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

#### **6.9 Home Address**

The school will not accept more than one address as the child's home address. The terms of a

residency order may clarify the home address.

Where necessary to determine which address to recognize and in the absence of a residency order, the school will consider the home address to be with the parent with primary day to day care and control of the child. In reaching this decision, evidence will be requested to show the address to which any Child Benefit is paid and from which the child is registered with a medical GP. Any other evidence provided by parents will also be considered by the school in reaching a decision on the home address for admissions purposes.

This may be necessary for instance where parents do not agree on the child's home address. Parents are urged to reach agreement or seek a Specific Issues Order from a court to decide which parent should or should not pursue an application. Where they do not, the school will determine the home address.

Where we ask for evidence of the address from which a child would attend school, this would usually be the exchange of contracts from a solicitor for a house purchase or a signed copy of a minimum of a six month formal tenancy agreement from a letting agency. An address change due to a move to live with family or friends will not be considered until the move has taken place and suitable proof of residency has been obtained. Proof that a move from the previous address has taken place may also be required e.g. proof of the house sale, a tenancy agreement showing the end date of the tenancy or a notice to quit from the landlord. The Governing Body reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim of residence. We recognise that some families may be unable to provide this, for example, where a house move is a very short notice or where a family is escaping domestic violence. If you cannot provide this evidence, please contact us. We do not intend to penalise families where there is a genuine reason why the usual evidence cannot be provided.

#### **6.10 Distance Measurements**

For the purpose of measuring home to school distance, all calculations will be based on a straight-line measurement calculated using the 'address point' of The Castle School and the 'address point' of the students home address using a Geographical Information System (GIS) method.

#### **6.11 Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan**

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are admitted to school in accordance with a separate process administered by the Local Authority (LA) in whose area the child lives. The governors must always admit a child whose Statement names The Castle School.

#### **6.12 Withdrawing an Allocated Place**

The governors will require parents to confirm within 10 school days (of the date of the offer letter) their acceptance of any place offered and to have made arrangements for their child to start attending The Castle School. The governors reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a place if these conditions are not met and to reallocate the place to the highest ranked

child/young person on a waiting list, or to a new applicant where no waiting list exists. The governors may also withdraw the offer of a school place if the child/young person's home address is subsequently found to be fraudulent.

### **6.13 Children of UK Service Personnel**

The Admissions Authority endeavor to ensure that their admission arrangements support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. In year applications are usually considered for admission up to a maximum of half a term in advance of the place being taken up. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and other Crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area where a place can be made available up to a year in advance of being required providing the appropriate documentation is provided as proof of posting (an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting.)

Usually, an in year place may be allocated prior to actual residency, only on receipt of exchange of contracts or a formal signed rental agreement. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and other Crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area. This means that, providing the application is accompanied by an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting, the admissions authority will process the application on that address. If proof of a home address is not available at this stage the admissions authority will accept a unit postal address or quartering area address. An offer of service family accommodation from the housing department is not sufficient to be accepted as proof of address, the signed tenancy agreement would be required.

If the parent/carer is moving to the area as a result of leaving the armed forces then no special consideration will be given to the application under the grounds of the application being made by a service family.

For further information please refer to the DfE explanatory note on Admission of Children of Crown Servants;

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/461481/Admission\\_of\\_children\\_of\\_crown\\_servants.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461481/Admission_of_children_of_crown_servants.pdf)

### **6.14 Catchment Map**

The governors prioritise some school places on the basis of living within a designated catchment area. Details of the catchment boundaries can be found at [www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/check-catchment=school1/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/check-catchment=school1/). Alternatively, a map can be provided by contacting the school office (see Section 1.2 Contact details). For applications to transfer from primary to secondary school, children must be living in the designated catchment area on the application closing

date (31 October 2016). For applications at any other time (in-year admissions) children must be living in the designated catchment area at the time of application.

#### **6.15 Fair Access Protocol**

All LAs are legally required to operate a Fair Access Protocol across their area – all schools are required to co-operate with that protocol. This ensures that children who are vulnerable, unable to access an appropriate school place under the standard admission arrangements for the area have an admissions safety net.

We participate in Somerset’s Fair Access Protocol.

#### **6.16 Transport**

All parents should consider how their child will get to school for the whole of their time on roll. Parents are advised not to rely on lifts, car shares or public service vehicles always being available. Supported transport will be provided by the LA for those Somerset-resident children attending this school if it is either the designated transport area school or the nearest school to the home address. The home address must be further than a walking distance of three miles (for children aged 8 years old and over) from the school. Please note that our admissions direct line measurement policy does not apply to Somerset’s school transport decisions.

#### **6.17 Extended Schooling**

Further information on extended schooling beyond the normal school day is available from the school office and our website.

#### **6.18 Home-School Agreement**

Admission to any school is not conditional on signing a home-school agreement. However, we will offer this to all parents after children have been admitted as we consider agreements to be a positive way of promoting greater involvement between parents in their child’s education.

#### **6.19 Documentary Evidence**

Once a place has been offered to a child, evidence of the child’s identity may be requested – usually a short birth certificate. This may not be necessary where the child has been on roll at another school in England which can confirm that evidence has been seen at that school. The school may also request evidence that a child’s address is genuine or that the person who made an application for admission was legally permitted to do so.

#### **6.20 School Fees and Charges**

There is no charge for applying for a place here, for admission or for the provision of education. We will not request donations before or during the admissions process and any donations made to the school following admission are entirely voluntary. No activities such as school visits are compulsory. A policy on charging for activities is available on request from the school office and can be viewed on our website.