



Marches Academy Trust

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Admissions Policy 2020/21

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Pre 16 Admissions

1. Introduction

The Marches Trust schools are open access comprehensive schools catering for children aged between 3 and 18. The maximum admission number for each September intake is: 208 students at The Grove School and College, 270 at The Marches School, 135 at Sir John Talbot's School, and 10 pupils at Tilstock CE Primary School, for both nursery and reception admissions. All schools within the Trust are an admission authority in their own right, and the Academy Trust is therefore responsible for determining each school's Admissions Policy.

For Early Years Education, transfers to Primary school for the first time into Reception, or Secondary school in Year 7, the Council's Admissions Team co-ordinates the admissions process, and all enquiries regarding admissions should be addressed to them. They publish a booklet, "Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire", each year, with up-to-date information about schools, and a full explanation of the admissions process. The booklets are available from the Shropshire Council website, or reference copies are available in schools and local libraries. Parents/carers who may wish to speak directly to an Admissions Advisor may also contact them through the Admissions Team. Admissions for any year group, other than Reception or Year 7, will be classed as In-Year or Mid-term applications, and will be handled directly by the school (please see Section 7).

- A copy of the determined arrangements are available for viewing on the Council's website at www.shropshire.gov.uk
- The contact address is: Admissions Team, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND. Tel: 0345 678 9008
or email: school-admissions@shropshire.gov.uk
Website: www.shropshire.gov.uk
Catchment areas for schools can be viewed on Local View which can be found on the above website address.

2. Published Admission Number

- The Grove School and College has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 208
- The Marches School has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 270 for each Year 7 intake (this number also applies to Years 8 – 11)
- Sir John Talbot's School has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 135
- Tilstock CE Primary School has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 10 for the Reception year, aged 4 and 10, and for Early Years education, aged 3, starting the term after their third birthday

The number of preferences received, and places allocated, for the previous year can be viewed on the Shropshire Council website and in the Parents' Guide to Education booklet.

3. Statemented Students

Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Following the School Admissions Code section 2.8: Students with a statement will not be part of an oversubscription process and will receive a place at the school in the event of the school being oversubscribed.

4. Applications

Parents/carers of pre-school children, children in Early Years Education, or Year 6 children and resident in Shropshire, will be required in the Autumn term, prior to the school year of transfer to make an application, naming 3 preferences, via the Shropshire Council website. The online application facility will be available in early September. Where there are more applications than there are places available, allocations will be made in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Full details of these criteria are given in the Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire booklet; therefore, it is recommended that parents read the booklet before completing an application, but, in general terms, they are based upon the following (in order):

Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education Health and Care Plan, which names the school the child should attend because their needs can be best met by that particular school, will be offered places before other children. After that places will be offered up to the admission number in the following priority order:

Priority 1a: Priority will be given to children in public care, usually referred to as "Looked After Children", and children who were previously "looked after". These are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order). Students within, or from state care, within England.

Priority 1b: Priority will be given to children in public care, usually referred to as "Looked After Children", and children who were previously "looked after". These are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order). Students within, or from state care, outside of England.

Priority 1c: Priority will be given to a child where medical or social exceptionalities are accommodated, if parents/carers can provide written evidence from a medical professional that attending the school is **essential** to the medical well-being of the child.

Priority 2: Children living **inside the catchment area** will have next priority. If there are not enough places for all the children living in the catchment area, we will look at the following two criteria:

- 1) Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area who will have an older sibling of compulsory school age (11 – 16) or a sibling in the 6th Form at the school on the day they are due to start there.
- 2) After that, priority will be given to other children who live within the catchment area.

Priority 3: Children who have a parent or guardian who is a member of staff, who 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, and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage by the school.

Priority 4: After that, any places that are left will be offered to children who **live outside the catchment area**. If there are not enough places for all of them, we will look at the following three criteria:

- 1) Priority will be given to children living outside the catchment area who will have an older sibling of compulsory school age (11 – 16) or a sibling in the 6th Form at the school on the day they are due to start there.
- 2) Secondly, priority will be given to children living outside the catchment area without an older sibling at the school, but who have attended a state-funded primary school that lies within the secondary school's catchment area, for more than a whole academic year immediately prior to transfer.
- 3) After that, priority will be given to other children who live outside the catchment area.

If, in any of the above priority categories, there are more applications than there are places available, priority will be given on the basis of distance measured as a straight line on a computerised mapping system between the home address and the nearest entrance gate of the school by pinpointing their eastings and northings. The shortest distance will be given priority. Where two addresses are within the same block of flats, the lowest number of flat or nearest the ground floor will be deemed to be the nearest in distance.

Notes which apply to the oversubscription criteria:

Very exceptionally, where a child has a particular health reason requiring them to attend a specific school, that child may be given a place before any of the children who qualify under Priorities 2 and 3 above. This will only be allowed if parents/carers can provide written evidence from a medical professional that attending that particular school is **essential** to the medical well-being of the child. The Council reserves the right to check the relevance of the medical condition.

Catchment area maps can be viewed on Local View available from 'Maps' at the foot of the website www.shropshire.gov.uk, or individual addresses can be checked by contacting the Admissions Team. Admission numbers can be found in the Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire booklet.

The definition of a sibling, is the brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, half-brother or half-sister, living at the same address as part of the same family unit, and of compulsory school age (ie 5 – 16 years) or in the same school's 6th Form. Fostered and adopted siblings are also included. Older siblings must still be attending the school on the date the younger sibling is due to start there. However, cousins or other relatives who take up residence in the home in order to establish an "in catchment area" address will not be given priority under the sibling criterion.

In the case of twins or triplets etc from the same address, the school will endeavour to admit both or all siblings.

All applicants are required to give correct information about the genuine residential address of the child. This is normally expected to be with the parent/carer who has care of the child for the majority of the time (that is school time during the week in term time) but where care is shared equally, the home address will be determined by which parent receives the relevant Child Benefit.

In the event that two individual applications are exactly the same, after all other criteria have been taken into account, a tie breaker will be used. This will be by random allocation, and overseen by an independent party not connected with the admissions process.

5. Refusals

The Trust schools may refuse admission to applicants who have been permanently excluded from two or more other schools; this does not apply to children with Statements of Special Educational Needs. The ability to refuse admissions runs for a period of two years since the last exclusion. Exclusions which took place before the child concerned reached compulsory school age do not count for this purpose.

Shropshire does not operate a system of feeder schools, as the home address of your child is the arbiter of being offered a place. That home address will be checked against data sources to ensure potential applicants are not, for example, using other relatives' addresses, work or office addresses, to achieve a higher priority under the published criteria.

6. Appeals Process

Any applicant refused a place at the Marches Academy Trust schools has a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

An academy is its own admission authority, and so you should contact the school in order to lodge your admission appeal if you are refused admission. The school will give you the information you need.

The Academy has to ensure that the independent appeal panel is trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Appeals Code published by the Department for Education. The code can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

If, after your appeal, you are concerned that the appeal did not comply with the Code, or was set up wrongly, and that this affected the outcome of your appeal, you can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA will investigate the complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State.

If the ESFA finds that the appeal arrangements have breached the Code, and affected the outcome of the appeal, the Academy may be required to establish a fresh appeal.

Further details can be found on the factsheet:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692952/Academy_independent_admission_appeal_panel_complaints_factsheet_2018.pdf

7. Mid-Term or In-Year Admissions

Where families wish to change the school their child attends at other times of the year, after the start of Reception or Year 7, please contact the Headteacher at your chosen school in the first instance in order to make an appointment to visit the school. You will be given an indication of whether there are places available in the relevant year group. If other applicants want that same place, we will apply the same published criteria to determine priority for that place. If there are no places available, the school will be able to inform you of the appeals process.

Parents and carers with children at any age, prior to beginning school in Reception, or admission to secondary school, who wish to visit a school within the Trust, should contact the relevant Headteacher.

If an application is made for a student to be admitted to the school, and the required year group is below the level of the Published Admission Number applicable to the age group, the student will be accepted subject to the provisions of Section 4. The Academy may refuse to admit a child, where there are places available, on the grounds that admission of such a student would prejudice the provision of efficient education, or the efficient use of resources in any year group.

The Trust will consult and co-ordinate its arrangements, including over the rapid re-integration of children, including those who have been excluded from other schools, and who arrive in an area after the normal admissions round, in accordance with local In-Year fair access protocols for securing schools for unplaced children.

8. Admissions to Attend out of Cohort

These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, to establish whether an out of cohort place is in the best interests of the child. For entry into Reception, please refer to the Local Authority online booklet, "Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire", for the legal start dates based on age.

Post 16 (6th Form) Admissions

1. Introduction

The Trustees of the Marches Academy Trust are responsible for admissions. It is intended that the school will offer an education particularly suited to the more academic student. It is our aim, when considering applications, to accept students onto a curriculum which will suit their learning style, and encourage them to flourish academically. Judgments and offers will be made on an appropriate level of prior academic achievement. For success in outcomes, students should also have a positive attitude, and aptitude for learning. We will support students to strive for standards of excellence, and encourage them to develop a sense of intellectual independence, accompanied by a social and moral responsibility, so as to prepare them for their roles in the wider society of the 21st Century.

2. Method of Application

All students in Year 11 will be invited to our Post 16 Events at The Grove School and College, The Marches School, and Sir John Talbot's School; this will take place in October. The event will be publicised locally and on the schools' websites. This will provide an opportunity for all Year 11 students, and students studying in other education establishments to attend.

Prospectuses will be published, and available for the Post 16 Event. Information, advice and guidance meetings will be arranged for every prospective Sixth Form student in Year 11 at the Trust schools, providing expert professional support at a critical time of decision making. All applicants will be required to attend an interview with a member of the Sixth Form team.

Students will be asked to indicate their provisional preferences in the late autumn term/early spring term, in order to help us construct the curriculum. Timetable blocks will then be created to cater for as many curriculum choices as possible. Students can alter their preferences, up, until, and including, the start of the AS courses, but they may be constrained by the timetable blocking that has been set based on earlier preferences.

3. General Entry Requirements

Students wishing to continue their studies with us are required to achieve a minimum of a grade 4 in English Language and Maths. Overall they should attain a minimum of five B grades/grade 5 in their GCSE examinations, and at least a B grade/grade 5 in the subjects they intend to study (one equivalent qualification other than GCSE will be accepted). If they are applying to join us from another school, we also seek a reference from the current school, focusing on predictions to meet the academic criteria.

4. Course Specific Requirements

In addition to the general entry requirements, there are course specific requirements which explain what students need to achieve, in order to pursue studies in each

subject in the Sixth Form. This may entail attaining particular grades in specified subjects, and it is important that students check these before making their choices. Details of these course specific requirements will be published in the Sixth Form prospectus, which will be available at the Post 16 Event.

Where an applicant fails to meet the general entry requirements we will provide them with information, advice and guidance to support them in continuing their learning or work-based training at an alternative institution. If a student fails to meet the course specific requirements but achieves 5 B grades/5 grade 5s at GCSE, we will strive to approve a new course offer which will allow the student to take up a place in a Marches Academy Trust Sixth Form. This will be dependent primarily on the number of students on the course, and the student having achieved the course entry requirement as published.

On the publication of mid-course exam results, we will review each student's progress. We will focus on the probability of them being successful if they make the transition to A2. If their results are not a platform for achieving three A*-E grades at A2, they may not be able to continue studying in the Sixth Form.

5. Courses in Year 12 and Year 13

All students in Year 12 will be required to work towards completing a minimum of three A levels or their equivalent. Alongside this, they will be expected to play a full and active part in the wider life of the school. This will include a commitment to developing themselves beyond their academic studies.

In Year 13 it is expected students will continue with a minimum of three full level 3 qualifications.

6. Applicant's Age

Very occasionally, we may offer places to students one year ahead or behind their standard year group, if we consider, as a matter of professional judgement that this would be in the best interests of the student and the school.

7. The Integrity of the Admissions Procedure

The Trust Sixth Forms rely on the veracity of the information provided by the applicant, and their parents/carers in the course of the application procedure. Where any such information proves to be both inaccurate or misleading, the school reserves the right to deny the applicant admission or, where a student has already entered Sixth Form, to immediately withdraw their place.

8. Oversubscription Criteria

In circumstances where the Sixth Form of a school is oversubscribed, the school would make every possible effort to accommodate extra numbers from beyond our own school's Year 11. Where this is not possible, the following over subscription criteria, given in order, would be used to allocate places:

- 1) Priority will be given to children in public care, usually referred to as “Looked After Children”, and children who were previously “looked after”. These are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order). Students within, or from state care, within England.
- 2) Priority will be given to children in public care, usually referred to as “Looked After Children”, and children who were previously “looked after”. These are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order). Students within, or from state care, outside of England.
- 3) Students who meet the entry requirements, and live within the Trust School’s individual Geographical Area of Responsibility for that school.
- 4) Our PAN (external intake) is 35 for The Grove School and College, 35 for The Marches School, and 35 for Sir John Talbots School.

9. Appealing Against Admission Decisions

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be advised of your right of appeal. Admission decisions may initially be considered by the Governors appeals panel but if unsuccessful, applicants may also appeal to an independent appeal panel. Parents/carers and children are able to appeal jointly or separately against a decision refusing a student admission to the Sixth Form. Where they appeal separately, the Trustees of the Academy Trust will make arrangements so that they are heard together.

Where applicants have been refused admission to the Sixth Form because there are more eligible children than places available, and other oversubscription criteria have then been applied, the appeals panel will follow the normal two-stage process of:

- 1) First stage: establishing the facts
- 2) Second stage: balancing the arguments

In the case of an appeal where the student did not meet the specified entry requirements, the panel will not attempt to make its own assessment of the student’s ability, but will decide whether the school’s decision that the student was not of the required standard was reasonable, in light of the information available to it. In doing so, it will consider whether any process in place to consider such cases (for example where a student had not been studying in England, and therefore did not have GCSEs) was carried out in a consistent and objective way.

10. Timetable for Appeals

The schools will ensure that appeals lodged by the appropriate deadlines are heard within certain timescales.

Where the offer of a place would not have been conditional upon exam results, appeals must be heard within 10 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

Where the offer of a place would have been conditional upon exam results, appeals must be heard within 15 school days of confirmation of those results

The schools will ensure that appellants receive at least 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing and that decision letters are sent within five school days of the hearing wherever possible.

11. General Enquiries

General enquiries about admissions to The Grove School and College Sixth Form should be directed the Head of Sixth Form on: 01630 652121, or andy.rayner@groveschool.net. Further details about The Grove School and College Sixth Form and the admissions procedure can be found at: www.groveschool.net

General enquiries about admissions to The Marches School Sixth Form should be directed to Miss Claire Buckle, Assistant Headteacher – Head of Sixth Form on: 01691 664400, or buckle.c@mmat.co.uk. Further details about The Marches Sixth Form and the admissions procedure can be found on our website: www.marchesschool.co.uk

General enquiries about admissions to Sir John Talbot's Sixth Form should be directed the Head of Sixth Form on: 01948 660600 or jones.m@mmat.co.uk. Further details about Sir John Talbot's Sixth Form and the admissions procedure can be found on our website: www.sirjohntalbots.co.uk