

## **Admissions : Frequently Asked Questions**

### **General School Admissions**

#### **How are school places allocated?**

When you apply for a school place you are asked to list three schools in order of preference.

Every school has a number of places available for applicants – this is called the published admission number (PAN) for the school.

- If fewer than this number of children apply for a place at the school, all of the children will be given a place.
- If more than this number of children apply then the 'oversubscription criteria' is used to decide which children must be offered a place

#### **What is meant by Oversubscription criteria?**

Every school has an oversubscription criteria. It explains the order in which their places will be allocated if the school is oversubscribed. Every child applying is placed within the highest priority group (criterion) that applies to them. Depending on the type of school, priority will be given to different groups, for example, those with siblings already at the school or those living in the linked area. In many cases when the published admission number (PAN) is reached within one of the criteria groups, a tiebreaker based on either distance or random allocation is used to decide between the children within that criterion. All distance measurements are done on a straight line basis unless the school states otherwise.

It is important that you understand the oversubscription criteria for the schools you wish to apply for, and the likeliness of your child being allocated a place.

#### **What is 'Equal preferencing'?**

When you make an application for your child's school place, you will be asked to state up to 3 schools you would like your child to attend (known as your preferences). You should state these in the order you prefer them.

Admission authorities (the local authority or the school depending on the type of school) must not give priority to 'first preference first', meaning they can not only consider those that have placed the school as a first preference. School places must be allocated using a fair system called 'equal preferencing'.

Equal preferencing means that each of your 3 school preferences will be considered by the admission authority of that school. Each admission authority must consider all applications for places at the school regardless of where parents/carers have placed the school in their list of 3 preferences (so there is no possibility of favouring those who

name the school as first preference or discounting those who placed it as second or third preference).

Your child will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria for all three school preferences. Where they are in the ranked list will depend on where they fall in the priority groups within the oversubscription.

The local authority must allocate a place at the highest preference that the child qualifies for - ranked high enough to be offered a place before the school reaches its published admission number (PAN).

### **Scenarios**

If a child:

- would rank high enough to qualify for a place at all 3 preference schools, the LA will offer a place at the school that is ranked highest on the common application form (preference 1) and the child will then be removed from the ranked list for preference 2 and 3 so that another child may be offered the place
- does not rank high enough for their first preference school, but does for their 2nd and 3rd preference schools, a place would be offered at preference 2 (as the highest preference that the child qualifies for)
- can be offered a place at only one of their preference schools, they will be offered a place at that school regardless of the preference order on the common application form
- cannot be offered a place within the PAN of any of their preferred schools, the LA will offer a place at the nearest school with a place available, meaning the nearest school which has not reached their PAN and therefore has a places available at that time

If a child is offered a place at a school which wasn't their first preference, they can go on to the waiting list of any of the schools which were a higher preference than the school offered. There is a right of appeal against the decision not to offer your child a place at the schools stated on your application, unless you have been allocated a higher preference.

### **Why is it important to state more than one preference?**

By stating only one preference, it does not give your child any extra priority or guarantee that a place will be allocated at that school. Your child would still be ranked according to where they fell in the oversubscription criteria for that school.

If it is not possible to offer a place at that school, your child will be allocated a place at the end of the process at the nearest school to your home address with places remaining at that point.

### **Admissions To Kettering Buccleuch Academy**

#### **How many places are available in Year 7 in September?**

KBA has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 180 for external applicants.

Children who are already on roll in our primary school do not need to apply for a place as they automatically move from Year 6 into Year 7. These children do not take any of the 180 places for external applicants.

#### **Does KBA have a catchment area?**

No. However, the distance from your child's main home address to the academy's address point can be a factor as this is one of our over-subscription criteria. It is important to remember that this is the distance using the local authority's mapping system (straight line) rather than the distance by foot, road or public transport.

#### **Am I guaranteed a place if my child has an EHCP?**

Before any allocations into Year 7 are made, places are reserved for any children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) whose plan names KBA: this is a legal requirement.

#### **Does KBA have an Admissions Test?**

If there are then fewer applications than the number of places left to allocate, everyone who applies will be offered a place. But where there are more applications received than places available applicants are invited to sit our Admissions Test.

More details about this can be found in our Admissions Policy on the academy's website.

#### **Isn't your Admissions Test just a way to take the most academic children?**

No. Our Admissions Test ensures that we have a Year 7 intake which represents a broad spread of abilities. Again, you can find out more in our Admissions Policy.

#### **What address should I use to apply from?**

Please be honest about the address where your child lives. You cannot use the address of a business, relative, friend, or childminder. You also cannot use a temporary address, or the address of a house you are intending to move to, or where you have acquired or leased a property purely to use the address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence.

If your child lives at more than one address, the address on the application should be the residential address at which the child lives and sleeps (with a parent) for more than 50% of their time during term time.

It is important to be aware that, when they receive applications, the LA admissions team runs checks on addresses. You may be asked to provide evidence of the address used on an application, in the interests of fairness to everyone who wants a place.

**Do I have to think ‘strategically’ when I choose the order of my preferences?**

There is an ‘equal preferencing’ system in place in Northamptonshire. This is explained at the top of this section.

**I have heard that some schools have a Supplementary Information Form (SIF). What is this and does KBA have one?**

Some schools in Northamptonshire require you to complete a SIF which goes directly to the school, in addition to the preference form to the county council. The SIF asks for further information beyond the standard application form.

KBA does not have a SIF.

**Do you have any ‘feeder’ schools?**

We do not have any ‘feeder’ primary schools whose pupils get preference in relation to places in Year 7 at KBA. Our own primary school students simply move from Year 6 into Year 7 so they do not have to apply for a place as they are not moving schools.

**I live in a village outside Kettering. Is there any point in me applying for a place at KBA?**

Yes. Last year children were allocated places in Year 7 from many surrounding villages.

**My older was a student at KBA but has now left, will my younger child have priority as a sibling?**

I am afraid not, the sibling link lapses when a child leaves the academy.

**I don’t live in Northamptonshire but I want to apply for a place at KBA, what should I do?**

You can name a Northamptonshire school as one of your preferences, but you have to apply via your home authority. We would also strongly recommend that you name at least one school in your own educational area.

**I am moving house between now and March, what should I do?**

You must put the address where the child is actually living as at the closing date of 31st October. If you move after that date but before the 1st March, please let the Local

Authority's Admissions Team know. However, they will use the 31st October address for the initial round of allocations in March, and the new address for the 2nd round in May.

**What about twins? What would happen if one of my twins was allocated a place and the others wasn't?**

Where only one twin is offered a place at KBA, if necessary we will consider exceeding our PAN of 180 so that the other can be offered a place too.

**My ex-partner and I share responsibility for our child, who should apply?**

The Local Authority can only accept and process 1 application per child. You need to decide together which schools to apply for. Neither the LA nor KBA can intervene in parental disputes. If you cannot come to an agreement by the deadline, the application may be treated as late.

**My child has Special Educational Needs, how will their needs be met?**

If your child already has, or is undergoing assessment for, an EHCP you don't need to apply via the standard route. The 0-25 team at the Local Authority is responsible for consulting with schools to see if they can meet your child's needs. When a school is decided on, it will be named in your child's EHCP. However, if you want to discuss any educational need, whether your child has an EHCP or not, please contact our SEN team.

**Will my child receive transport to KBA if they are offered a place?**

It is your responsibility as a parent/carer to get your child to and from school, so please think carefully about the distance from home to school and what travel options are available. Hamiltons do run a private bus service to KBA but this is at a cost. Please see the relevant page on our website for more information.

**What if I don't get the school I want?**

Firstly, please don't panic. After the initial allocation in March, parents have 2 weeks to let the LA know what they want to do. At this point, some families' circumstances have changed and they reject the place they have been offered, which frees up some places.

People will also have moved in and out of the area. So there is a 2nd round of allocations in early May, which takes all of those changes into account, and some children who were not offered a place in March can be offered a place in May. Changes can continue to happen all the way through term 6 and even during the summer holiday. In the meantime, you can contact the Local Authority Admissions Team and ask to be placed on our waiting list.

**How does the Waiting List work?**

The Local Authority maintain KBA's Waiting List. You will need to contact them if you do not secure an offer of a place and wish your child's name to be added.

Students are ranked on our Waiting List using our over-subscription criteria and not on a 'first-come first-served' basis. This means that your child can move up or down.

Please don't ask about the Waiting List at the start of March, as it will not exist. The LA does not start to form the list until after all parents have responded to their offers.

### **How do appeals work?**

For the bulk Year 7 intake, we generally have a number of appeals. The first stage is where KBA explains to all the parents and to an independent panel of (usually) 3 people why they could not offer places to everyone who applied.

Assuming that the panel accepts that the reasons are valid, the process moves on to stage 2. Here, every family has their own, private, individual hearing where they have the opportunity to explain to the same panel why they feel their child needs a place.

The panel hears all of the cases before making any decisions. Each child's case is balanced against the school's case, and not against the other children's cases. When the panel makes a decision, it is binding on the school and on the family. Appeals generally take place between May and July. The number of appeals lodged in recent years, and the number upheld, can be requested from the Local Authority.

### **Remember**

#### **DO:**

- Put down three preferences. By stating only one preference, it does not give your child any extra priority or guarantee that a place will be allocated at that school. Your child would still be ranked according to where they fell in the oversubscription criteria for that school. If it is not possible to offer a place at that school, your child will be allocated a place at the end of the process at the nearest school to your home address with places remaining at that point.
- Use the address where your child lives most of the time.
- Consider naming one of your local schools. It is a very risky strategy to put schools which are located a considerable distance from your home address.

#### **DON'T:**

- Miss the deadline. If you do, your child will not be allocated a place until May and most popular schools will be full by then.
- Assume that you will be offered a place at your closest school.

- Choose not to send your child to sit our Admissions Test if we are over-subscribed as preference is given to students who take the test over those who do not.