

Admission Policy for Entry to Sixth Form

1. Entry into Lower Sixth

There are 3 conditions to be satisfied for entry into Lower Sixth

(a) Disciplinary Record

Entry into Lower Sixth will be conditional upon a satisfactory disciplinary record particularly in Years 11 and 12. Pupils disqualifying themselves for return on the grounds of unsatisfactory behaviour will be informed by the end of the academic year. The school reserves the right to contact the previous school of a student in order to acquire a behaviour report. In the case of a pupil who has been suspended or expelled from a previous school it will not be possible to consider the application until the school has been contacted by the Principal of the pupil's immediately previous school.

(b) Overall GCSE Performance

At least six GCSE passes at grade C or above including a grade C or above in English Language or a grade C or above in Mathematics.

(c) Individual Subject Requirements

Pupils must take the equivalent of at least three A Level subjects and must meet the individual subject requirements, most commonly a GCSE grade B or higher in that subject or in a specified alternative subject. For some subjects, with a high proportion of the marks awarded through coursework, pupils will be required to have a good record of meeting GCSE coursework deadlines and to have achieved grade B or above in any two GCSE subjects.

Entry into Sixth Form will be competitive based on the GCSE point scoring system, ie, A* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C = 1 point. Places will only be offered to pupils who satisfy all of the criteria outlined in (a), (b) and, for at least 3 subjects in which spaces exist (c). The offer of places will take into account the availability of spaces in the classes of the subjects requested and the total GCSE point score. Consequently priority will be given to:

- (i) those pupils with 20 points or more who will normally be expected to take four A Level courses
- (ii) those pupils with 16 to 19 points who may take three or four A Level courses or other Level 3 courses
- (iii) those pupils with 12 to 15 points who will take three A Levels or other Level 3 courses
- (iv) those pupils with 10 to 11 points who will take three A Levels or other Level 3 courses, at least one of which would normally be vocational
- (v) those pupils with 8 to 9 points who will normally take three A Level or other Level 3 courses, at least two of which would normally be vocational
- (vi) For pupils joining Down High from 11 – 16 schools who wish to progress from a BTEC Level 2 in any subject to any BTEC Level 3, the grade achieved by the end of Year 12 will be recognised as follows:
 - Distinction Star 4 points equivalent for entry to BTEC course
 - Distinction 3 points equivalent for entry to BTEC course
 - Merit 1 point equivalent for entry to BTEC course

With respect to pupils with less than 16 points, pupils wishing to transfer from schools without a Sixth Form may be prioritised over pupils wishing to transfer from 11-18 schools.

In the event of there being adequate spaces in classes when the school's enrolment number is reached the following criteria will operate.

2. Down High School criteria for any extra places made available by the Department of Education for admission into Year 13 (Sixth Form)

The Department of Education may, in response to a request from a school, increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to its Year 13. Places that become available in this way shall be allocated only to pupils who meet the basic eligibility criteria for sixth form study (as above) and shall be allocated in the order determined by the criteria to be applied in the order set down.

1. Pupils who have most recently completed Year 12 in Down High School.
2. Pupils from other schools where admission to an extra place at Down High School has been agreed by the Department of Education.*

*Parents should note how the Department of Education (DE) will, in response to a school's request, increase the school's enrolment number in order to allow an extra post -16 pupil to enrol. DE will only increase the school's enrolment number if it is content that each external pupil for whom a place is requested would not be able to pursue their post-16 course-choices at a suitable school without undertaking an unreasonable journey (i.e. a journey that by public transport would be over an hour from where the young person lives). If DE finds that no other suitable school may provide all of the post-16 courses that the pupil wishes to pursue – then DE will agree a school's request for an extra place.

What is a school of a type that is suitable for a pupil? To determine this, DE first considers all schools to be one of 4 types: (i) denominational (ii) non-denominational (iii) Integrated and (iv) Irish-Medium. A school requesting an extra place for a post-16 pupil will belong to one of these 4 types and DE will consider any other school from this same type as suitable for the pupil. DE will also consider as suitable for the pupil any school of the same type as that attended by the child in Year 12.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Governors of Down High School may, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. someone joining from abroad), award a place in Lower Sixth Form or Upper Sixth Form to a student.

Lower Sixth Form to Upper Sixth Form transition

To move from Lower Sixth to Upper Sixth students are required to have achieved a pass grade (i.e. E grade or higher / BTEC pass or higher) in at least three subjects and to have gained at least 80 UCAS points from three A Levels or other Level 3 courses (AS grade A = 60 points, B = 50 points, C = 40 points, D = 30 points, E = 20 points, BTEC Distinction = 60 points, BTEC Merit = 40 points, BTEC pass = 20 points).

Pupils are required to study at least three subjects at Down High School in Upper Sixth classes and are only allowed to progress to an A2 equivalent course if they have achieved a pass grade (i.e. grade E or above) at AS Level and are only allowed to progress to the second half of the BTEC qualification if they have achieved at least a pass. Entry into Year 14 is also dependent on a satisfactory disciplinary record and a record of regularly meeting coursework and other deadlines.