

Balcarra School
Admissions Policy 2026-27 for Year 7

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- Set out the school's arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

As an academy, the school is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry (Year 7), using the common application form provided by their home local authority. The arrangements for admissions into the sixth form for Year 12 entry can be found in section 10.

Looked-after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked-after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from the local authority.

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

The school's default position is that pupils are placed in their normal age group.

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The headteacher's views

In general, Balcarras aims to place all pupils in the year group that matches their chronological age. Only in exceptional circumstances will Balcarras move a pupil to another year group. Pupils coming to Balcarras from abroad or having been taught in a different year group at their previous school without a clear medical or diagnosed SEND need, would not be placed in a different year group from their chronological age.

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission number

The school has an agreed admission number of 194 pupils for entry in Year 7.

For information about sixth form allocation please see section 10.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated. A place will be offered unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person,

or

- the attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. At all times the school will adhere to the SEND Code of Practice.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order, until all places are filled.

1. Highest priority will be given to looked-after children and all previously looked-after children who apply for a place at the school (see definition in section 3).
2. Priority will next be given to children living in the school's area of priority (see Area of Priority Map in Appendix 1) who have a sibling attending the school where the sibling is or has been a member of Years 7-12 and who will continue to be on the school roll when the applicant's child is admitted. This criterion does not apply if the sibling has only attended Years 12-13.
3. Priority will next be given to children of full or part time salaried members of staff who have been employed at Balcarras for two years or more at the time of the application for admission, or of a member of staff recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. This does not include staff employed on an ad-hoc or casual basis, e.g. examination invigilators, supply staff etc.
4. Priority will next be given to children living in the area of priority, served by the school (see Appendix 1). If there are more children in the area of priority than places available, those with the strongest geographical claim, measured in a straight line from the ordnance survey address point of the child's home address (including flats) to the ordnance survey address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.
5. Priority will next be given to children who live outside the area of priority (see Appendix 1), who have a sibling attending the school where the sibling is or has been a member of Years 7-12 and who will continue to be on the school roll when the applicant's child is admitted. This criterion does not apply if the sibling has only attended Years 12-13.
6. Priority will next be given to children with the strongest geographical claim, measured in a straight line from the ordnance survey address point of the child's home address (including flats) to the ordnance survey address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Note 1.

A sibling is a brother or sister, half-brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner, and in every case, the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address.

Note 2.

Criteria 2, 4, 5 and 6 refer to the child's home address. A child's home address will be considered to be where they are resident for the majority of nights in a normal school week. If there is an equal 50/50 split, parents will decide which address to use.

Note 3.

Where any category at points 1 – 5 is oversubscribed, criterion 6 (strongest geographical claim based on straight line distance) will be used to determine which child will be offered a place.

Note 4.

If a pupil is admitted to the school, on any criteria, and has a twin, who has applied at the same time, both children will be admitted, even if their admission leads to exceeding the PAN by one.

6.3 Tie break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the school will use the distance between the school and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the school.

Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the school's address. A child's home address will be considered to be where he/she is resident for the majority of nights in a normal school week.

Where the distance between 2 children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be independently verified.

6.4 Waiting list**For Year 6 into Year 7 entry**

A waiting list will be maintained until the end of the first term in the academic year of admission. All children on the waiting list will be ranked using the above criteria, taking into account children added to the list after the start of September. If places become available the school will contact the parents of the child who is highest on the waiting list according to criteria set out in 6.2.

For in year applications

The waiting list for in-year applications will contain all applicants who have applied for an in-year place at the school (and submitted all the necessary supporting documents) and ticked the box on the application form to indicate they wish to be added to the waiting list. The waiting list will be maintained for the academic year. On 31st August, the waiting list will be wiped clear, and a new list will begin on 1st September each year.

6.5 Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

6.6 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Gloucestershire County Council's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

7. In-year admissions

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, when an applicant names the school as part of an EHCP, the school will follow the guidance in the SEND code of practice (section 9.79). A place will be offered unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person,

or

- the attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

The stipulations laid out above in Point 6.5 (challenging behaviour) apply also to in-year admissions.

If there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by 1 of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.2 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

To apply for an in-year admission, applicants must fully complete an in-year admission form which can be downloaded from the Gloucestershire County Council website. Balcarras requires that all applications include the following supporting documents:

- A good quality photocopy of the child's birth certificate or passport.
- A good quality photocopy of the council tax bill for the address where the child is living.

Applicants are advised that it is best to send into school paper copies, as often electronic copies do not download successfully from the school's computers. If the copies are not entirely clear, then the school will ask that the original documents are brought in to the school so that DoB and address can be confirmed. Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:

admin@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

or post to:

Admissions
Balcarras School,
East End Road,
Charton Kings.
GL538QF

Parents will be notified of the outcome of their in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

Application forms can be obtained from the address above.

8. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

appeals@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

All the necessary paperwork and supporting documents (see section 7) must be completed and passed to the school before an appeal hearing can be scheduled.

You can find details of the school's appeals timetable on the following webpage:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/page/?title=Balcarras+Admissions&pid=16>

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the local governing board and the Balcarras Trust Board every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.

10. Sixth Form Admissions Arrangements 2025-26 – Year 12

10.1 Capacity

The overall capacity of the sixth form is 471. There are 236 places available in Year 12.

10.2 Entry Criteria

All pupils applying for a sixth form place must be of chronological age Year 11 when making the application and be of chronological age Year 12 in the September when they start in the sixth form*.

The entry criteria for Balcarras Sixth Form are the same for Balcarras Students and for external students and are as follows:

- Students must achieve at least 2 grade 6s and 3 grade 5s in full GCSE courses.
- Students must achieve a grade 5 or higher in GCSE Mathematics and a grade 5 or higher in GCSE English (Language or Literature).
- Some subjects have additional entry criteria and for students applying for those subjects, the additional requirements are set out clearly in the sixth form brochure which is published on the school website.
- The school will transfer its own pupils into the Sixth Form before admitting applicants from other schools.

*Pupils who are not going to be of chronological age in Year 12 when they are due to join the sixth form should arrange to meet with the Head of Sixth Form to discuss options.

10.3 Over-subscription

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated provided they have met the entry criteria for the Sixth Form.

If the Sixth Form is oversubscribed for external applicants, we will give priority to applicants as follows:

- 1) Highest priority will be given to looked-after children and all previously looked-after children who apply for a place at the school and have met the entry criteria. (see definition in section 3)
- 2) Other applicants according to their geographical distance from the school, with priority to those living closest to the school. Geographical distance will be measured in a straight line from the Ordnance Survey address point of the child's home address (including flats) using the Local Authority's Address Point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system

10.4 How to Apply

All of the information about how to apply can be found on the Balcarras website here:

<https://www.balcarras.glos.sch.uk/page/?title=Admissions&pid=52>

The admissions process begins in January with the Sixth Form Open Evening. The Sixth Form prospectus is published in January also and contains all of the details on subject entry criteria. Students must fully complete a formal application form and ensure it reaches the school by the application deadline. The deadline for application is February 5th.

10.5 Appeals

Any appeals must be made in writing to the Head of Sixth Form and must be received within 3 weeks of the decision letter being sent.

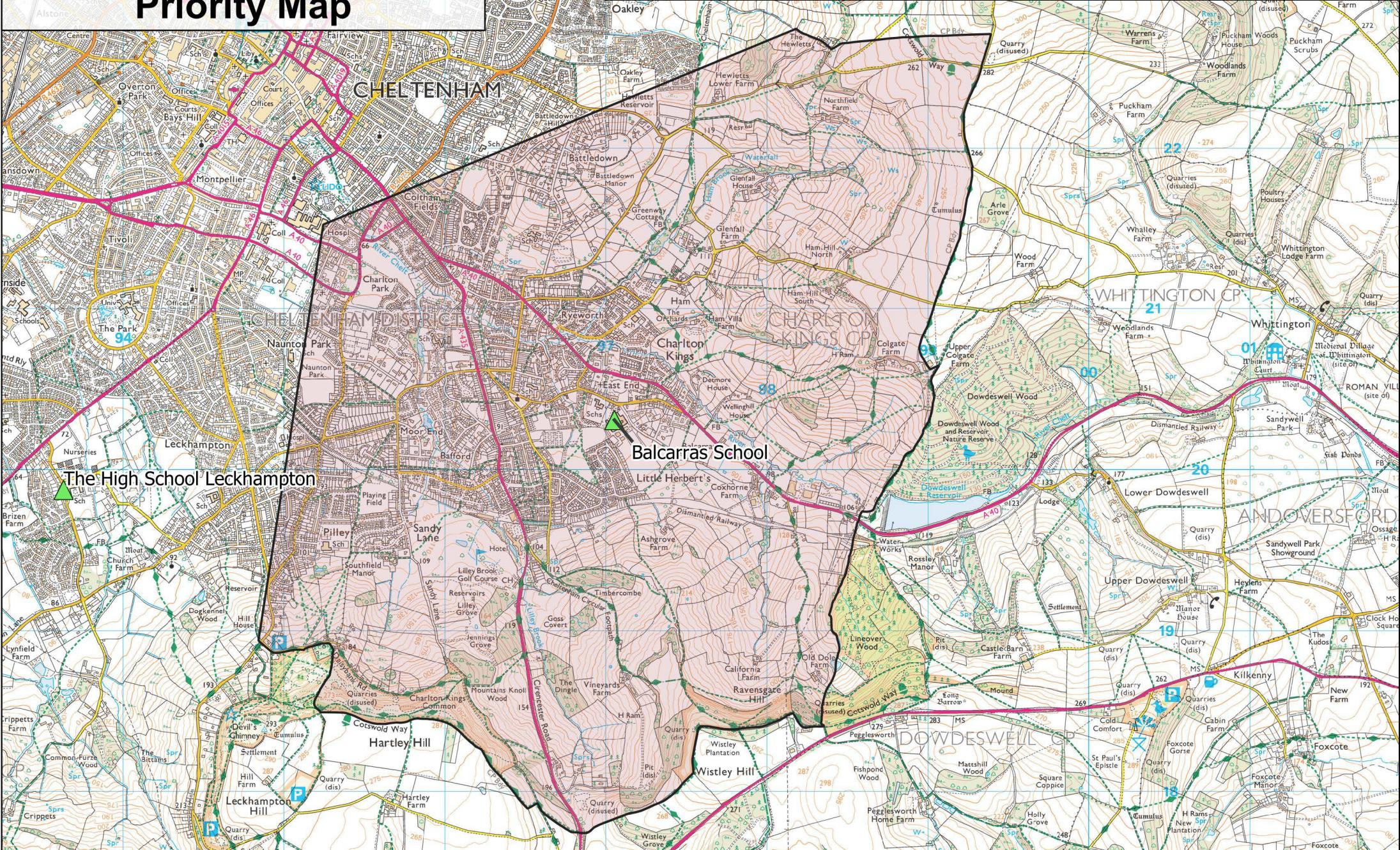
10.6 Students with qualifications other than GCSEs

Balcarras Sixth Form will consider some non-GCSE full courses. However, not all courses will be sufficiently equivalent to provide the necessary academic grounding for the A-levels and study environment at Balcarras Sixth Form. For example, it is often not possible to directly compare foreign examinations grades with GCSE grades.

Offers will be made based on the examinations the student is due to take in the school he/she is studying and will be made on an individual basis. The offer will be the decision of Balcarras School and be broadly comparable, as far as is possible, to the equivalent GCSE requirements set out at the top of this document.

Balcarras School - Area of Priority Map

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