

Admissions Policy

For entry from 1 September 2024



Approved: March 2023

Adopted: March 2023

Review Due:

October 2024 (for entry from September 2025)

Background

The Spires College, as a Foundation School, operates its own Admissions Policy as set out below. This policy is the responsibility of the Governing Body of the College. It is hoped that the policy will be operated without significant year-on-year change to introduce stability into the admissions to the College. The School Admissions process is published and formulated by the Local Authority and includes common dates and application form. This is agreed by all admission authorities and is published on the LA and College websites.

As a Bilateral School, The Spires College has two distinct populations at the time of entry. These are recognised as selective students who have passed the selection test to enter the College and non-selective students who have not passed the test, or who have chosen not to take it.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all prospective students are treated fairly and that the college continues to provide an educational facility to serve the local community in which it is situated. To achieve this, it will work in co-operation with other Admitting Authorities within Torbay under Torbay Council's co-ordinated scheme.

Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee consists of five members, including the College's Principal and four Governors. A minimum of three members are required to make decisions regarding admissions.

Designated Area

The Spires College wishes to serve as a community school and, as such, seeks to service a specific designated area. A map showing this area is included at the end of this document; however children from both inside and outside of this area are admitted.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

The published admission number into Year 7 each year is 210 students. The College reserves the right to exceed the planned admission number as detailed in the Department for Education Code on School Admissions. The operational capacity of the year group will be reviewed in Year 10 due to students transferring to educational settings dedicated to KS4 provision.

Ratio of Selective and Non-Selective places

There are up to 60 selective places available in each year group. If any of these places remain unfilled following the allocation process they will be used to increase the number of non-selective places in the College. For example, if only 30 of the maximum of 60 selective places per year are awarded, the balance of 180 places will be allocated to students with applications for a non-selective place.

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Body to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names their school. This is not an oversubscription criterion and schools must admit such children whether they have vacancies or not. Therefore, places will be allocated to these students before other applications are considered.

Local Authority ASC and HI Provisions

The College hosts Local Authority Provisions for students with hearing impairment and students with an autism diagnosis. Places in these provisions require an EHCP and are allocated via a consultation process with Torbay Council's SEN Team. The ASC provision has a capacity of 15, with no more than 3 students per year group. The Hi provision has a capacity of 8 across all year groups.

Oversubscription Criteria

The following criteria apply for all non-selective places. If there are more applications than available places the applications will be prioritised in the order of the following categories:

1. Looked after Children or children who were previously looked after.
2. Children of members of staff in either or both of the circumstances defined on page 9 of this document.
3. Children with a sibling already on roll at the College at the time when the application is received (for Primary to Secondary Transfer this will normally be the closing date for applications).
4. Other children whose home address is inside the designated area.
5. Other children whose home address is outside of the designated area.

When there are more applications than available places, categories 2, 3, 4 and 5 above will be prioritised in straight line distance order from the home address. Distance is measured in the following ways:

- ▲ When the home address is within the designated area - furthest from Torquay Academy first. Distance is measured in this way to ensure that children who live in the west of the catchment area (between The Spires College and Torquay Academy) are not ranked higher than those living to the east (between The Spires College and the sea).
- ▲ When the home address is outside of the designated area - closest to The Spires College first.

In the event of applications being received for two or more children living exactly the same distance from the school, the allocation will be made by lot undertaken by the LA Admissions Manager on behalf of the College by the operation of an electronic list randomiser. This may be in the presence of a College representative.

Selective Entry from Primary School

*dates to be confirmed. Confirmation of these dates will be published on the school website and by Torbay Council as soon as possible.

The Spires College can offer up to 60 selective places in each year. Places will be offered to those students who meet the eligible score in the 11+ selection test as determined by the Admissions Panel. The pass rate may vary from one year to another, depending on the range of scores achieved across Torbay each year.

Applications for selective places are ranked by 11+ score. If more than 60 applicants reach the eligible score and test scores are identical for the final place, the oversubscription criteria detailed above will apply for the final place.

To help parents make an informed decision about whether an application for a place in a selective school may be successful, children sit the selection test before the closing date for applications for a school place with the Local Authority. This is referred to as **Testing Before Preference**.

Parents who intend to apply for a selective place must register their child to take the test at one of the selective schools in Torbay by midday on 19 July 2023* (preferable) or the final date of midday on 7 September 2023*. An **11+ registration form** is included at the end of this document and is on the college website. Candidates can take only one test within Torbay and, if an application is made to more than one selective school in Torbay, the selective schools will share the results.

Special arrangements for the tests will only be based on support an applicant regularly receives in school. For example, large-print test papers for visually impaired candidates, the use of magnifying aids, coloured filters, templates or the provision of a scribe to record the child's answers. Special arrangement requests, including additional time to a maximum of 25%, will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Special arrangements must not provide an unfair advantage over others. Requests for special arrangements should be made at the same time as an 11+ registration form is submitted and should be accompanied by a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Primary School SEND Support information. Each case will be considered on its own merit and the current school may be consulted. Allocation of places for children with The Spires College named on their EHCP, for whom the results of the 11+ test establish they are of academic ability to benefit from a selective education, will be decided following consultation with the College's SENDCo and the Local Authority SEN team.

The College will email details of the **selective testing arrangements** to parents/carers who have registered their child to take the test. The test is taken on Saturday 16 September 2023 and is supervised by staff from the College.

Within fourteen days of the test, a parent/carer may submit a case that there were **exceptional circumstances** that may have affected their child's performance prior to or on the day of the test. This information must be submitted to The Spires College in writing or via email, within fourteen days of the test even if the test has been taken at a different school. The Admissions Panel will consider each written case before the end of November, obtaining information from the current primary school, such as assessment results, school reports and a letter of support indicating why it is considered that the child is of the appropriate academic ability and, where appropriate, other agencies such as the educational psychologist service.

By submitting a case to be considered, the parent/carer consents to The Spires College contacting the primary school and other agencies for relevant information. Cases based upon illness must be supported by a medical certificate or letter from a relevant medical practitioner. After considering the case, the panel may decide that the child could have reached the standard required to gain a selective place and that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the candidate is of the required academic standard to be awarded a selective place. An example of an exceptional circumstance would be the death of a parent.

The **test papers** are designed by an external assessment authority, Granada Learning (GL), in English and Maths. Papers completed at The Spires College will be marked by another Torbay Grammar School in accordance with local arrangements.

The test scores are adjusted to take account of the age of the children at the time they take the test. This is referred to as **standardisation**, a statistical process designed to take account of the fact that older children are at an advantage when taking the test. Standardising the raw score makes it a level playing field for all the children in the year. One child taking the test might be born on the first day of the school year (1 September), while another might be born on the last day (31 August). Up to a whole year's difference in ages means that older children are at an advantage; for example, they will have up to an additional year's worth of vocabulary. As children are exposed to new vocabulary at the rate of more than 1,000 words per year, the difference can be very significant for the tests. To remove this unfairness, the marks are adjusted to make them 'standard' for all children, regardless of their age.

When the scores have been standardised the Admission Panel (the Principal, the Admissions Officer and a representative from the Governing Body) will meet to discuss the results. In the event of a tie on score and the selective places being oversubscribed, children will be ranked in order of the over subscription criteria, as shown on page 2.

Children who are unable to take the test on Saturday 16 September 2023*, due to illness or other significant acceptable reasons, (e.g. religious observance) will be offered the opportunity to take the test on the pre-arranged catch up date of 29 September 2023*. However, this must be discussed with the school at the earliest opportunity. Children sitting the test at this time will be considered alongside those children who sat the test on 16 September 2023*. Requests to take the test received beyond this time will only be considered when parents/carers can demonstrate a genuine reason why the test could not be taken according to the above schedule. For example, bereavement, or other circumstance beyond the control of the parent(s)/carer(s) prevented a timely registration, or the child moved into the area after the closing date for test registration. Evidence will be required to justify this delay. Testing under these circumstances will take place in December 2023. Children sitting the test at this time will be considered alongside those children who sat the tests in September 2023. Late notification of the testing timetable by a child's current school or otherwise will not be accepted as a reason why timely registration was not possible and these children will be able to sit the test in March 2024.

For children whose registration or common application form (or both) were submitted after the closing dates and where they were not considered to be timely, there will be an opportunity to sit the test for consideration after the first round of allocations on 1 March 2024. Such cases might be if illness prevented a lone parent/carer from returning the form on time, if the reason for lateness is supported in writing by a medical professional involved in the case, or if the applicant has moved into the area after the deadline (evidence will be required). The final decision on whether there are exceptional circumstances will be made by the Admissions Panel.

Guidance letters will be issued on, or as soon as possible after 17 October 2023 indicating whether, on the basis of the child's performance in the 11+ examinations, a selective

education is appropriate to his or her academic ability. The letter will not provide the actual scores but a Yes or No to whether the child has met the eligible score for each of the selective schools in Torbay, as determined by their respective Admissions Panels. The guidance letter indicates if the scores achieved would be likely to gain a place at each of the selective schools in Torbay. The guidance letter does not provide an offer of a place at a selective school: it will simply give an indication of whether an application is likely to be successful. Scores for successful candidates will not be disclosed even when places are formally offered in March.

Parents/carers must submit an application for a school place using a Common Application Form from the Local Authority in which they live by the deadline of Tuesday 31 October 2023. They can submit up to three ranked preferences. Applications for selective places at The Spires College where candidates do not reach the required standard to qualify for a selective place will automatically be considered for a non-selective place, alongside all other applications for non-selective places. Therefore, there is no need to state a separate preference for a selective and/or non-selective place at The Spires College. Parents/carers wishing to apply for a selective place should ensure that they have clearly indicated this on the application to their local authority.

Late applications for Entry from Primary School (main round) and Waiting Lists

Late applications will be considered after those received by the closing date.

If the college is oversubscribed, applications that have not resulted in a place being offered will be kept on a waiting list ranked in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where a place becomes available, it will be offered to the child whose application is at the top of the waiting list.

As of the first day of the next academic year, all new and existing main round applications are considered as in-year admissions. When a year group is oversubscribed, waiting lists for in-year transfer applications will be kept for each year group.

Late applications and applications on a waiting list are not differentiated by whether they are for selective or non-selective places.

In-Year Admissions (Years 7 – 11)

In-year admissions are those when a student enters the College at any time other than normal transfer from primary secondary school. Applications are made to Torbay Council's School Admissions team. Information and an online application facility are available at: <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schooladmissions> or by contacting 01803 208908 for a TIPS 4 booklet.

Offered places must be accepted by returning the registration form within ten school days of the written offer and the student will begin attending on the first day of the next half term or within four school weeks from the date a written offer is made, whichever is latest. If a student does not begin attending on the date arranged, the place will be held open for ten school days. Exceptions to this are only made if a medical certificate for sickness is supplied.

After a place has been accepted, students will be assessed to determine the appropriate teaching group and an admission meeting will take place.

In-Year Admissions - Selective Places in Years 7 & 8

Once a place has been offered the following criteria will apply for placement to the selective groups:

- ▲ A score in the 11+ tests taken in Year 6 within Torbay that would have secured a selective place during the primary transfer process.
OR
- ▲ Key stage 2 test scores of at least two 'greater depth' and one 'working at' in English, Mathematics and Science, in any combination. Where an applicant has not taken these tests, due allowance will be made, however, academic evidence will be sought.
OR
- ▲ Secondary CATs scores of 114 average (three test minimum score of 110) administered by The Spires College as part of the admission process.

In-Year Admissions - Selective Places in Years 9, 10 & 11

Once a place has been offered the following criteria will apply for placement to the selective groups:

- ▲ A score in the 11+ tests taken in Year 6 within Torbay that would have secured a selective place during the primary transfer process.
OR
- ▲ Secondary CATs scores of 114 average (three test minimum score of 110), administered by The Spires College as part of the admission process.

If the selective class/classes in a year group is/are full at the time of admission, students transferring in-year will be admitted to non-selective places.

Fair Access Protocols

Children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit, or who are allocated to a school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list. The Protocol aims to ensure that the needs of children are fully considered before admission to school and that they are admitted to school without undue delay. Torbay Council's Fair Access Protocol can be found at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/cs/admission-policies/>.

Sixth Form Admissions

All students seeking admission to the Sixth Form are invited to have a discussion with senior staff prior to their being offered a place. The purpose of this meeting is to review the applicant's intended subject choices against the courses available at the College and to consider the contribution of subjects to future career profiles. The meeting does not form part of the decision making process whether to offer a place.

All Level 3 programmes are two-year, full-time programmes.

Offers of places will be made subject to courses running. The College reserves the right to withdraw courses that have insufficient student numbers or if financial implications make them unviable. In addition, entry may be refused to courses where the practical maximum of students will be exceeded. Negotiations for alternative courses will take place with students who are affected by such situations.

Offers of places on Level 3 study programmes will be conditional on meeting academic entry requirements.

Academic Entry Requirements

There are academic entry requirements for admission onto Level 3 study programmes. This is to ensure that we accept students onto programmes on which they will have a reasonable chance of success.

- ▲ For admission onto a Level 3 Academic study programme, students will need to have achieved a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade 5 or above, including English and Mathematics. Course specific entry requirements, as described in the Sixth Form Course Guide, will also apply.
- ▲ For admission onto a Level 3 Applied study programme, students will need to have achieved a minimum of five GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including English and Mathematics. Course specific entry requirements, as described in the Sixth Form Course Guide, will also apply.

Any student admitted to the Sixth Form who has not achieved, at least, a Grade 4 in GCSE English and/or GCSE Mathematics, will be required to continue to study these subjects as part of their Sixth Form study programme.

Educational Progression Requirements

Students' Sixth Form study programmes must demonstrate educational progression. Students will be admitted onto programmes which do not demonstrate educational progression only in exceptional circumstances. For instance, students who have completed a Level 2 course should next begin a Level 3 course.

Age Requirements

The Spires College Sixth Form is a school-based Sixth Form. As such, admission to the Sixth Form will be to the year group which is usual for a child's age:

- ▲ For admission to Year 12 – aged 16 years on 31 August 2023
- ▲ For admission to Year 13 – aged 17 years on 31 August 2023

Admission into a year group other than that which is usual for a child's age is not typical but applications of this kind will be considered by our Sixth Form management team where there are exceptional circumstances that demonstrate this is in the best interests of the young person.

Funding Eligibility Requirements

Students seeking admission to The Spires College Sixth Form must meet the funding eligibility requirements as set out in the relevant *ESFA Funding guidance for young people*.

The Application Process

We welcome both students transferring from the College's Year 11 population, and those external to the College. Applications can be made by students or their parents/carers.

The College holds a Sixth Form Open Evening in November, attendance at which is recommended for all applicants. The date is available from College and advertised on the College website.

Applications should be received by the advertised deadline. In order for the college to plan effectively, applications should be received by the advertised deadline wherever possible.

Capacity

Internal students who meet the Conditions of Admission and apply will be offered a place. The number of external admissions is limited so that the total number of students entering Year 12 does not exceed 250.

Where there are more applications from external students with the grades required to access their chosen course than places available, the oversubscription criteria detailed on page 2 of this document will apply to those external applications.

Emergency Arrangements

In the event that a local, regional or national public health lockdown is imposed, school admission and appeal arrangements may operate to amended timescales or under emergency regulations. Wherever possible, in-year admission applications will continue to be processed and places will be held open until it is practical and safe for children to attend on site. Remote learning will be made available as for existing students if it is not possible for this to continue with the child's current school. On-site provision may be available for vulnerable and key worker children, according to circumstances at that time.

Definitions

Residential/Home Address

The residential/home address used to prioritise applications is the one where the child lives at the time of application (for Primary to Secondary Transfer this will normally be the closing date for applications). Where a child lives under the care of separated parents, the address of either parent may be used as long as it can be proved that the child lives at that address for part of the school week. Torbay Local Authority, as co-ordinators of the scheme, will make the final decision about the address to be used.

In the event of oversubscription, checks will be made to ensure that the given address is correct, usually by requesting documents, such as council tax statements, utility bills, benefit statements or tax / universal credit statements. Telephone bills and bank statements will not be accepted. Should there be a concern that an address may be fraudulent or misleading, additional information may be requested or a visit made to the address to check that it is genuine. In these instances, the college will adopt Torbay Council's Address of Convenience Protocol, available to view on Torbay Council's website. If the address is found to be fraudulent, the offer of a place may be withdrawn. If the child concerned has already begun attending the college, the amount of time that they have been attending will be taken into consideration.

Where an applicant is a member of the UK forces or a crown servant returning from overseas, but where there is not yet a residential address, official proof of a posting to the area will be required as stated in the Schools Admissions Code.

If a family seeking a place as part of the Primary to Secondary Transfer moves home on or before 30 January 2024, or if they have exchanged contracts on a residential property purchase by that date, the new address will be used as the residential address for the purposes of the application. If a family moves on or before 30 January 2024 but does not declare this change to Torbay Council and the child is allocated a place at the college that, based upon the new address, they should not have been, this place may be withdrawn if the college is oversubscribed.

Distance

Distance will be calculated using the website www.doogal.co.uk, using the 'crow flies' facility on the 'driving distances' page or using the same distance measuring tool as Torbay Council.

The distance is measured in the following ways:

- ▲ When the home address is within the designated area - furthest from Torquay Academy first. Distance is measured in this way to ensure that children who live in the west of the catchment area (between The Spires College and Torquay Academy) are not ranked higher than those living to the east (between The Spires College and the sea).
- ▲ When the home address is outside of the designated area - closest to The Spires College first.

Sibling Definition

For the purposes of this policy the definition of "siblings" is children who live as brother or sister at the same home address, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, step brothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. This does not include extended family e.g. cousins or friends sharing a house.

Multiple Birth or Same Year Siblings

Where non-selective applications are received for multiple birth or same-year siblings, each sibling within the same year group will be offered a place, even if this exceeds the published admission number. This does not apply if a sibling has been allocated a place in our selective stream or has been allocated a place as their Education, Health and Care Plan names the school.

Looked After Children Definition

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order) including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Applications from members of staff

This oversubscription criteria regarding children of members of staff applies 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 they were recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. This would be a post that the school has had difficulty in filling indicated for instance by a nationwide or international recruitment drive and/or where the post was not filled at the first attempt. Should the employment end prior to national allocation day, the application will be re-ranked accordingly.

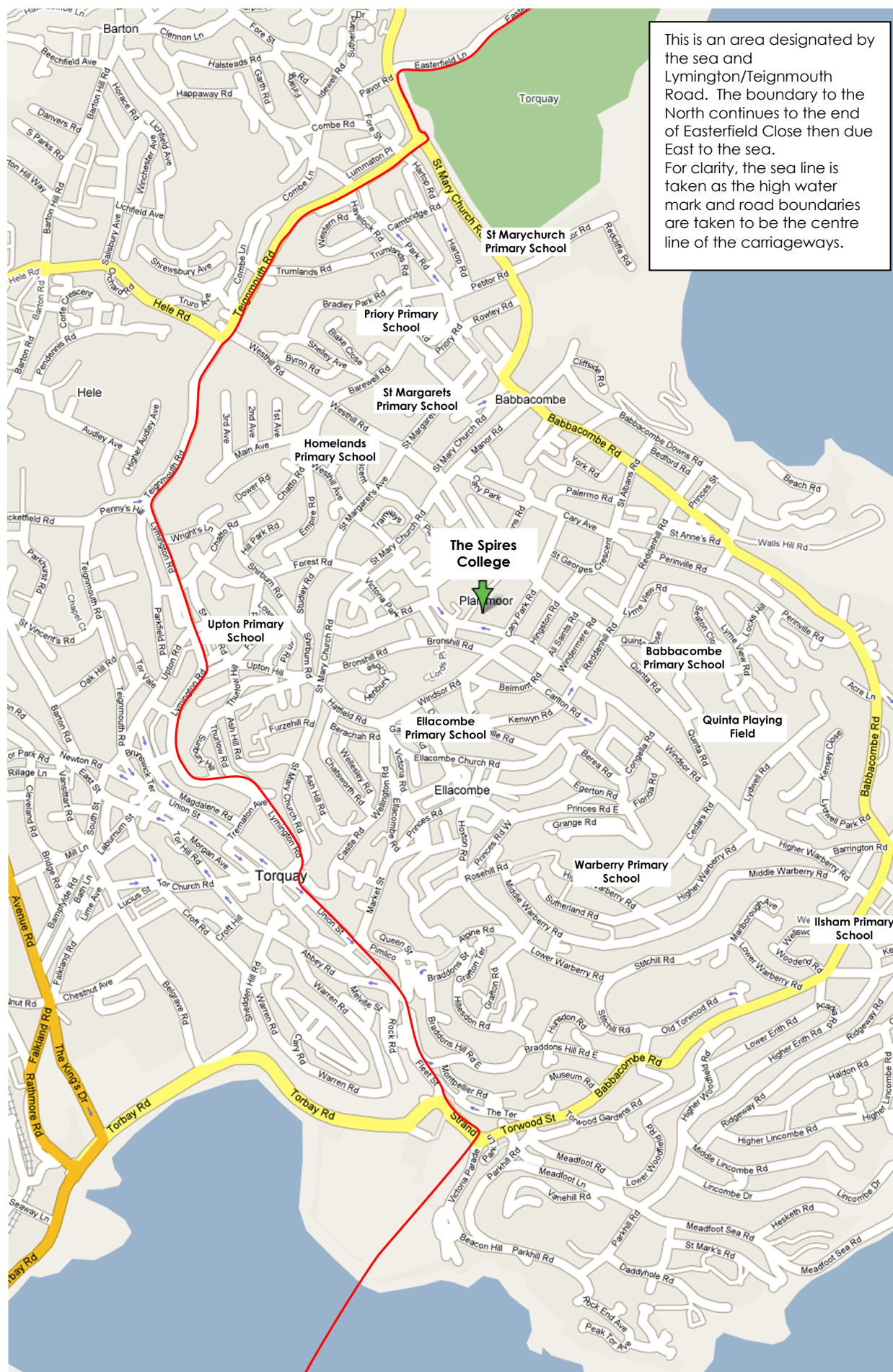
Out of year applications

Admission into a year group other than that which is usual for a child's age are not typical but applications of this kind will be considered on individual merits. Applications for a place should be made in the normal way (TIPSB form via Torbay Council) clearly stating the year group in which a place is sought and the reasons why. Applicants will need to give specific consent for this information to be shared with the college. In these circumstances, there is no right of appeal if the application for an out of year place is refused but one in the correct year group is offered.

Appeals Process

The Spires College uses the Torbay Independent Appeals Panel to hear appeals for unsuccessful applications. If an applicant is not satisfied with the final outcome of the application process and there are exceptional circumstances supporting an application for a place, then an appeal may be made. Applicants have the right of appeal and appeals heard by Torbay Independent Appeals Panel are organised by the Governance Support Team at Torbay Council. More information regarding the appeals process is available at: <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schooladmissions> or by contacting Governance Support by email to governance.support@torbay.gov.uk or by telephone on 01803 207013. The Governance Team is based at Torquay Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR.

Map Showing Designated Area



REGISTRATION FORM FOR 11+ TESTS

September 2024 Entry

TORBAY SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

CHURSTON FERRERS GRAMMAR SCHOOL
TORQUAY GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

TORQUAY BOYS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL
THE SPIRES COLLEGE

Please indicate at which selective school you would like your child to take the tests. It would be logical to take the examinations at the school you expect to be your first preference.

Name of School _____

Please complete this form and return it to the school where you propose sitting the tests by midday on **Wednesday 19 July 2023 where possible or midday on Thursday 7 September 2023**. You must also complete the Common Application Form for your Local Authority by **31 October 2023**. A school place cannot be offered unless the Common Application Form has been completed.

Surname of Child _____

Forename(s) _____ Date of Birth _____

Full Address, including Postcode _____

_____ Gender: Male / Female

Parent / Guardian's Email Address _____

Contact Telephone Number(s) _____

Primary School Attended _____

Does your child need any special requirements to enable him/her to take the tests? YES / NO
If yes, please specify what requirements are necessary

Is your child in receipt of Pupil Premium YES / NO

Name of Parent or Guardian:
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr (please print) _____

I / We grant permission for the personal data we have supplied to be shared with approved Data Processors, Test Providers and other Admission Authorities performing similar testing for any reason deemed necessary in order to ensure the integrity of the process and the tests. At all times Data Processors, Test Providers and other Admission Authorities agree to treat all personal data strictly in accordance with the Data Protection regulations currently in force.

Signature _____ Date _____

If at the time of the tests you become aware of any circumstances which you feel may affect your child's performance, please contact each of the selective schools you are applying to in writing within 14 days of the tests in order that this may be considered by the Admissions Panel.

All school addresses can be located on their websites.