

**ST PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL**

108 Camlough Road

Bessbrook

NEWRY

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**Principal:** Mr Dáithí Murray, BA (Hons), PGCE, PQH

**Chairperson of the Board of Governors:** Mrs Eileen Fearon

**Maintained Secondary**

**Age Range:** 11 – 18

**Admissions Number:** 250

**Enrolment Number:** 1555

**Open Day: Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

St Paul's High School is a Catholic coeducational school with a Catholic ethos under the Trusteeship of St Patrick's Educational Trust, Archdiocese of Armagh.

The school provides a faith-based education centred on gospel values of love, respect, justice, compassion and hope.

We warmly welcome learners from the Catholic tradition, other Christian traditions and non-Christian traditions as well as those who do not identify as having any religious faith.

**RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS TO THE SCHOOL**

The Board of Governors draws up the admissions criteria and delegates to the Principal and an admissions sub-committee the responsibility of applying the criteria.

**When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will follow the below outlined procedures precisely. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the Transfer application and the school's Supplementary Information Form.**

**NOTES OF INFORMATION**

- In accordance with DE regulations, all children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission will be selected for admission before any child not so resident may be selected.
- It is the sole responsibility of the parents/carers of prospective pupils to ensure that all information relevant to the Admissions Criteria of St Paul's High School is submitted on the Transfer application and the school's Supplementary Information Form.
- Parents/carers should use the Transfer application to provide as much information as possible to assist the school in the application of its criteria. Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to complete all sections of the Transfer application in order to provide relevant information which demonstrates clearly why the child is entitled to admission.
- In order to facilitate the proper application of criteria, the Board of Governors requests parents to ALSO complete a Supplementary Information Form. The Supplementary Information Form is available from the Principal's Secretary, Primary Schools and from the school website (available from January 2026). The Supplementary Information Form, and any verification documentation, should be completed in tandem with the EA Transfer application process and should be uploaded to the EA portal in line with the published deadlines.
- NB: The provision of inaccurate, ambiguous or misleading information provided on, or attached to, any such application, may prejudice the offer of a place and may subsequently lead to the withdrawal of a place awarded to any applicant, who shall be deemed to have gained unfair and improper advantage by submitting such information.
- The school authorities reserve the right to authenticate and seek verification of the content of any application. In the case of a surname, the final decision will be based on the surname shown on the birth certificate, or any subsequent court order. The failure to provide verifying documents, according to the required deadline, may result in the inability of the school to offer a place.

## Admissions Criteria for entry September 2026

- **Pupils who have statements of special educational needs follow a different admissions process, rather than the admissions process outlined in this document. They are admitted to St Paul's above and beyond the normal admissions number.**

### ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

All applications will be considered in line with the timetable set out in the Open Enrolment in Post Primary Schools 2026/2027 (Circular 2025/11).

**The Subcommittee, on behalf of the Board of Governors, will apply the criteria listed below to identify which children will be admitted to Year 8. In selecting children for admission, children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school will be selected before any child not so resident.**

Application for admission to St Paul's High School will be divided into three categories A, B and C. All applications will be considered, but applications belonging to category A will be given preference over applications belonging to category B and so on.

#### CATEGORY A

Applications from pupils who normally reside in the traditional catchment area of the school, which are listed below not in any order or priority.

- a. Parish of Lower Killeavy,
- b. Parish of Loughgilly,
- c. Parish of Dromintee,
- d. Parish of Upper Killeavy,
- e. Newtownhamilton part of Lower Creggan Parish that traditionally contributes to St Paul's High School,
- f. Cladybeg and Ballylane parts of Ballymacnab Parish, that traditionally contribute to St Paul's High School,
- g. Those pupils who normally reside in the part of the parish of Newry that lies west of the railway line between Kidd's Road and both sides of the A25 Camlough Road.
- h. Applications from pupils whose parent/guardian is a permanent member of staff.

A map which defines the areas listed above is available for consultation through appointment with the school, or can be accessed on the school's website: <http://www.stpaulsbessbrook.org/catchment-area/>

#### CATEGORY B

Applications from pupils who normally reside in the Parish of Middle Killeavy.

A list of the areas which are defined as being in the Parish of Middle Killeavy can be checked on the school website.

#### CATEGORY C

All other applicants.

#### SUB-CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED IN THE EVENT OF OVERSUBSCRIPTION

**In the event of oversubscription within any of the above categories, the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order below to each category beginning with category A to determine which children should be admitted. Should places still exist, the process will be repeated for Category B and then Category C until all places are filled:-**

1. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a first preference for St Paul's High School, Bessbrook and who have a \*sibling, living at the same address, who is currently in attendance at St Paul's High School, Bessbrook.
2. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a first preference for St Paul's High School, Bessbrook and who have had a \*sibling previously in attendance at St Paul's High School, Bessbrook.
3. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a first preference for St Paul's and who are the first \*\*eligible child in their family transferring to second level education.
4. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a first preference for St Paul's, and do not qualify at 1, 2, 3 above.
5. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a second preference for St Paul's.

## Admissions Criteria for entry September 2026

6. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a third preference for St Paul's.
7. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a fourth preference for St Paul's.
8. Those pupils whose Transfer application expresses a fifth preference for St Paul's.

In the event that, at any stage of the above sub-criteria being applied, there is more than one applicant for the final place, a random selection will be made to complete the admissions selection. This random selection process takes the form of each applicant, at the point of over-subscription, being assigned a number, based on their position alphabetically according to surname (please note, the surname will be that which appears on the child's birth certificate), and then numbers randomly drawn. This random selection process will be carried out by three persons, nominated by the Board of Governors, who will keep a written record of the selection procedure.

\*The use of the word sibling is defined as children who, at the date of their application, have a child of the family currently enrolled at the school. The phrase 'child of the family' covers children fostered, adopted etc. and avoids having to define all the various permutations of sibling.

\*\*Eligible – The Board of Governors defines 'Eligible' as fulfilling reasonable circumstances which place the child in category A3. These might include a scenario whereby the family was resident at an address outside the catchment area when the first child transferred; or that the first child, with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, was placed in a school commensurate with their needs and by default could not attend St. Paul's. This also applies to applicants whose eldest siblings chose St Paul's as their first preference school in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025, but did not secure a place due to over-subscription. The school has kept a record of such unsuccessful A3 applications made in these years. The Board of Governors will reserve the right to determine 'eligibility'. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school, at the time of application of any of the above.

### DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors will take account of all appropriate and relevant Departmental Guidance and Circulars as may be required to support or verify information on any applicant's Transfer application.

In the event that any canvassing of any member of the Board of Governors is made by any applicant, or anyone on behalf of an applicant, the Board of Governors may take any action deemed appropriate, including disqualification of that applicant's application.

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on the Transfer application or appended to the Transfer application by parents/carers. For verification purposes original documents are required and not facsimiles or photocopies.

It is the responsibility of the Parents/Carers to ensure that:

- The Transfer application, Supplementary Information Form and other necessary documentation are correctly completed and present.
- All relevant information is included on, or attached to, the Transfer application.
- Any required verification documents are provided within specified deadlines.

Applicants who succeed at Category A (h) will not be required to produce proof of address as part of the school's verification processes.

**Any change of address, which changes the applicant's address which was originally on the Transfer application, from outside the traditional catchment area of the school (as detailed in Category A) to an address which is within the traditional catchment area of the school (as detailed in Category A), in the period during which the Transfer application is in the possession of the school, will not be accepted.**

### APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8

Year	Admissions Number	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/2024	260	320	305*
2024/2025	254	280	288*
2025/2026	267	311	315*

\*These figures include pupils with statements of SEN and Appeals

### ADMISSIONS TO YEARS 9 – 12 (and Year 8 post 31 August each year)

Pupils will be considered for enrolment providing that their admission:

- (a) Would not cause the school to exceed its enrolment number as determined by the Department of Education and/or class sizes, including practical class sizes as determined by the Department of Education, would not be exceeded.
- (b) Would not prejudice, in the opinion of the Board of Governors, the efficient use of the school's resources.

If at the time of the consideration of the application, there are more eligible applicants than places in a particular year group available, then the admission criteria to Year 8 will be applied to select pupils to fill available places.

#### WAITING LIST POLICY Year 8

Any student that has initially not gained a place during the Transfer Application process, parents should contact the school, in writing, to indicate that they wish to be placed on a waiting list for Year 8 entry. In the event of a Year 8 vacancy arising, the above admissions criteria will continue to be applied in the order set down above, with a pupil offered any available place based on their rank order during the admissions procedure. This list will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

#### WAITING LIST POLICY Year 9-12

St Paul's High School does not operate a waiting list for students who apply for a place to any year group and are unsuccessful. Each application is decided upon at the time of receipt.

#### ADMISSIONS TO POST 16 STUDY

##### Category 1:

Pupils attending St Paul's High School, and who meet the minimum criteria at (a) to (e) below have priority over all other applicants.

- (a) Seven GCSEs or more, Grades A\* to C, including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics, for entry to "A" Level courses.
- (b) Seven GCSEs or more, Grades A\* to C, including GCSE English or GCSE Mathematics, for entry to "A" Level courses.
- (c) Six GCSEs or more, Grades A\* to C, including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics, for entry to "A" Level courses.
- (d) Six GCSEs or more, Grades A\* to C, including GCSE English or GCSE Mathematics, for entry to "A" Level courses.
- (e) Six GCSEs or more, Grades A\* to C for entry to "A" Level courses.

##### Category 2:

All other Pupils who meet criteria (a) to (e) above and who are unable to obtain their A level subject choices in their current school. Pupils applying for admission from other schools will be required to meet the academic entry requirements of their current school before they will be considered for admission to St Paul's.

**The categories above are in rank order.**

External applicants for "A" Level study from category 2 above will be graded on their academic performance at GCSE and/or equivalents as recognised by DE in the following manner:

Grade A\* = 5pts    Grade A = 4pts    Grade B = 3pts    Grade C\* = 2pts    Grade C = 1pt

Should there be a tie for a final place, the decision will be made by random selection. This random selection process takes the form of each applicant, at the point of over-subscription, being assigned a number and then numbers randomly drawn.

**All applications to Post 16 study will be subject to pupils having;**

- (i) An acceptable attendance record,
- (ii) An acceptable behavioural record,
- (iii) An acceptable punctuality record,
- (iv) Places being available in the subjects sought.

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***A reference may be sought from their previous school.***

**All pupils applying under Category 2 above will be subject to approval by the Department of Education before admission can be confirmed. See notes below. \*\***

**\*\*St Paul's 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 St Paul's High School.
2. Pupils from other schools where admission to an extra place at St Paul's 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 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 four 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 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.*

**St Paul's High School does not operate a waiting list for students who apply for a place to any year group and are unsuccessful. Each application is decided upon at the time of receipt.**