READING BLUE COAT

Admissions Policy

Introduction

Reading Blue Coat ("RBC") is a selective, co-educational, independent day school for students aged 11 to 18.

Our selection process is designed to identify students who will benefit from the exceptional educational opportunities available at RBC and who will make a positive contribution to the life of the School through our core values of aspiration, compassion, courage, integrity and service.

Whilst there is an established co-educational Sixth Form, Years 10 and 11 are currently boys only, and girls joined Year 7 for the first time in September 2023. The intention is for the School to be fully co-educational in all year groups by September 2027. As of April 2026, the School has approximately 850 students.

Choosing the right school for your child is very important; a personal visit can be invaluable, and we hope that you and your family will visit RBC. We hold several open events during the Autumn and Summer terms, offering a general introduction to the School. Full details are published on our website.

We are also very happy to welcome prospective parents or guardians and their children at other times. Please check the website for dates or contact the Admissions department via email at admissions@rbcs.org.uk or by telephone on 0118 933 5806.

If it is not possible to hold open events or arrange school visits because of circumstances beyond the School's control, alternative arrangements will be published on the School's website.

This policy sets out the selection criteria and procedure for entry to RBC and aims to be consistent with the School's charitable objectives and fair to all applicants.

Entry Procedure

RBC is a selective school.

The usual points of entry are Year 7 (11+), Year 9 (13+) and Year 12 (16+). The School has capacity to admit 120 students a year into Year 7, approximately 20 students into Year 9, and approximately 50 additional students into Year 12.

Very occasionally applications for other entry points may be considered, subject to places becoming available. Parents seeking places outside the three main entry points should contact the Admissions department.

Candidates must be registered online via the School website, and the registration fee of £120 (including VAT) must be received before an application can be progressed.

Registration
The Registration Form is available on the School website: Registration Form – Reading Blue Coat.

Year 7 (11+ Entry)
Registration for Year 7 takes place prior to the entrance assessments, which take place in the Autumn Term of Year 6.

The closing date for applications for 2027 entry is Friday 30 October 2026.

Year 9 (13+ Entry)
Registration for Year 9 takes place prior to the entrance assessments, which are held in the Autumn Term of Year 6 or 7.

The closing date for applications for 2028 entry is Friday 30 October 2026.

Year 12 (16+ Entry)
Registration for Year 12 takes place during Year 10 or the first half of the Autumn Term of Year 11.

The closing date for applications for 2027 entry is Friday 30 October 2026.

Equal Treatment
RBC encourages applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing students for life in today's world.

The School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of a candidate's sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or social background.

RBC is proud to offer two Foundation Awards each year. These are fully funded places for students who would thrive at the School but for whom an independent education would not otherwise be financially possible. Candidates for Year 7 and Year 12 entry in September 2027, and Year 9 entry in 2028, who wish to be considered for a Foundation Award should submit their applications by the closing date of Friday 30 October 2026.

Applicants for Foundation Awards will be asked to complete a financial assessment via our partner organisation, Bursary Assessment Associates. Please refer to the School's Foundation Awards Policy for full details: Foundation Awards Policy.

Additional Needs and Disabilities

RBC does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. A separate SEND policy is available, which provides further detail on the School's approach and provision: Learning Support Policy.

The School welcomes students with mild disabilities and/or additional needs, provided that the Learning Support department is able to offer the support they require, cater for any additional needs, and ensure that the School site can accommodate them. We aim to ensure that all our students are provided with a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Our admissions criteria are applied equally to all prospective students. We advise parents of children with additional needs or disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the School as early as possible in the admissions process, so that appropriate consideration and provision can be made. Parents should provide full written details of any additional needs or disabilities alongside the Registration Form, or as soon as these become apparent during the admissions process. Where available, this should include the most recent professional report or assessment, a medical report, and details of any Exam Access Arrangements, supported by appropriate evidence.

This information enables the School to assess a student's needs and to discuss with parents, and where appropriate specialist advisers, any reasonable adjustments that may be made during the admissions process and, if an offer is made, during the student's time at RBC. As part of the usual admissions process, a meeting with the School's Director of Learning Support may be required before an offer is confirmed.

In the vast majority of cases, the School is able to make reasonable adjustments to support students with additional needs or disabilities. However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which the School is unable to offer a place, for example where, despite reasonable adjustments, a prospective student would be unable to access the education and co-educational opportunities offered by the School.

Occasionally, a student's circumstances may change between an offer being made and the student joining the School. Parents are required to keep the School informed of any significant changes that mean previously submitted information is out of date or incomplete. In most cases, such changes will not affect a student's place at the School. However, in exceptional circumstances, the School may need to review an offer if a student's needs change materially and cannot reasonably be met. It is in the student's best interests for any such matters to be discussed as early as possible to avoid disruption to their education.

Assessment Process

RBC looks for potential in well-rounded students with a genuine interest in education in the broadest sense, and with interests that extend beyond the academic curriculum. The School has strong traditions in art, drama, music, public speaking and sport. There is a wide range of co-curricular activities, all of which contribute to the development of a well-balanced, confident individual.

No specific preparation for our entrance tests is required; all candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities to demonstrate their academic aptitude and, where appropriate, their co-curricular strengths.

The following sections outline the criteria for entry at Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12.

Entry Criteria: Year 7 (September 2027)

Selection is based on:

- a series of academic tests
- an interview at the School
- group observations
- references and other relevant information from the candidate's current school

These elements are considered holistically when assessing a student's potential and their capacity to benefit from the full breadth of education offered at RBC.

In the Autumn Term of Year 6, parents of registered candidates will receive an email inviting their child to attend an assessment day.

Academic Assessments

The Year 7 entrance assessments take place during an assessment day in the academic year prior to entry.

Candidates sit computer-based tests in English, Mathematics, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning. These assessments are provided by Quest (a third-party provider of formative assessments).

While test performance is not the only factor, candidates must demonstrate a satisfactory performance to show they can meet the pace and rigour of the School's academic curriculum.

Interview

Interviews are conducted by the Headmaster (or another member of staff) on the same day as the academic assessments. They last for approximately 15 minutes and are informal in style.

Other

The School does not publish results of the components of the assessment day and is not obliged to state its reasons for rejecting an applicant. The Headmaster's decision regarding admission is final.

Entry Criteria: Year 9 (September 2028)

Selection is based on:

- a series of academic tests
- an interview at the School
- group observations
- references and other relevant information from the candidate's current school

These elements are considered holistically when assessing a student's potential and their capacity to benefit from the full breadth of education offered at RBC.

In the Autumn Term of Year 6 or Year 7, parents of registered candidates will receive an email inviting their child to attend an assessment day.

Academic Assessments

The Year 9 entrance assessments take place during an assessment day when candidates are in Year 6 or Year 7.

Candidates sit computer-based tests in English, Mathematics, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning. These assessments are provided by Quest (a third-party provider of formative assessments). No preparation is necessary.

Whilst test performance is not the only factor, candidates must demonstrate a satisfactory performance to show they meet the pace and rigour of the School's academic curriculum.

Candidates who took the Year 7 entrance assessments and were unsuccessful are not normally permitted to re-sit for the Year 9 entry, except in exceptional circumstances.

Interview

Interviews are conducted by the Headmaster (or another member of staff) on the same day as the academic assessments. They last for approximately 15 minutes and are informal in style.

Other

The School does not publish results of the components of the assessment day and is not obliged to state its reasons for rejecting an applicant. The Headmaster's decision regarding admission is final.

Offers for Year 9 entry are unconditional, and candidates are not required to sit Common Entrance examinations.

Entry Criteria: Year 12 (September 2027)

RBC has a vibrant Sixth Form with a strong academic ethos. All students are expected to adopt a positive approach to their studies and engage fully with the co-curricular programme.

Entry Requirements

It is expected that all students, both existing and external applicants, will achieve a minimum of eight GCSE passes at Grade 5 or above. Of these:

- at least two grades must be Grade 7 or above
- a further four grades must be Grade 6 or above; and
- the remaining two grades must be Grade 5 or above.

All students must achieve at least Grade 5 in English Language and Mathematics.

Some A Level subjects require specific minimum GCSE grades. Full details are available in the Sixth Form Information Booklet, which is available online: Your Guide to the Sixth Form - 2026-27.

Entry Procedure for External Applicants

The selection process consists of three elements:

- an interview at the School

- a formal Letter of Application written by the student, explaining their reasons for applying
- a report from the student's current school confirming a positive approach to study and predicted GCSE grades.

These elements are considered holistically when assessing a student's potential and their capacity to benefit from the full breadth of education offered at Reading Blue Coat.

In the Autumn Term of Year 11, parents of registered applicants will receive an email inviting their child for interview.

Interview
Interviews are conducted in the Autumn Term by the Headmaster or another member of staff. They last for approximately 25 minutes and are informal in style.

Offer of a Place
Offers are made at the Headmaster's discretion, and his decision to accept or refuse a child entry to the School is final.

Year 7 Entry
Parents will receive a communication confirming the outcome of their child's application in the week commencing 11 January 2027.

Year 9 Entry
Parents will receive a communication confirming the outcome of their child's application in the week commencing 30 November 2026.

Year 12 Entry
Parents will receive a communication confirming the outcome of their child's application in the week commencing 7 December 2026. Offers for Year 12 are conditional upon the candidate meeting the minimum GCSE entry requirements.

Payment of Deposit
Parents wishing to accept an offer of a place are required to pay a deposit of £1,250. This deposit will form part of the general funds of the School until it is credited, without interest, against the final invoice for fees or any other sums due to the School upon leaving.

Please see the School's Terms and Conditions for full information on how and when the Acceptance Deposit may be refunded: Terms and Conditions - Reading Blue Coat.

Waiting Lists
The number of suitable applicants for any year group normally exceeds the number of places available. The School therefore maintains waiting lists, which continue to be reviewed until the start of the new academic year in September.

Late Applications

Late applicants may sit the entrance assessments by appointment. If successful, they will be offered either a place if one is available, or a place on the waiting list if the year group is fully subscribed.

Sibling Policy
A number of siblings join RBC; however, admission is not automatic and there may be occasions where the School judges that a sibling may thrive better in a different academic environment. Please note that the School does not offer a sibling discount.

Scholarships
RBC offers scholarships for excellence in:

- Academics (Year 7 and Year 12)
- Art (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Dance (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Drama (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Music (Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12)
- Sports (Year 9 and Year 12)

A scholarship may be withdrawn in accordance with the terms upon which such award is made or in accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions. Please note that scholarship holders are required to reapply for their scholarships at the transition between Lower and Middle School, and again when entering the Sixth Form.

Purpose of Scholarships
Scholarships are designed to reward excellence and to celebrate exceptional talent. Scholarships are honorary and do not carry a reduction in school fees.

All Scholars will be expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the academic life of the School or to the co-curricular discipline for which they have received an award. Scholars are also expected to contribute to the relevant department(s) throughout their time at the School.

Scholarships will only be awarded to students who have passed the School's entrance assessments.

Further information on the scholarship programme can be found on the School's website: Scholarships - Reading Blue Coat.

Academic Scholarships
For Year 7, Academic Scholarships are awarded based on performance in the academic assessments (via Quest) on the Assessment Day. No additional examination is required.

For Year 12, Academic Scholarships are awarded following an examination. Candidates will be invited to a scholarship assessment day, provided a scholarship application has been received by 30 October 2026.

Art Scholarships
Art Scholarships are awarded on the basis of

- a portfolio of work,
- an assessment, and
- an interview with the Head of Art.

Dance Scholarships

Dance Scholarships are awarded on the basis of an audition and an interview with the Director of Performing Arts, or a member of the Performing Arts department.

Drama Scholarships

Drama Scholarships are awarded on the basis of an audition and interview with the Director of Performing Arts, or a member of the Performing Arts department.

Music Scholarships

Music Scholarships are awarded on the basis of an audition with the School's Director of Music or a member of the Music department.

Sports Scholarships

Sports Scholarships are available to candidates who are currently active at a representative level, involved in professional academies, or competing at national or international level.

Financial Assistance with Fees – Foundation Awards

The School has a long history of providing fully funded places to students who would benefit from, and contribute to, the environment at RBC but for whom independent education would not otherwise be financially accessible.

Two Foundation Awards are offered to applicants for Year 7 entry, although strong candidates at other entry points will be considered. These awards cover 100% of tuition fees, together with additional support for essential costs such as lunches, transport, uniform, equipment and trips.

Financial Assistance with the Registration Fee – Universal Credit

To enable applications to be progressed without payment of the required registration fee (£120 including VAT), prospective parents in receipt of Universal Credit should provide supporting documentation to admissions@rbcs.org.uk at the time of application.

Overseas Applicants

The School welcomes applications from overseas students, provided they have the legal right to enter and study in the UK and have a relative or responsible adult living in the UK with whom they can stay.

Fluency in English

To manage the academic and social demands of RBC, students must be fluent English speakers. Normally students should have been educated in English for at least two years prior to joining the School. When appropriate, tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) may be arranged at the parents' expense. Please refer to the School's EAL Policy for full details: English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy.

Religious Beliefs
Although the School has a Christian foundation, it does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and offers opportunities, where possible, for students of all faiths to practise their traditions. Parents should note that students are expected to attend Christian religious services during their time at the School.

School's Terms and Conditions
The School's Terms and Conditions will be made available to parents as part of the admissions process.

Complaints
The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website and may be sent to prospective parents on request. Please note, however, that the Complaints Procedure cannot be used by prospective parents.

Records and Review
Applicants' details will be held on file with due regard to data protection legislation and the School's Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

The School will not retain personal data relating to prospective parents or their child/children for longer than is necessary for a lawful purpose.

Conclusion
The School is keen to support prospective parents throughout the applications process. Parents are encouraged to contact the Director of External Relations or a member of the Admissions Team by email at admissions@rbcs.org.uk for further guidance.

Author(s):	Charles Cadby (Director of External Relations)
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Agreed by:	 Howard Williams (Chair of Governors) *on behalf of the Full Governing Board*
Date of Agreement:	June 2026