

Castle Academy - FAQs

What is the difference between Castle Academy and Castle Climbing Club?

Academy members must have a solid interest in competition climbing, thrive to improve their climbing skills to an elite level and commitment to do several sessions of climbing per week (both with the coaches and on their own/ supervised by their parents or guardians).

What are the fees?

Depends on the Academy Level. Commitment for the whole season, give or take £300-£400 per term (£45-£50 per week).

Do you have to get picked or assessed to join the Academy?

Access to the Academy is through the process described in the website: profiling sessions & attendance to our summer competition. The coaches will analyse the Tactical, Technical, Movement and Psychological skills of each athlete by taking notes and/or gathering short videos.

All current Academy members must reapply each year if they wish to continue in the team. As expected, their assessment process is slightly more complex than for the newcomers as their coaches would have a whole season of data to analyse and review.

The profiling sessions for new athletes are scheduled the weekend before the Young Guns event on the 14th July. These are a series of 2 hour, 1:4 coach-led session around bouldering and rope climbing. Please note the booking for these sessions is separate from the Young Guns booking. Places for the profiling sessions are very limited.

By the end of the selection process, athletes will have a summary of their current profile that will highlight their strengths and weaknesses. The decision regarding the team selection will be notified to parents by email - 4 weeks after the Young Guns Summer Festival.

How many times a year is there an intake?

We profile and select the team once per year, during the summer. Part of the profiling and selection process is participating in the Young Guns Summer Festival.

Is it just Young Guns that is the competition where they are selected?

Young Guns Summer Festival is part of the selection process, as well as the profiling sessions and, where applicable, continuous monitoring and feedback from the coaches of the Castle Climbing Club (NICAS).

Are competitions involved?

All climbers are encouraged to join the youth competition circuit each year (BMC Youth Climbing Series and BlokFest)

Is it an intensive program?

The Castle Youth Development Programme is underpinned by the Long-Term Athlete Development model, considering the different stages of growth and trainability of children. We strongly encourage younger children (pre-puberty) to participate in various physical activities and not specialise in a single sport... even if all they want to do is climb like monkeys!

What are the timings of the classes?

Academy 1: Wednesdays & Fridays, 17:30-19:30 (we break for half-term)

Academy 2: Wednesdays 17:30-20:30 & Fridays 17:30-19:30 (we train during half-term)

Should those in academy be climbing outside of the sessions?

They are encouraged to regularly climb with their parents and peers to further expand what they learn on the Academy sessions. From 14 years of age, they could be assessed to become a registered (unsupervised) climber at The Castle.

Do the parents need to be certified to supervise their children?

Academy & Squad must be supervised by a registered adult if they wish to climb in the centre and they haven't been assessed by our Duty Managers (14 or older). We offer special rates for parents to learn the basics (appropriate use of harnesses, tying a suitable knot and belaying), so they can confidently supervise their children in the centre.

What are the age groups and ability levels for Level One and Level Two?

- Academy 1 is for younger climbers, from 8-11 years of age.
- Academy 2 is the progression, from 12-15 years of age.

- Solid movement foundation: advanced climbing-specific skills are not our priority
- Minimum NICAS Level 2 or similar relevant experience (hard skills competency: put on a harness correctly, tying a figure of 8 knot and safe, top rope belay and bouldering). For Academy 2 applicants (12-14), basic knowledge of lead climbing is desirable.
- Strong interest in physical activities (not just climbing) - participation in other sports is highly recommended.
- Commitment and desire to train and improve performance.

Who is the main contact for Castle Academy?

Head Coach: Juan Avendano Juan@castle-climbing.co.uk