Admissions Policy

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Contents

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Determining a PAN
4. Oversubscription criteria
5. Catchment area
6. Siblings and children of staff
7. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
8. Selective criteria
9. Admissions procedures
10. Applications and offers
11. Admissions appeals
12. Constitution of appeals panels
13. Appeals hearing
14. Reaching a decision
15. Complaints
16. In year admissions

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'
- This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The admission authority is responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the school.
- Outlining the school's admissions arrangements and publishing them on the academy website.
- Clearly communicating any reasons for rejecting the admission of a pupil, as well as the parent's right to appeal and the appeal process.
- Implementing any advice or recommendations given by the Schools Adjudicator without undue delay.
- Determining the admission arrangements on an annual basis and publicly consulting stakeholders on any proposed changes to the admission arrangements.
- Setting clear, fair and effective oversubscription criteria which do not discriminate against any pupil.
- Communicating oversubscription criteria clearly to parents.
- Notifying the LA of any in-year admissions and their outcomes.

The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:

- Acting in line with the relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to admissions.
- Receiving concerns and objections regarding the admission of pupils and making recommendations to the admission authority as a result of these concerns and objections.
- Approving variations to determined admissions arrangements where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.

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The appeals clerk is responsible for:

- Having an in-depth knowledge of the relevant appeals codes and other relevant law.
- Providing an independent and impartial service for admission appeals.
- Making the necessary administrative arrangements for hearings.
- Notifying all parties of the order of proceedings in advance of an appeals hearing.
- Responding to queries from appellants in advance of an appeals hearing or identifying who will be appropriate to respond.
- Being an independent source of advice on procedure and admissions law.
- Keeping accurate records of proceedings and providing written notification of the appeals panel's decisions.

Determining a PAN (Pupil Admission Number)

The number of places available is determined by the capacity within our school:
For Knowsley Lane, the PAN for new Reception pupils is 60.

The admission authority will notify the LA of their intention to increase the school's PAN and reference the changes on the school's website.

If the admission authority can accept more pupils than the PAN, it will notify the LA in good time so that the LA can deliver their coordination responsibilities effectively.

Oversubscription criteria

In the event of there being an oversubscription of applicants to the school, the following oversubscription criteria for each relevant age group will be applied:

- LAC and PLAC will be given priority over non-LAC or PLAC children.
- Children with siblings currently at the school will be given priority.
- Distance from the child's home to school, measured in a straight line. Those living nearest the school have priority.

When formulating their admission arrangements, the admission authority will not carry out the following:

- Place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements
- Take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a feeder school
- Give priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in their application
- Give priority to children based on any practical or financial support their parents give to the school or associated parties (including any affiliated religious organisation)
- Give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial or educational status of parents applying – apart from where these factors determine a child's pupil premium eligibility, and for children whose parents work at school
- Take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other children in the family
- Discriminate against any protected characteristic
- Give priority based on a child's or their parents' past or present hobbies or activities
- Name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools
- Interview children or parents
- Request financial contributions as part of the admissions process
- Request photographs of children – apart from for proof of identity when sitting selection tests

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Catchment areas
The home to school measurement is a straight-line measurement ("as the crow flies") using a Geographical Information System (GIS) based on Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) data and the National Grid co-ordinates for the application address and the school.

The school will accept pupils from outside the catchment area – oversubscription criteria will apply where applicable.

Siblings and children of staff
For the purpose of this policy, "sibling" is defined as any brother or sister related by blood or marriage and any fostered or adopted siblings.

Where oversubscribed, the school will give priority to children whose siblings are currently at the school or who attended the school within the last six years.

For the purpose of this policy, "children of staff" refers to any children of staff who have been employed by the school for two or more years at the time at which the application was made, and where the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names an individual school as the appropriate provision, the child must be admitted. Where such pupils are known about at the time of the annual allocation procedures for admission to reception classes, they will be placed in the named school within the PAN, with priority over all others.

For placements outside the normal admissions round, a place will normally be provided as an excepted pupil even the cohort has already reached its usual operational limit, this includes infant classes as pupils with an EHCP that names the school are a permitted exception to infant class size restrictions.

Applicants who have a disability will be considered no less favourably than others in the allocation of places. Schools may make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage.

Selective criteria
The school will not establish admissions criteria that excludes individuals with a particular protected characteristic.
The admissions criteria will not exclude a greater proportion of pupils with particular protected characteristics, unless the school can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
The admissions criteria will not discriminate against disabled applicants, unless the school can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

Admissions procedures
The school will offer open events and school visits to all potential applicants, irrespective of any protected characteristics. Where necessary, the school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants or disabled parents.

The school may assess its ability to cater to the applicant's needs by:
- Inviting the applicant to attend the school for half a day
- Visiting the applicant's home
- Visiting the applicant's current education provision

Applications and offers
Parents will be provided with a common application form (CAF) where they will note their three preferred schools, along with a brief explanation, in rank order – the schools do not have to be located in the LA area where the parents live.

Parents will provide LAs with the following information within the CAF:
- Their name and their child's name and date of birth
- Theirs and their child's address and proof of residence

The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA.
Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met.

The admission authority will not request any of the following:
- Any personal details, including information on criminal convictions or financial status
- The first language of the parent or child
- Details about the parents' or child's disability, medical or SEND requirements
- Any parental agreement to follow the ethos of the school in a practical way
- For the child to complete any part of the form or for both parents to provide signatures

Once a place has been offered, the admission authority may ask for the child's short birth certificate as proof of birth date.

For PLAC and LAC, the admission authority will request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, and a letter from the LA confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the order being made.

A clear, fair and objective waiting list will be provided until 31 December of each year. Priority will not be given to pupils based on the date they were placed on the list. LAC and PLAC will take priority over the waiting list.

An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 20 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application.

If any application is found to be fraudulent after a child has started at the school in the first term of the new academic year, the school may withdraw the place. If the fraudulent application is found after this time, the pupil will not be removed.

All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day.

The admission authority will maintain a waiting list for oversubscribed schools.

The admission authority will make clear in the admissions arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group for the admissions round.

The headteacher will assist the admission authority with deciding on which year group a child will enter. Once a decision has been reached, the child's parents will be informed in writing along with an explanation of how the decision was reached and any reasons why.

Pupils not of usual school age will not be given less of a priority where the school is over subscribed. Applications for children coming from overseas will be treated in accordance with EU law or Home Office rules.

For children of UK service professionals, the following procedure will be adhered to:
A place will be allocated to the child in advance of the family arriving in the area named in the application form.

The application must be accompanied with an official letter confirming the relocation date and the service unit's postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria.

The application will not be refused on the grounds of the child not currently living in the area, nor will places be uniquely reserved.

The arrangements for service children will be in line with the government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.

Admission Appeals
When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent which includes the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal.

Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Grounds for appeal are not limited.

Constitution of appeals panels
The admission authority and the appeals panel will act in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance.

The judicial function of the appeals panel will be transparent, accessible, independent and impartial, and will operate in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

A clerk will be appointed to the appeals panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the LA.

The appeals panel will comprise a chair and at least two other panel members. The panel will also include at least one lay person and a person who has experience in education.

The chair of the appeals panel is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including introducing parties, explaining individual roles and how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case and ask questions.

Panel members will be independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service.

There will be three members of the panel available at all times during the appeals process. If any member has to temporarily withdraw, the hearing will be postponed until the panel member returns. If the panel member is unable to return, they will be replaced, and the appeals will be reheard.

Appropriate training will be given, funded by the admission authority, to all panel members and clerks before they take part in a panel hearing. As a minimum, this training will include:

- The law relating to admissions.
- The panel's duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Procedural fairness and natural justice.
- The roles of specific panel members, e.g. the chair.

The appeals panel must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the hearing.

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Appeals hearings
The admission authority will publish an appeals timetable on their website. The timetable will comply with section three of the 'School admission appeals code'.

Appeals will be lodged and heard for the normal admissions round within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

For late applications, appeals will be heard between 30-40 school days of the appeal being lodged.

For in year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 days of the appeal being lodged.

Admission authorities will provide appellants with written notification of the date and all final arrangements of the appeal hearing, including a deadline for the submission of any further evidence that was not sent in the original appeal.

The admission authority will comply with any request for information to help parents prepare their case for the appeals hearing.

All evidence relating to the appeal hearing will be passed on to the clerk, including the admission process, reasons for the decision and how the admission would cause prejudice to the education provision of the school.
The clerk will send all the papers required for the hearing to both parties and the members of the panel seven days before the hearing.

The presenting officer will be responsible for relaying to the attendees the decision not to admit the child, and answer questions where necessary.

Appellants may attend in person or be represented by another individual. Where appellants cannot attend, a decision will be made based on the written evidence.

Appeal hearings must be private and held in an accessible location. The order of the appeals will be:

- Case for the admission authority.
- Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
- Case for the appellant(s).
- Questioning by the admission authority and panel.
- Summing up by the admission authority.
- Summing up by the appellant(s).

Multiple appeals will be heard, either individually or in groups, by the same appeals panel where appropriate.

Notes of the hearing will be made and kept securely by the admission authority for a minimum of two years. These notes are, in most cases, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Reaching a decision
When reaching a decision, the admission authority will have due regard to section three of the 'School admission appeals code'.

Appeals decisions will either be upheld or dismissed – there will be no conditional decisions made, in line with section 94(6) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The final decision will be decided by a simple majority. If votes are split equally, the chair will make the casting vote.

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The final decision and accompanying reasons will be communicated in writing to the appellant, admission authority and the LA.

The decision letter will be signed by the clerk or chair of the appeals panel and sent no later than five school days after the decision has been made.

If a child has been refused admissions due to any SEND, this will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) and not the appeals panel.

Complaints
Appellants do not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority has accepted a second application from the appellant due to a material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission.

Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.

If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Secretary of State.

In year admissions
In-year admissions are the result of applications made for school places outside of the typical points of entry.
In the primary sector this is applications for years 1 to 6 or for reception class places after annual coordination has ended.

In-year applications for Knowsley primary schools are administered at school level.

In the event of oversubscription occurring in the consideration of in-year applications for any year group in a community primary school or a primary or secondary academy adopting the LA arrangements, the oversubscription criteria detailed in this document will be used to determine the allocation of vacant places and the order of the waiting list for the year group if one is maintained.

Please visit our website for a copy of the in-year admission application form.