

# Mercia Primary Academy Trust



## Admission Policy Academic Year 2022/2023

### Policy Status and Review

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Date:</b>               | May 2021 |
| <b>Review Date:</b>        | May 2023 |
| <b>Signed by Director:</b> |          |
| <b>Date Signed:</b>        |          |

The Mercia Primary Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority of these schools and is responsible for determining the individual school's admissions policy.

The number of places available in the admission year groups is as follows:

Lark Hall - Reception class in academic year 2022/23 is 30

Flax Hill - Year 3 class in academic year 2022/23 is 75

Lakeside - Reception class in academic year 2022/23 is 30

### How and when to apply for places

All applications for school places must be through Staffordshire County Council Local Authority.

Applications for Reception/Year 3 places for September 2022 must be submitted **by midnight on 15 January 2022**. Applications for school places in other year groups or after the start of the school year can be submitted at any time.

### Late applications

Applications received after the closing date will be classed as late and processed after all of the applications received on time.

### Special Educational Needs

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school will be admitted to the school.

### How places will be allocated

If there are enough places at the selected school, then every applicant will be offered a place. If more applications are received than the number of places available, the following oversubscription criteria will be used in the order shown to decide which children will be allocated places.

Although parents have the right to express a preference for the school that they wish their child to attend, there is no guarantee of a place being offered at their preferred school.

It is the Trust's policy to try and meet parents' wishes where possible, however in some cases there may be more applications for a particular school than there are places available.

Oversubscription Criteria:

If the total number of preferences for admission to a school exceeds the school's Published Admission Number (PAN), the following order of priority is used to allocate the available places.

- 1) Children in Care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order). Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 2) Children who satisfy both of the following tests:

**Test 1:** The child is distinguished from the great majority of other applicants either on their own medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances. Medical grounds must be supported by a medical report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application). This report must clearly justify, for health reasons only, why it is better for the child's health to attend the preferred school rather than any other school.

Exceptional circumstances must relate to the choice of school and the individual child, i.e. the circumstances of the child, not the economic or social circumstances of the parent/carer. They should be supported by a professional report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application), e.g. social worker. This report must clearly justify why it is better for the child to attend the preferred school rather than any other school.

**Test 2:** The child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend the preferred school. Hardship means severe suffering of any kind, not merely difficulty or inconvenience, which is likely to be experienced as a result of the child attending a different school. Applicants must provide detailed information about both the type and severity of any likely hardship at the time of application.

3) Children who have an elder sibling in attendance at the preferred school (or in the case of an infant school, the affiliated Junior school) and who will still be attending the school at the proposed admission date; (For admission purposes, a brother or sister is a child who lives at the same address and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parents marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the same address, whose parents live as partners).

4) Children living within the catchment area of the preferred school. Where it is not possible to accommodate all children applying for places within a particular category then the Local Authority will allocate the available places in accordance with the remaining criteria. If for instance, all the catchment area children cannot be accommodated at a school, children who are resident within the catchment area will be arranged in order of priority according to distance i.e. category (5).

### **Additional Notes**

- Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the individual Academy.
- There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a school.
- Admissions are administered through a coordinated admission scheme and preferences for community, controlled, aided and foundation schools will be processed centrally by the School Admissions and Transport Service. Each child will receive only one offer of a place at a Staffordshire school.
- Attendance at a particular infant school will not guarantee admission to any particular junior school. Parents must make a separate application for admission to junior school at the appropriate time.
- In accordance with legislation, children who have a statutory statement of special educational need or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names a particular school as being the most appropriate to meet the child's needs must be admitted to that school. This will reduce the amount of places available to other applicants.
- Children in Care means children who are in the care of, or provided with accommodation by a local authority in accordance with section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making the application.

- It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supportive information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the Trust will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.
- The Trust uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to calculate home to school distances in miles. The measurement is calculated using Ordnance Survey (OS) data from an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. The coordinates of an applicant's home address are determined using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS Address Point data.
- The home address is considered to be the child's along with their parent/carer's main and genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e. where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than legal guardianship) the friends or relatives address will not be considered for allocation purposes.
- Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week, parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.
  - If a place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent home address then that place is likely to be withdrawn.
  - If there are a limited number of spaces available and we cannot distinguish between applicants using the criteria listed, such as in the case of children who live in the same block of flats, then the child or children who will be offered the available spaces will be randomly selected. This process will be independently verified.
- Any Staffordshire child not obtaining a place at any of their parent's preferred schools will be allocated a place at their catchment area school (if places remain available) or the next nearest school with a space available and advised about the independent appeals process.
- Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Trust who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the Headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

### **Waiting lists**

For applications for Reception places, waiting lists will be kept until the 31 December 2022 and will then be cleared. Waiting lists will be ranked using the oversubscription criteria regardless of the date the application was received. From January and then on a termly basis, waiting lists will be cleared and parents will need to re-apply each term if they still want their child to be considered for a place at the school.

### **Summer born children and the admission of children below compulsory school age including deferred entry and part time admission**

The School Admissions Code requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth

birthday. For summer born children (those born after 1 April) this can sometimes be almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted.

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents are entitled to request in writing that:

- their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. The school will hold any deferred place for the child, although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age.

The child must, however, start school full-time in the term after their fifth birthday.

If parents of summer born children (born between 1 April 2018 and 31 August 2018) wish them to be admitted to the Reception year in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than year 1, then parents should submit a written request providing reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group and any supporting evidence from relevant professionals.

Requests must be submitted before the closing date for Reception applications in the child's normal age group in good time for the LA to notify the school, and for the Academy Trust to consider the request and inform the parent of the outcome before the closing date for the normal age group. In other words, for children due to start school in September 2022 where the parent wishes the child to delay admission until 2023, parents must submit their requests well before 15 January 2022. The Academy Trust will consider each case individually.

If the request is agreed, any application made for the normal age group will be withdrawn before any place is offered and parents will need to reapply in the normal way for a Reception place in the following year.

If the request is refused, the parents must decide whether to apply for a Reception place in the current academic year (Note it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria in this policy) or to withdraw their application and apply for a year 1 place the following year. Parents should be aware that the year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the previous Reception year group.

Further information and advice on the admission of summer born children is available from The Academy Trust.

### **Right of appeal**

Parents/carers who are refused a place for their child have a statutory right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Appeals for Reception and Year 3 places should be submitted by 15 May 2022 to ensure they will be heard before the end of July 2022.

### **Definitions**

- A **Looked After Child** is a child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time the application for admission to school is made and whom the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the date of admission.
- An **Adoption Order** is an order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- A **Child Arrangements Order** (previously known as a **Residence Order**) is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live.

- A **Special Guardianship Order** is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

This information can be made available in a range of formats and languages, including Braille and large print. If this would be useful to you or someone you know, please contact your Directorate HR Unit.

A signed copy of this document is available from the office.