

Admissions Policy

Version: 1.1

Next Review date: July 2026

Approved by: LGB

Date: 02/07/2025

Custodian: M Ley

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The following, up to a specific academy heading, is applicable to all Sussex Learning Trust Academies. After the academy heading are detailed the local arrangements that complement this policy but reflect local criteria and practice.

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at each Academy within the Trust
- Set out the arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

We are required by our funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at a school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked-after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked-after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their 5th birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round, you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). Each Academy will be part of the local authority's coordinated admissions. This requires parents to complete a Common Application form, which will be provided by the local authority. Copies of the form are available from West Sussex County Council online at www.westsussex.gov.uk. You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

Only one application per child will be accepted. Parents with shared parental responsibility should agree to their child's school preferences before making an application.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority. You will receive an email from the Pupils Admissions Office under West Sussex County Council guidelines, offering you a school place on the following dates:

- Reception - 16th April 2026 or the next working day
- Year 7 - 1st March 2026 or the next working day

Please note that emails will be sent out throughout the day. Those without an email address or who applied on a paper form will be sent a letter by second class post, posted during the day. No information is given to parents over the telephone. Applicants to whom places are offered will be required to inform the Governing Body of their decision whether to accept or reject the offer by the date given in the letter of offer.

Any applications received after the closing date of 15th January 2026 for primary and 31st October 2025 for secondary will be considered as late applications. Applying after the closing date means that your preferences will be considered after all the preferences received on time have been allocated.

Please note, pupils already attending Warden Park Primary Academy Nursery will not transfer automatically into reception in the attached school (or any of our other schools). A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. Parents wishing to request admission outside a child's normal age group should do so via the [West Sussex County Council Admissions website](#).

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- Headteachers' or Principals' views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of places

Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Governing Body of each Academy. Once admitted to the school pupils will automatically transfer from one key stage to another up to the end of KS4.

The Admissions policy has been designed to give every child a fair and unbiased chance of entry to each of our Academies. All applications for places at each school will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below and in each Academy's local policy.

6.1 Admission numbers

Each Academy will publish its admission number (PAN) for entry for each year of entry in its local Admissions policy.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care plans (EHCP) name one of our Academies will be admitted to the school before any other places are allocated. If this is the case, fewer places will be available to applicants admitted via the school's determined admission arrangements.

If any of our Academies is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that one of our Academies receives more applications than the number of places available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out in the Academy's local policy, in order, until all places are filled.

The decision about whether an admission application qualifies to be considered under the oversubscription criteria category - "Children who need a place at the school on exceptional and compelling social, psychological or medical grounds" will be made by the LGB, in agreement with the Trust CEO.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the week, then the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives the majority of the week. Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to support the address used.

6.3 Tie break

Each Academy will outline its process for tie break situations in their local admissions policy.

6.4 Waiting lists

Waiting lists will be ordered by the same criteria outlined in each Academy's oversubscription section (6.2).

The [School Admissions Code](#) prohibits waiting lists from being ordered by date of application or length of time on the list. A child's position may change on the waiting list as other children join or leave the list. If a place becomes available, the waiting list, and any new applications for the school, will be considered.

The place will be offered to the child with the highest priority based on the over-subscription criteria. We are unable to give any indication as to when this is likely to happen, if at all.

Starting school (Reception) and secondary transfer

The waiting lists for all intake groups will be established after the national offer date for that intake year group. The date is given in the relevant key dates for [secondary school places](#) and [primary school places](#).

If your child has been refused a place in writing they will automatically be added to the waiting list.

Waiting lists are held until the end of the summer term in July of the academic year applied for. Children applying for September 2026 will remain on the waiting list until July 2027. Children applying for September 2026 will remain on the waiting list until July 2027.

6.5 Children below compulsory school age

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents may defer their child's entry to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year the offer was made for.

Where the parents wish children to attend part-time until later in the school year they should liaise with school staff. Any arrangement to attend part-time will not extend beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

6.6 Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with EHC plans.

6.7 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in our local authorities' Fair Access Protocol. This helps make sure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

7. In-year admissions

Applications for in-year admissions should be made via the [West Sussex Applying for a school place website](#).

Parents will be notified of the outcome of their in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name our schools will be admitted to the school.

Likewise, if there are spaces available at the school in the year group you are applying for, your child will always be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application and your child has been refused a place in writing for an existing year group you will be advised about the steps necessary to add their name to a waiting list. When a space becomes available it will be filled by 1 of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.2 of this policy. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Waiting lists are held until the end of the summer term in July of the academic year applied for.

8. Appeals

If your child's application for a place is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal via the West Sussex County Council admissions website. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties. Please note that appealing for a school place does not give priority on a waiting list.

You can find details of the appeals timetable on our Trust and each Academy's webpage.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees every year. The local policy for each Academy, as referenced throughout, will be reviewed by each Academy's Local Governing Board every year.

Whenever changes to the admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the PAN), the board of trustees will publicly consult on these changes.

The board of trustees will consult on the admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

The following information will be added the Trust and each academy website

Appeals Timetable

Admissions Appeals:

Please read the following information from the DfE: [Admissions appeals for school places](#)

Appeals resulting from in-year admission applications will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Appeals for September 2026 resulting from year of entry or transfer applications:

School	Offer	Appeals lodged by	Appeals to be heard by
Primary	16 April 2026	10 May 2026*	12 July 2026 (40 School days)*
Secondary	2 March 2026	27 March 2026*	10 July 2026 (55 School days)*

* These dates are provisional; they have not been confirmed at the time of writing.

Dates for 2026 will be published on the [West Sussex Admissions website](#).

NB: Appeals will not start being heard until after the relevant closing date has passed.

Appeals lodged after these dates will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of being lodged, whichever is the later date.

Appellants will be sent notification of their appeal hearing at least 10 clear school days in advance of the hearing. Appellants will be sent a copy of the school's case 7 clear working days in advance of the hearing.

Appellants must ensure that any further evidence not included with their initial appeal, is received by 5pm on the day on the day notified in the letter with details of the hearing. Any additional evidence or information received after this date might not be considered at the appeal hearing.

Further advice to parents wishing to appeal for a school place is available on the WSCC website: [Make an admissions appeal](#)

Appendix 1: Billingshurst Primary Academy: Admission Arrangements 2026/2027

Billingshurst Primary Academy is an Academy Primary School for children aged 4-11 years. The school caters for the last year of the Foundation Stage (Reception), Key Stage 1 (5-7 years), and Key Stage 2 (7-11 years) of the National Curriculum.

Oversubscription criteria

The following oversubscription criteria apply when the Academy receives more applications than its admission number. The admission number for the school is 90.

1. Children Looked After (children in public care) and children who were previously looked after.
2. Children who need a place at the school on exceptional and compelling social, psychological or medical grounds.
3. Children who live within the catchment area for Billingshurst Primary Academy with brothers or sisters already at the school and who will still be there when the child starts.
4. Other children who live in the catchment area for Billingshurst Primary Academy.
5. Children who live outside the catchment area for Billingshurst Primary Academy with brothers or sisters already at the school and who will still be there when the child starts.
6. Other children who live outside the catchment area for Billingshurst Primary Academy.

In the case of oversubscription in **any** of the above categories, priority of placement is given to applicants who live nearest the school.

Please note:

1. Any child with an Education, Health and Care Plan issued under the Children and Families Act 2014, naming the school will automatically be admitted to that school, under section 324 of the Education Act 1996.
2. Children who were previously looked after are children who leave care under a special guardianship, residence or adoption order. Evidence must be provided.
3. Appeal information from West Sussex can be found here: [Make an admissions appeal](#)
4. The term 'parent' includes other legal guardians.
5. A catchment area is a geographical area served by a specific school and defined on a map. Parents are informed of the catchment school for their home address by the Local Authority. Maps are available from admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk or from the Academy Trust.
6. Brothers or sisters may be half or step-siblings, adopted siblings or the child of the parent/carer's partner but must be living permanently at the same address.
7. Distances are measured in a straight line from school to home using Ordnance Survey address point data from a central point in each building.
8. Parents may decide to defer entry to primary school until the Spring or Summer term as long as their child has not reached compulsory school age (the start of the term following the child's 5th birthday). This must be formally agreed with the school.
9. Waiting lists are kept by West Sussex for each year group, in the order of the oversubscription criteria.
10. Parents refused a place at the school have the statutory right of appeal to an independent appeal panel arranged by the admission authority.

Applying for a school place in West Sussex

Parents can express a preference for any school but do not have a right to "choose" a school. The Academy Trust does however make every effort to meet parental preference where possible.

Further information about how places are allocated at this and other schools in West Sussex is contained in the Local Authority's Information for Parents Booklet which is available at www.westsussex.gov.uk.

Waiting list

WSSC will maintain a waiting list for as long as required for any children not offered a place in the initial allocation. The waiting list will be ranked in line with the published oversubscription criteria and will be ranked again each time a child is added or withdrawn from the list.

Appeals

Parents or carers of children not offered a place have a right to appeal against the decision. Further information about appeals can be found here: [Make an admissions appeal](#)

Starting School

New children and their parents are most welcome to visit the school by appointment made with the School Office. On these occasions you will be given a guided tour of the whole school and the Headteacher will usually be available to answer any questions you may have. However, these visits do not form part of the admission process.

Parents of children due to start school on a full or part-time basis, and those who wish to defer their school place until the term in which their child becomes five years of age, are invited to the school for an evening during the Summer term prior to the academic year in which their child is due to begin. On this occasion they are welcomed by the Headteacher, and have the opportunity to meet the Reception year staff and discuss starting school and practical issues such as school routines and school uniform.

During the term before they begin in our school, children are invited for preliminary visits. They normally spend time in the classroom with their new teacher, forming part of our comprehensive induction programme. Where appropriate, the Reception year teachers visit the local playgroups and nursery schools from which children will be transferring.

Please refer to our Starting School policy for further information about arrangements for how children are welcomed to Billingshurst Primary Academy.

Change log				
Date	Version	Comment	Ratified by	Reviewer
02/07/25	1.1	Dates updated to reflect 2026-27 academic year	LGB	M Ley