



PYRAMID
SCHOOLS TRUST

Working in partnership, so future generations achieve, belong and contribute

Admissions Policy

2026 - 2027

Edition 5: 03/12/2024

Document Control		
Edition	Issued	Changes from previous
1	25/10/2020	None – new policy. Approved by the Board of Trustees
2	28/03/2022	Amendment to age of admission for Westoning Lower School. Amendment to oversubscription criteria. Amendment to definition of a Previously Looked After Child. Approved by the Board of Trustees.
3	21/02/2023	None – renewal. Approved by Board of Trustees
4	6/12/2023	None - renewal Approved by Board of Trustees
4	3/12/2024	Addition of Parish of Hexton to Ramsey Manor Lower School catchment Addition that Westoning Nursery children do not automatically get a place in the school Addition of Harlington Lower and Sundon Lower schools Approved by the Board of Trustees

Review Cycle: Annually

Review Date: November 2025

Statement of intent

At The Pyramid Schools Trust (PST), we welcome all pupils, and places at the schools in the Trust are offered in an open and fair way. Our admissions process is delivered in line with the Equality Act 2010, the School Admissions Code, the School Admission Appeals Code, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school, and is called the 'agreed admissions number'. Our published admissions numbers (PAN) for each school are:

Harlington Upper School	270
Arnold Academy	180
Parkfields Middle School	113
Harlington Lower School	30
Ramsey Manor Lower School	60
Sundon Lower School	15
Westoning Lower School	30

The Pyramid Schools Trust is the admission authority for each school, and the Local Authority coordinates the admission arrangements for each school.

1. Legal framework

1.1. 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 Trust policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Protection Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. 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 Trust schools.
- Outlining the schools' admissions arrangements and publishing them on the Trust and school websites.
- 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.

2.2. 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.

3. Admissions

Determining a PAN

3.1. The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school.

3.2. The PAN for new pupils at each school is as follows:

School	Initial Year Group	PAN
Harlington Upper	9	270
Harlington Upper	12	150
Arnold Academy	5	180
Parkfields Middle	5	113
Harlington Lower	Reception	30
Ramsey Manor Lower	Reception	60
Sundon Lower	Reception	15
Westoning Lower	Reception	30

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

3.4. 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

3.5. 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:

Ramsey Manor Lower School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

1. All looked after or 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 of current PST employees
3. Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school
4. Children living in catchment area
5. Children living in the Parish of Hexton
6. Very exceptional medical grounds
7. Other siblings
8. Any other children

Harlington, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

1. All looked after or 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 of current PST employees
3. Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school
4. Children living in catchment area
5. Very exceptional medical grounds
6. Other siblings
7. Any other children

Arnold Academy and Parkfields Middle School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

1. All looked after or 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 of current PST employees
3. Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
4. Children living in catchment area (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
5. Very exceptional medical grounds (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
6. Other siblings (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
7. Children attending PST lower schools
8. Children attending Harlington cluster feeder schools within the Arnold or Parkfields pyramid
9. Any other children

PST Feeder Schools:

Harlington, Ramsey, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

Harlington Cluster Feeder Schools:

Toddington St George Cof E School, Pulloxhill and Greenfield Academy, Eversholt Lower, Academy, Silsoe VC Lower School, Harlington and Sundon Academy, Chalton Lower School.

PST Lower Schools:

Harlington, Ramsey, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

The Parkfields Pyramid:

Parkfields Middle, Chalton Lower, Toddington St Georges, Eversholt Lower and Harlington Lower

The Arnold Pyramid:

Arnold Academy, Ramsey Manor Lower, Westoning Lower, Silsoe Lower, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Lower, Sundon Lower

Harlington Upper School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

1. All looked after or 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 of current PST employees
3. Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
4. Children living in catchment area (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
5. Very exceptional medical grounds (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
6. Other siblings (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
7. Children attending PST feeder middle schools
8. Children attending Robert Bloomfield Middle School
9. Any other children

PST Feeder Schools: Arnold Academy and Parkfields Middle School

3.6 Pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are required to be admitted to the school which is named on their plan, even if the school is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.

3.7. If there is a 'tie-breaker' between oversubscribed pupils, the school will follow a fair, clear and effective procedure by measuring the distance the pupil lives from the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closest to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the entrance of the relevant school.

3.8. 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

Catchment areas

3.9. Details of the catchment area schools for addresses in Central Bedfordshire can be found at <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions>

3.10. The point within the school grounds from which a school will measure any distance or radii is the entrance to the school reception.

3.11. The Trust schools will accept pupils from outside the catchment area, oversubscription criteria will apply where applicable.

Home address

3.12. A child's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the child is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday) including nights. If there is any query on the home address, this will be checked against original official documentation, eg council tax bill, a recent utility bill, a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

Looked after and previously looked after children

3.13. A 'looked after' child is a child who is a) in the care of the local authority, or b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

3.14. A 'previously looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order, or regarded as having been in a state care in a place outside of England, if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Siblings

- 3.15. 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. In every case, the child should be living at the same address.
- 3.16. Where oversubscribed, the Trust will give priority to children whose siblings are currently at the relevant school.

Children of Staff

- 3.17. For the purpose of this policy, “children of staff” refers to any children of staff who have been employed by the Trust for two or more years at the time at which the application was made, or was recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage.

Very exceptional medical grounds

- 3.18. ‘Very exceptional medical grounds’ refers to cases where there are exceptional medical reasons which make it essential that a child should attend a particular school and where the preferred school is the only school locally that could meet the child’s needs. A medical report from the child’s doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to the school in question and the difficulties which would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The Trust Board reserves the right to seek further information in order to determine whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the preferred school on medical grounds. Admission on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent/carer, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.

Equal opportunities

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

Open evenings

- 3.22. Each 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.

Consultation and determination

3.23. The admission authority will consult on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.

3.24. Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.

3.25. The admission authority will consult on admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if no changes have been made in that time.

3.26. The admission authority will consult with the following:

- Parents of all pupils
- Stakeholders
- Other admission authorities within the relevant area
- The local governors boards of the schools and the LA

3.27. The admission authority will publish a copy of the full proposed admission arrangements and the contact details of the individual responsible for admissions liaison on the Trust website.

3.28. A copy of the proposed admission arrangements will be made available upon request.

3.29. Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year on an annual basis, even when no changes to the arrangements have been made.

3.30. Finalised admission arrangements will be published on the Trust and individual schools' websites.

3.31. A copy of the finalised admission arrangements will be sent to the LA for entry by 15 March in the determination year.

3.32. Any objections to the admission arrangements will be directed to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

Applications and offers

3.33. 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.

3.34. 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

3.35. The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA – this can be submitted online.

3.36. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met.

3.37. The admission authority will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary.

3.38. 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

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

3.40. 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.

Sixth Form

3.41. Applications to the sixth form at Harlington Upper School can be made using the CAF; however, pupils already on roll who are transferring into Year 12 are not obliged to use it.

3.42. The entry requirements for the sixth form are the same for all pupils, irrelevant of their previous school, without reference to ability or aptitude. However, acceptance on to individual courses of study will be dependant on students meeting specific course entry requirements, as outlined in the Sixth Form Prospectus, and on the viability of the course.

3.43. Where oversubscribed, priority will be given to LAC and PLAC who meet the academic criteria, followed by students in catchment and then students with siblings at the school. Where a tie break is necessary, this will follow the same criteria as for all other school admissions, as detailed in 3.7 above.

Westoning Lower School Nursery

3.44. Applications to Westoning Nursery can be made to the school at any time, and application forms will be held in the Nursery until the child is eligible to start (when the child is around 2 years, 9 months of age). On acceptance of a place, parents are required to complete a set of admissions forms.

3.45. Criteria for admission to the Nursery are as follows:

- Looked after children, or children who were previously looked after
- 3 year olds receiving nursery education funding in catchment
- 2 year olds receiving nursery education funding in catchment
- 3 year olds in catchment
- 2 year olds in catchment
- 3 year olds out of catchment
- 2 year olds out of catchment

3.46. A successful application for admission to Westoning Nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a Reception place in accordance with the rest of this policy.

Sundon Lower School Nursery

3.46. A successful application for admission to Sundon Nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a Reception place in accordance with the rest of this policy.

3.47 Admission to Sundon Lower School Nursery Unit is operated by the Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools. An application form may be obtained from the school office and it should be completed and returned to the school no later than the last day of March prior to the year of admission. Admission may be at the beginning of any term subject to place availability.

3.48 During the term that they are three children will be offered a fee paying part or full time place subject to a place being available. The term after their third birthday children will be offered a free part time place subject to a place being available.

3.49 Inclusion Statement

As an inclusive school, children who experience difficulties accessing the school and curriculum will be treated as fairly as other applications for admissions.

3.50 Allocation of Places

Where the number of requests for places exceeds the Admission Number, the places will be allocated (in the rank order shown) to determine how the places will be allocated:

- All “looked after” children or children who were previously ‘looked after’ (see definition)
- Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school (see definition)
- Other children living in the catchment area
- Other children with siblings at the school (see definition)
- Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child’s home address
- Within each of these criteria the oldest children will be given priority.

Overriding priority will be given by the Academy Trust to the admission of children who have an

- Education, Health Care Plan (EHC) that names the school.
- Offer of places

3.51 All offers for places at Harlington Lower School, Ramsey Manor Lower School, Sundon Lower school or Westoning Lower School will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day.

3.52 All offers for places at Harlington Upper School, Arnold Academy or Parkfields Middle School will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 1 March or the next working day.

3.53 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.

3.54 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.

3.55. The admission authority will maintain a waiting list for oversubscribed schools. Pupils on the waiting list will be prioritised according to the Trust's admissions criteria and not on the basis of the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. If a place becomes available, the local authority will contact the parent/carer of the child at the top of the list. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be maintained for the academic year.

3.56 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.

3.57 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.

3.58 Pupils not of usual school age will not be given less of a priority where the school is over subscribed.

3.59 Applications for children coming from overseas will be treated in accordance with EU law or Home Office rules.

3.60 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.

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

4. Admissions appeals

4.1. 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.

4.2. Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Appeals are made to an appeals panel which is independent of the Trust and the local authority Admissions team, and further information on the appeals process can be obtained from the local authority.

Complaints

4.3. 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.

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

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

5. Monitoring and review

5.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board on an annual basis.

5.2. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.

Two new schools transferred into The Pyramid Schools Trust on 1 March 2025. For ease of reference their admissions arrangements are included here. In future years the two schools will be fully integrated into the Trust's admission arrangements.

Beecroft Academy

Introduction

At Beecroft Academy, the Governing Body applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend the school. The Governing Body seeks to offer an inclusive school, welcoming children regardless of their age, ability, gender, ethnicity, culture or special educational or physical needs.

The Governors will admit 60 pupils (the admission number) per academic year to Reception. All admissions applications will be treated on merit, and in a sensitive manner. The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we adopt the procedure set out below to determine whether a child is to be accepted or not. It is our wish for parents and carers to find a place for their child at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible due to excess demand on the places available.

Criteria for Admissions

The Published Admission Number into Reception is 60. The school will allocate places to children whose parents wish them to attend Beecroft Academy, using the admission criteria and provided they can be accommodated with the school's pupil admission number.

1. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' – see definitions
2. Children living in the catchment area with siblings in the school
3. Children living in the catchment area
4. Other children with siblings at the school
5. Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address

Definitions:

Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Previously 'looked after' children

A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was 'looked after', but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local

Authority or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the pupil's home address

The distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school, which is known as the designated measuring point.

Pupils with a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the academy/school named in the Statement or Plan and will be allocated a place ahead of those without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in the allocation process. Thereafter, the admissions criteria for each academy/school will apply to those children without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan. After allocations have been made, if an application is made late or is received as part of the in-year process, pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement or Plan, even if the school is full.

If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised mapping system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the main entrance of the school. The governors will not give priority within each criterion to children who meet other criteria. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the School Admissions Team database to allocate the place.

Fair Access Protocol

All Local Authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol which operates outside of the arrangements of co-ordinated admissions (i.e. those children being admitted to the point of entry at an academy/school) to ensure unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable are offered a suitable school place. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will be admitted even if the school is full.

How do parents and carers apply for their child(ren) to be admitted to our school?

The Council's annual admissions prospectus informs parents and carers how to apply for a place at the school of their choice.

- Application should be made on a form that can be obtained from the school or parents/carers can apply online (www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions), and should be returned by the date stipulated (parents and carers also need to register their child at the school by completing the school's registration form and providing a copy of their child(ren)'s birth certificate).

- Parents and carers have a right to express their preference with regards to a school but this
- does not, in itself, guarantee a place at that particular school.
- The Council will notify parents and carers of the decision regarding their child(ren)'s admission to the school as soon as all the applications have been considered.

NB: At Beecroft Academy, children are admitted at the start of the academic year in which they become five. There is one admission date per year, in September (i.e. when the autumn term begins).

In Year Admissions

In year admissions will be dealt with by Central Bedfordshire Council and children will be admitted at other ages where there are vacancies. Requests for admission into other year groups or admission into Reception after the start of the academic year should be made directly to School Admissions at Central Bedfordshire Council. Information about this can be gained from the school office.

When a child joins Beecroft during the school year, a parent/carer interview is required prior to the child starting to ensure that the transition into Beecroft is smooth and that appropriate provision is ensured.

Waiting lists

Children who have not been accepted for a place at the school will be placed on a waiting list in line with the Academy's admissions criteria until the end of the academic year.

Admissions Appeals

When a child is refused a school place it is because admitting them would prejudice the education of the other children as a result of pupil numbers exceeding the school's limit. However, if a parent or carer feels that they wish to appeal such a decision then they must follow the steps in the appeals procedure that will be offered to them by Central Bedfordshire Council at the time that they are refused a school place for their child. An independent panel considers all such appeals and its decision is binding for all parties concerned.

If the panel decides that the school should admit a child to whom a place was refused then the school would willingly accept the decision and continue to do all that is required to provide the best education for all the children at the school.

Sizes of Classes for Children

We teach children aged four to eleven and class sizes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 cannot exceed 30, although in Key Stage 2 it is possible to exceed this number.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the governing body, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by Central Bedfordshire Council. The policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our school or in the local area.

Delayed admission for summer born children

Parents have the right to request their summer born child's admission to Reception Year in the September following their fifth birthday. However, parents/carers do not have the right to

insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, and if this is the case, a decision will be made by the academy trust in consultation with the Headteacher.

Parents/carers need to make their request in writing, separately from the CAF, directly to the Academy via the Headteacher. The request should include the parents'/carer's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional and if applicable, details if the child was born prematurely including whether they would have been in a lower age group had they been born on their due date.

The Academy, along with the Headteacher, will then consider the request, making their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Once determined, the decision will be communicated by the Academy to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

If a request is granted, the parent will need to make an application as part of next year's normal admission round and this will be processed within the normal allocation process. A place is never guaranteed at the academy and in the case of oversubscription, places are offered in accordance with the academy's oversubscription criteria. In short it would be delaying the application rather than an offer of a place.

*A summer born child is one born between 1 April to 31 August.

Brooklands Middle School

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school. The PAN for new Year 5 pupils is 150.

The LA will consult with the governing board where it proposes to increase, decrease or keep the same PAN. Where the LA has set a PAN lower than the school's wishes, the school will submit an objection to the Schools Adjudicator, where appropriate.

The governing board will communicate with the LA where the admission of additional children would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Oversubscription criteria

The LA is responsible for determining admissions arrangements for the school. The oversubscription criteria is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and compliant with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. This means that the oversubscription criteria will not unfairly disadvantage, whether directly or indirectly, any child based on a protected characteristic or economic disadvantage.

In the event that there are more applicants than available places, the LA will apply the following oversubscription criteria, in order of priority given:

1. LAC and previously LAC, including those who have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Pupils with siblings* attending Brooklands at the time of admission;
3. Other pupils living in the catchment area;
4. Children of any staff member employed at Brooklands School who the school reasonably considers have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is demonstrable skill shortage and/or have two or more years' service at the time of application.
5. 'Very exceptional' medical grounds;
6. Children who have spent a significant amount of time (3 years or more) in a lower school in Leighton Buzzard, Linslade, Hockliffe or outlying villages such as but not exclusively Stanbridge, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray.
7. Any other children.

All pupils who have named the school in their EHC plan will be admitted.

Where two applications cannot otherwise be separated, the LA will follow a fair, clear and effective 'tie-breaker' procedure by allocating the place to the pupil who lives closest to school. This is determined by straight line distance from the Headteacher's office to the child's home address.

***Definition of sibling**

For the purpose of this policy a sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission. In the scenario where one twin or a child from multiple birth has an EHCP, the other twin or children from multiple birth will be considered as a sibling once the school named on the EHCP has been finalised.

Catchment areas

The point within the school grounds from which the school will measure any distance or radii is the Headteacher's office. This point will be used to determine the school's catchment area. This will be measured using the child's primary address.

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

Children of staff

Where oversubscribed, priority will be given to children for whom staff members have parental responsibility, where the staff member has been employed by the school for two or more years at the time at which the application was made, and/or where the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Trustees of the school are included in the staff criteria with regard to admissions for children.

Equal opportunities

The LA 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.

1. Consultation, determination and publication

Consultation

The LA will consult with the governing board on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements. Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. The LA will consult with the governing board on admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if no changes have been made in that time.

Determination and publication of admissions arrangements

The school will publish a link to the LA's full proposed admission arrangements and the contact details of the individual responsible for admissions liaison on its website. The governing board will address any complaints about the proposed admissions arrangements to the School's Adjudicator.

Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year on an annual basis, even when no changes to the arrangements have been made.

A link to the finalised admission arrangements will also be published on the school website by 15 March in the determination year, and will continue to display them for the whole offer year.

Any objections to the admission arrangements will be directed to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

2. Applications and offers

Applications

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
- Their 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 LA will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary.

Offers

All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day, where this date falls on a weekend or bank holiday.

Where the school is oversubscribed, the LA will rank applications in accordance with its determined arrangements, and the qualifying scheme will ensure that only one offer will be made per child by the LA.

An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within the allocated time, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application. Where an offer has not been responded to within the designated time frame, the LA will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and will explain that the offer will be withdrawn if they do not. 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.

The headteacher will assist the LA 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.

For children of UK service professionals and crown servants, 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, where one is available.
- The application must be accompanied with an official letter confirming the relocation date.
- The address at which the child will live will be used when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria – a Unit or quartering address must be used where this is requested by the child's parent.
- The application will not be refused on the grounds of the child not currently living in the area or not currently having an intended address, 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.

The school must admit all children who have an EHC plan where the school is named. Children with SEND who do not have an EHC plan will be treated equally to all other applicants in the admissions process. This includes children who may need extra support or reasonable adjustments to be made. The details of the school's SEND provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and SEN Information Report.

3. In-year admissions

The school follows a slightly different process for in-year admissions than admissions at the start of the academic year as it is its own admission authority for in-year admissions. Please see our separate policy for in-year admissions.

4. Waiting lists

For admissions at the start of the academic year, the school will operate a waiting list which is maintained until 31 December on year of entry. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order set out in the oversubscription criteria. When additional children are placed on the waiting list, the list will be re-ordered in line with the oversubscription criteria – no pupil will be prioritised based on when their name was added to the list.

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

Parents may request that their child is placed on the waiting list if they are not successful in receiving a place. Where a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

For in-year admissions, if there is a waiting list for that year, the child will be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available, or the child finds a new school setting. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order as admissions at the start of the year – when a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

If a child on the waiting list is offered a position at the school, the parents will be notified by letter and will have the option of accepting or rejecting the place within 28 days.

5. Admissions appeals

The governing body will be aware of, and assist the LA where relevant with regard to, the below admissions appeals procedure.

Informing of appeals

When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent by the LA 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 LA 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. The clerk is responsible for assigning members of the appeals panel; however, they will not assign the following disqualified persons:

- A member of the LA
- A member or former member of the governing board of the school
- An employee at the LA or governing board of the school, other than a teacher or TA
- Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the LA, school or LA who may not act impartially
- Any person who has not attended training required by the LA arranging the appeals panel

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 LA, 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.

Members of the appeals panel will receive travel and subsistence allowances where applicable, and will be compensated for any loss of earnings or expenses.

The rate of payment is set by the LA and has due regard to the recommendations of the remuneration panel.

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

The LA will indemnify the members of the appeals panel against any legal costs and expenses they incur in connection with any decision taken in good faith whilst acting as a member of the appeals panel.

Appeals hearings

The LA will publish an appeal timetable on their website by 28 February each year. 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.

The LA 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 LA 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 LA.
- Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
- Case for the appellant(s).
- Questioning by the LA and panel.
- Summing up by the LA.
- 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 LA 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 LA 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.

The final decision and accompanying reasons will be communicated in writing to the appellant, LA 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 LA 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 Local Government Ombudsmen.