

# Mercia Primary Academy Trust



## Admission Arrangements/Policy Academic Year 2025-2028

### Policy Status and Review

<b>Date:</b>	<b>October 2024</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>September 2027</b>
<b>Signed by Director:</b>	<b>Garry Hirons</b>
<b>Date Signed:</b>	<b>11/12/2024</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 is 30

Flax Hill - Year 3 class in academic year is 75

Lakeside - Reception class in academic year 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 must be submitted **by midnight on 15 January of the year of admission**. 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.

### **Oversubscription Criteria:**

- 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.

5. Other children arranged in order of priority according to how near their home addresses are to the main gate of the school, determined by a straight-line measurement as calculated by the local authority's geographical information system.

Where it is not possible to accommodate all children applying for places within a particular category then the Trust 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).

### **Tie break**

In every criteria, distance from home to school will be the deciding factor. In the event that more than one child has an equal right to an available place the place will be offered by random allocation.

### **Additional Notes**

- Children in care means children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the

Children Act 1989 defines a special guardianship order as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- Parents/carers have two weeks to respond to an offer of a school place. If an acceptance is not received it may be assumed that a place is no longer required and the offer may be withdrawn.
- Parents who share responsibility for the care of their child are expected to reach agreement to a school placement between them. If conflicting applications are received or the admissions team is made aware of a dispute between parents all applications will be placed on hold and will not be processed until written agreement is provided from both parents or a Court Order is obtained confirming which application has priority.
- When stating your choice of school, you must give the child's permanent address at the time of application. The address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of your child must not be quoted as the home address.
- If the child lives at more than one address Monday to Friday (for example due to a separation) the address used should be where the child lives most of the time during the school week. Only one address can be used. If the child lives at two addresses, the Trust will decide which address to use based on where the child spends the majority of their time.
- The local authority 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 and provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS address point data.
- The requirement for the local authority to meet the infant class size legislation may result in the refusal of catchment area or sibling applications where a class has already reached its limit of 30 pupils. However, as an exception, the Trust will give careful consideration to offering places above the published admission number to applications from children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted even when there are no other vacant places.

### **Waiting lists**

For applications for Reception places, waiting lists will be kept until the 31 December of the year of admission 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<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August) 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. For example, for children due to start school in September 2025 where the parent wishes the child to delay admission until 2026, parents must submit their requests well before 15 January 2025. 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.

### **Right of appeal for Reception / Year 3 places**

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 of the year of admission to ensure they will be heard before the end of July of the year of admission..

### **Late Applications**

Application forms received after the closing date will be considered alongside those applicants who applied on time wherever possible. Where it is not practicable because places have already been allocated, or are shortly to be allocated, then late applicants will be considered only after those applicants who applied by the published closing date. A late application does not affect the right of appeal or the right to be placed on a school's waiting list.

### **Repeat Applications**

Parents do not have the right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Trust has accepted a second

application from the appellant because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission.

### “In-Year Transfer”

Parents or carers seeking to transfer to a Mercia Primary Academy Trust School may make an application using the appropriate application form. This application will be processed in line with the procedure outlined in the determined admission arrangements and parents and carers need to be aware that any date set for joining the new school may be after the next term or half term holiday and those parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child continues to receive appropriate education in the interim.

### 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.

### Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Changes	Reasons for Alterations
V2	Jan 2022	Added a range of formats.	Accessibility
V3	Jan 2022	Updated information and agreed with LA	Accessibility
V4	Nov 2022	Updated name of policy	In line with local authority
	Sept 2024	Changes of date. Change of ‘local authority’ measures to Trust	New academic years Trust are the admitting authority not eh LA