



# Policy for Admissions



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### 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the academies within the Trust
- Set out the Trust’s 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 advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

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

As an academy, 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 the school’s normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

**Looked-after children**, as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989, 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 (defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order (defined in section 14A of the Children Act 1989)

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

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

A **parent** is any individual who holds parental responsibility, as defined under the Children Act 1989, or any person who has care of a child, where the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after that child.

#### **4. How to apply**

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by Norfolk Local Authority. You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools/academies, in rank order.

You will receive an offer for a school/academy place directly from Norfolk Local Authority.

Please note, pupils already attending our nursery will not transfer automatically into the main school. 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. For applications outside the normal admissions round, we ask parents to consult with the academy Headteacher.

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
- The headteacher's 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 at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

#### **6. Allocation of places**

##### **6.1 Published admission number (PAN)**

The academies in the Trust have an agreed admission number as set out as follows: -

Academy	Admission number	
	Nursery	Reception
Blenheim Park		22
Greenpark Academy	56	60
Reffley Academy	50	60

## 6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the academy is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the academy receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order, until all places are filled.

1. Highest priority will be given to children with an Education Health Care Plan naming a trust academy.
2. Children in public care who are due to start school.
3. Children who are due to start school, living in the area served by the academy, who have a sibling attending the academy at the time of admission.
4. Children who are due to start school, living in the area served by the academy without siblings at the academy.
5. Children who are due to start school, living outside the area served by the academy, who have a sibling attending the academy at the time of their admission.
6. Children who are due to start school, living outside the area served by the academy, without siblings at the academy.

## 6.3 Tie break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the Trust will use the distance between the academy and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the academy.

Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the academy's front gates on:

Academy	Address
Blenheim Park Academy	Lancaster Road Sculthorpe Fakenham Norfolk NR21 7PX
Greenpark Academy	9-11 Wensum Way, King's Lynn PE30 2RE
Reffley Academy	Reffley Lane, King's Lynn PE30 3SF

For the purposes of this policy, a child's home address is defined as the place where they live and sleep for the majority of nights in a normal school week, with their parent(s).

If a child lives in different properties (shared care), parents must provide the address where the child lives for the majority of the week. In cases of equal shared care, both parents must agree which address should be used on the application. For applications made in the normal round, if there is no agreement, the local authority will decide which address will be used.

Where the distance between 2 children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be independently verified.

The Trust's random allocation process is as follows: - drawing random sealed envelopes with the name of one child per envelope, numbers assigned to pupils will be drawn from an electronic randomiser.

#### **6.4 Waiting list**

After submitting an application, if a place isn't offered, your child's name is automatically added to the Local Authority waiting list for the oversubscribed academy until 31 December 2026.

Where places become available, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria outlined in section 6.2. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received, or when their name was added to the list.

Under the School Admissions Code, looked-after children, previously-looked after children, and those allocated a place at the academy in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol (see section 6.6 below) must take precedence over those on the waiting list.

#### **6.5 Children below compulsory school age**

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

Parents may defer their child's entry to the academy 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 may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

#### **6.6 Fair Access Protocol**

We participate in Norfolk Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure 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 and before anyone is considered from the waiting list. Eligibility for the Fair Access Protocol does not limit a parent's right to make an in-year application to the academy for their child. Any application will be processed in accordance with the usual in-year admission procedures (see section 7).

#### **6.7 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. The exception to this is where 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, in certain cases where: -

- the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13) apply
- 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 the pupil 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 listing the school.

## **6.8 Children of UK service personnel and crown servants**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, will be allocated a place in advance of the family arriving in the area, provided a place is available and the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date.

We will use the address at which the child will live when applying our oversubscription criteria, provided the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. Alternatively, the unit or quartering address will be used as the child's home address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria, where this is requested by a parent.

## **6.9 Withdrawing an offer of a place**

We will not withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

Where a parent has not responded to the offer, we will give them a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not respond.

If an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, we will consider the application afresh and a right of appeal will be offered if an offer is refused.

We will not withdraw an offer of a place once a child has started at our school except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In these circumstances, we will consider the length of time that the child has been at the school before deciding whether to withdraw the place.

## **7. In-year admissions**

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round via the following link:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-admissions/moving-schools>

As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHCP plans name the academy will be admitted. Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

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

## **8. Appeals**

If your child's application for a place at one of the academies within the Trust is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals (see Appendix 1). If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address: [janet.mcgahren@admtrust.org.uk](mailto:janet.mcgahren@admtrust.org.uk)

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors annually. Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the Board of Directors will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the Trust's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.

Consultation will be for a minimum of 6 weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before the arrangement are to apply.

## Appendix 1: Ad Meliora Trust Academy Admission Appeals

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#### 1. Overview

The trust board is the admission authority for the academies within the Trust and is responsible for organising admission appeals.

Appeals for a transfer admission round (admission to Reception classes) must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

Appeals in respect of in year admissions must be heard within 30 school days of the date of the appeal being lodged with the academy.

#### 2. Rights of parents

Parents have the right to say which school/academy they would prefer their child to go to. This is not the same as having the right to choose which school/academy their child goes to.

The Board of Directors for the Trust is responsible for admissions and must offer a child/children a place at the academy unless they can show that doing this will harm the quality of education they provide or make it less efficient. The legal phrase for this is: *"That to do so will prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources."*

The Directors of the Trust have agreed that there should be a limit to the number of pupils that can be accommodated at the academy or in an individual classroom. It is up to the Appeal Panel at an appeal to decide if this limit is reasonable.

If an application for a place is turned down, parents have the right to appeal against the decision at an independent Appeal Panel.

If the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, the appeal will be made to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Parents do not have the right to appeal for an academy if a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools/academies.

Parental right to an appeal is set out in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

### 3. Appeal panels

Panels are set up under Schedule 24 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. They are made up of either three or five people selected as follows:

1	At least one lay member – someone who is not directly connected with the Trust, or with any of the academies within the Trust, unless as a volunteer.
2	At least one person with knowledge of experience of education - someone who has experience in education; or who is familiar with schools/academies in Norfolk; or who is a parent of a child at a school/academy (though they cannot be parents of a pupil at the academy concerned in the appeal)
3	The remaining panel member(s) will be from either of the above categories.

The law says that Panels must be independent, for example: -

- They are not paid.
- They do not report to, nor are they responsible to, the Trust Board of Directors.
- They must work within the national statutory Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals.
- Members do not sit on panels where they have a conflict of interest.
- The work of the panel is monitored by the Council on Tribunals.
- Parents and education representatives are not present when a panel makes its decisions.
- The decision of the panel is binding on both the Trust and the parents.

The panel will be supported by a trained clerk. The clerk is not a member of the panel. Their role is to:

- explain the basic procedures to parents/guardians and deal with any questions they may have.
- make sure that the facts are presented.
- make sure that the appeal runs smoothly.
- be an independent source of advice on the way the appeal is run.
- write notes of the meeting, decisions and reasons.
- tell all parties of the panel's decision.

### 4. Appeal panel powers

The appeal panel can either refuse or allow the appeal. The panel cannot -

- attach any conditions if it allows the appeal.
- hear complaints or wider objections about local admission policies and practice.
- make the Trust board change the position on the waiting list for the academy.

### 5. Hearing preparation

At least seven days before the appeal meeting a full set of papers will be sent out. These will include -

- The Headteacher's case for why a place cannot be offered.
- The parental appeal form and/or letter (appendix 3)
- Any relevant correspondence
- Any additional information from parents to support the appeal.

This information is sent to the -

- panel
- Headteacher
- Parent(s)
- Clerk.

Parents are required to provide all evidence they wish the panel to consider.



## 6. Attendance

The following people are expected to attend the hearing: -

- The panel
- A Clerk (appointed by the Board of Directors)
- The Headteacher (or representative)
- Parents – a friend/representative can support parents.

## 7. Appeal meeting

The following process takes place: -

- 1) The members of the panel will be introduced and the Chair will explain what is going to happen.
- 2) Stage 1: - the panel will investigate whether the leader of the academy has good reasons for not giving a place. The following process takes place: -

Order	What happens
1	The Chair of the panel will open the meeting and undertake introduction
2	A representative from the academy presents the case. This will be the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher
3	The panel invite parents to ask questions.
4	The panel ask questions. Note the panel can ask questions at any point in the meeting.
5	The panel invite the academy representative and parents to make any further points they wish to make.
6	The chair of the panel will ask parents and the academy representative to leave the room so that the panel can make their decision.
7	The panel make one of the following decisions: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The academy has not proven its case. If there is only one appeal, then the place will be given. If there is more than one appeal the panel will decide how many children could be admitted. The panel will allow appeals up to that number, following the Trust's admissions criteria. The appeals of the other parents will be considered in the second stage.</li><li>• The academy has proven its case that the academy has reached its intake limit and that the admission of one more child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. A place will not be given.</li><li>• If the panel agree that the academy has proved its case, stage two starts.</li></ul>

- 3). Stage 2: - this stage is for the panel to consider whether the details in the case of the parent(s) is/are strong enough to override the grounds established by the academy.

There may be appeals from a number of parents for places at the same academy. The academy case will be the same for all the appeals and put to the panel once. All the parents involved are invited to attend this part of the meeting first.

Order	What happens
1	The panel will introduce stage 2 and outline the purpose.
2	If there is only one person appealing – the parent will be invited to verbally present the reasons why they wish for their child to attend the academy. If there is more than one appeal – each parent will be given a different time slot to speak to the panel. Each case is heard in private.
3	The academy representative can ask questions.
4	The panel can ask questions. Note: the panel can ask questions at any point in this stage.

5	The academy representative can respond to any questions/points raised.
6	Parents are invited to sum their case up.
7	Parents and the academy representative leave so that the panel can make a decision.
8	The panel and clerk meet in private to make their decisions. Once the decisions have been made, the clerk will notify the Trust Business Manager who will let parents and the academy leader know the outcome as soon as possible via telephone or email (typically the same day). Parents will receive written confirmation of the decision. The decision letter will record the reasons for the decision made by the panel.

### **8. Right of appeal**

The decision of the panel is binding. There is no appeal against the decision of the appeal panel.

If there are significant and material changes in circumstances e.g., the family move into the catchment area, or a medical condition has arisen since the application, parents have the right to re-apply for admission within the same academic year. If there is not a place, the parent has the right to a fresh appeal.

If the parent considers that the appeal meeting was not properly conducted (maladministration), the parent has the right to complain to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. This is not a right of appeal against the decision, as the Ombudsman can only investigate complaints about maladministration on the part of the appeal panel.

### **9. Useful documentation**

The Department for Education have produced a booklet “Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals: A Guide for Parents” which is available from [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications) or by phoning 0845 6022260 and quoting reference 00160-2008BKT-EN.

Parents can contact the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd, which is an independent national advice centre. They provide clear advice and information particularly for parents on admission appeals through a national advice line and a wide range of publications. Especially helpful is a booklet called “Appealing for a School”. ACE can be contacted on 0300 0115 142 Monday – Friday (10.00am –1.00pm). Their website address is [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk).

## Appendix 2: Acknowledgement of intention to appeal



I wish to acknowledge receipt of your intention to appeal against the refusal to admit «Childs name» to Blenheim Park Academy/Greenpark Academy/Reffley Academy.

Your appeal has now been recorded and will remain live until it has either been 'heard' or subsequently withdrawn by you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I enclose a form for you to complete. Please can you use the form to set out your reasons for appealing against the refusal to admit.

Please can you return the form by XXXXXXXXXXXX. The form will help the appeal panel understand your reasons for the appeal.

A hearing will be arranged within 30 days of the appeal being lodged. You will be invited to the meeting and be given an opportunity to verbally give further reasons to support your appeal.

The Ad Meliora Trust Central Administrative team will arrange and organise the hearing. You will receive a letter inviting you to attend the meeting and any other relevant documents (including the Headteacher's Statement as to why your application has been refused).

You will be given two weeks prior notice of the date, time and venue at which it will be held.

**FURTHER INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF AN APPEAL**

(PLEASE COMPLETE THE FIRST PART OF THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS USING BLACK INK)

FULL NAME OF CHILD	
DATE OF BIRTH	
NAME OF PARENT(S)	
ADDRESS	
CONTACT TELEPHONE	
CONTACT EMAIL	
CURRENT SCHOOL/ACADEMY	
<u>ALLOCATED SCHOOL/ACADEMY</u>	
PREFERRED SCHOOL/ACADEMY	

I have given notice of my intention to appeal against the decision of the Academy not to comply with my wish for my child to attend my preferred academy stated above. The reasons for my appeal are detailed below. I certify the details on this form are an accurate account of this child's current situation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please detail below your reasons for your appeal. You may use or attach separate sheets if required.

My reasons for appeal are -

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Continue overleaf as necessary