



Admissions policy

Palace Fields Primary School

Approved by:	Palace Fields Governing Body	Date: 11 th October 2021
Last reviewed on:	March 2024	
Next review due by:	May 2025	

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- › Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- › Set out the school'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, the school is required by its 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 are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

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

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

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

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

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following 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.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your 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.

Any requests should be made in writing to the Head of School; outlining the circumstances surrounding the request.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in 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 Head of School's and Executive Principal'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 Admission number

The school has an agreed admission number of 30 pupils for entry in reception.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

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

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

In the event that the school 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.

Priority 1 Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school.

Priority 2 Priority will next be given to children in the Nursery at Palace Fields Primary School at the time of application who wish to transfer.

Priority 3 Where there are professionally supported medical reasons, or professionally supported exceptional social reasons why a child should attend the school. Written evidence from a Doctor, Social Worker, Health Visitor, Housing officer, Borough School Attendance Officer or other relevant Council Officer will be required at the time of application. (Refugees and Asylum Seeking children may be included under this criterion, depending on individual circumstances.)

Priority 4. Applicants who have an older sibling who will be attending Palace Fields Primary School, at the intended time of admission at the intended time of admission. Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, foster siblings, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, who is living as part of the same family unit at the same address, Monday to Friday. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former pupils of the school.

Priority 5. Remaining places will be offered on the basis of proximity of the child's home address to the school. The point within the school to be used in any distance calculation will be the main entrance to the school building. The child's home address is defined as excluding any business address, relatives or childminder's address and must be the child's normal place of residence. If there is a genuine equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, the address that will be used will be the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit for the child.

Any offer of a place under this criterion is conditional on the child being resident at the address provided, on the relevant date. Parents have a responsibility to notify the school and the Local Authority of any change of address. The address to be used for the initial allocation of places will be the child's address at the closing date for applications.

6.3 Tie break and the admission of twins, triplets, other multiple births or siblings born in the same academic year

If the school becomes oversubscribed within any of priority categories 1 to 4, Subsequent categories will be used as a tiebreaker. Where two or more applicants share the priority for a place, e.g. where two children live equidistant from the school, and where there is only one place remaining, the child to be allocated will be selected by the drawing of lots. **(The drawing of lots will be supervised by an independent person at a minuted meeting of the school's admission panel.)**

Where a parent/carer applies for entry into the same year group for more than one child, and where one or more of those children have been offered a place and there are no remaining places available, then the remaining child/children will be treated as an excepted pupil (s) and offered a place under limited exceptional circumstances.

6.4 Challenging behaviour

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

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

6.6 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Halton Borough Council'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.

7. In-year admissions

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

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

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.3 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:

Palace Fields Primary School, Badger Close, Palace Fields, Runcorn, WA7 2QW or emailed to lconnor@pfp.theheathfamily.org.uk

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

8. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

Palace Fields Primary School, Badger Close, Palace Fields, Runcorn, WA7 2QW or emailed to lconnor@pfp.theheathfamily.org.uk

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.