Orchard Primary School

ADMISSIONS POLICY

for September 2028

Responsibility	CEO
Date of last review	October 2026
Date of next review	October 2027
Approved by	Trust Board
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Version Control	Vs1

Orchard Primary School is an Academy, part of Quest Learning Trust and the academy trust is the admissions authority with powers to decide the arrangements for admitting children.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council's Information for Parents Booklet on Admissions and Transfers to Schools and is available to view online at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions. **Online applications for school places should also be made through this link.**

A copy of the booklet is also available to view in schools, libraries and at the Worcestershire Hub.

The Information for Parents booklet contains full details on the application and allocation process. **Parents/carers are advised to read the booklet prior to making an application.**

Schools with nursery provision:

Where a child is enrolled in the pre-school at Orchard Primary School they are not automatically entitled to a place in the main school. Parents must complete an application for a place in Reception.

Published Admission Number:

The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 children in Reception.
In accordance with legislation, a Child with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be offered a place at the school named in the Plan.

Admissions Criteria – in order of priority

i) 'Looked-after' and 'previously looked-after' children, including those who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

ii) Siblings (see below for definition) of pupils attending the school and living within the catchment area of the school. In order to qualify for a place on the grounds of a sibling attending the school, the sibling must already be attending the school at the time of application and still be attending at the time of admission. Copies of catchment area maps, if required are available from the LA, or can be viewed in schools. To find the catchment school for a postcode visit https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch

In the event of a school catchment area change being approved, pupils who would still have a sibling connection (see below for definition) at the time of admission and who are living at the same address in the previous catchment area for a school, (but not within the revised catchment area), at the time the change was approved will be considered as living within the catchment area.

iii) Pupils living within the catchment area of the school. Copies of catchment area maps, if required are available from the LA, or can be viewed in schools. To find the catchment school for a postcode visit https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch

iv) Pupils living outside of the catchment area but who would still have a sibling connection (see below for definition) at school at the time of admission. In order to qualify for a place on the grounds of a sibling attending the school, the sibling must already be attending the school at the time of application and still be attending at the time of admission.

v) Children of all staff at the mainstream school, where that member of staff has been employed for two or more years, or is recruited to fill a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

vi) Pupils who live nearest to the school by the shortest straight line distance. The measurement will be taken using the GeoCode Points for each property and the GeoCode point for the School. The academy trust will utilise the Local Authority software package called Arcview GIS to determine distance. Ordnance Survey supplies the co-ordinates that are used to plot an address within this system. (In the event of equi-distance applicants, any place will be allocated by random selection (lottery). Someone totally independent of the academy trust will supervise this process).

Where an **Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** has been agreed naming the school on the Plan: where places required by such children are known before the Admissions Committee meets, the number of pupils with EHCPs naming this school will be deducted from the school places available to be offered. Such pupils are automatically offered places at the school and Worcestershire County Council and the academy trust will consider each application for a pupil with an EHCP individually. A response of concern may be raised prior to the naming of the

school on an EHCP if they consider that provision will be inadequate for the child's needs or if there is evidence that to admit the applicant would have a detrimental impact on the learning of other pupils.

Definitions

'Looked-after' and 'previously looked-after' children, includes those who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A 'looked-after child' has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of the local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (eg children with foster parents) at the time of making the application to the school. A 'previously looked-after child' is a child who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, child arrangement order or special guardianship order and includes those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

A sibling, as well as brother and sister includes half-siblings, adopted children, step-siblings or a child of the parent/carer's partner living in the same household. They must also be living at the same home address. Children who are brought together as a family by a civil partnership and who are living at the same address, are also considered to be siblings.

In the event that one or more but not all children from a multiple birth can be allocated a place(s), all of the children from that multiple birth will be admitted even if this takes the school over PAN. These children are exceptions to the Infant Class Size legislation.

Late Applications

The Trust has agreed to accept late applications, within the time-frame set out in the co-ordinated scheme, and treat them as being on time, only in the following circumstances;

a) where a family have just moved address, and independent supporting evidence is provided;

b) where it is agreed by the Trust, that individual circumstances apply and the delay was reasonable given the circumstances of the case;

In each case supporting documentary evidence will be required. In all other circumstances, or if the application is not received until after 28th February 2028, late applications (including late changes to on time applications) will receive a lower priority, and will only be considered after the applications received (or deemed to be) on time.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists are maintained by the School. If your application for a place is unsuccessful, your child's name will be automatically added to the school's waiting list which is maintained until 31st December 2028. Parents will need to reapply at the start of the following term if they wish to be included on the new waiting list for that term.

Admission of children into Reception

Admission authorities must provide for the admission of children in the September following their fourth birthday. Where a place has been offered for a child at a school that child is entitled

to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. The child's parents can defer the date their child is admitted but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. 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.

Fair Access Protocol

As part of the Worcestershire Fair Access Protocol, all schools with Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 classes can be required to exceed the published admission number to admit pupils covered by the Protocol. The protocol can be accessed here: School admissions policies | Worcestershire County Council

'In Year' transfer arrangements

The procedure for in-year admissions for Worcestershire residents is as follows:

Parents/Carers must complete a Worcestershire on-line application. Those who are unable to apply on-line are advised to contact School Admissions for assistance.

In addition to the on-line application, parents must arrange for their child's current or most previous school to complete the Education History Form. This is available to download from the Worcestershire County Council website and must be either uploaded to their application or forwarded to School Admissions in order for them to process the application.

Further information can be found at https://emsi.worcestershire.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

Preference order is not taken into account when applying admission criteria as the law requires all preferences to be treated equally.

Parents or carers seeking to transfer to a school need to be aware that they are responsible for ensuring their child continues to receive appropriate education in the interim.

Admission of Children outside of their normal age group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health, effectively in the year group below or above their chronological age group. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1.

The process is set out in full in documentation on the Worcestershire School Admissions website, Policy on Delayed and Accelerated Transfer. Parents wishing to apply for a place outside of the normal age group they should contact the school office to make this request in writing, trustees may require additional evidence from parents to support their request.

The Trust must make the decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The Trust will request the headteacher of the school to take account of the parent's 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; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely in order

to reach a decision as to whether or not it is appropriate for the individual child to delay or accelerate their entry into school and be taught outside of their chronological age group.

Parental Responsibility and what is considered to be the Home Address

Home is defined as the only or main permanent residential address, at the closing date for applications, where the child usually resides and which is the usual address of the parent/carer with main responsibility for the child.

Where parents/carers have shared responsibility, the child's home address will usually be considered to be that of the parent/carer with whom the child lives for the majority of the school week (eg three or more days out of five Monday to Friday during term time). Where care is split equally, parent/carers must provide independent supporting documentary evidence to prove that care is equally split. In such cases the address used will be determined by random selection (lottery). Someone totally independent of Avonreach Academy Trust will supervise this process.

Where both parents have parental responsibility for a child, they should both be in agreement over the preferences expressed prior to the application being submitted. Failure to ensure agreement prior to submission, may result in a delay in any application being processed and in some instances, where agreement cannot be reached we may not be able to proceed until a legal resolution has been sought and the courts determine which parent can make the final decision on schooling.

If it is subsequently determined that agreement was not made prior to the application being submitted, it could result in the withdrawal of the offer of a place, if it is determined that the information supplied was misleading or fraudulent.

Appeals

The parents/carers of children who are unsuccessful in gaining a place at the school may appeal to the Avonreach Academy Trust who will organise an independent appeal panel. Worcestershire County Council Appeals Team, who are totally independent of Avonreach Academy Trust will supervise this process. Appeals should be lodged in writing with Avonreach Academy Trust within 20 school days from the national offer day.

Key Stage One Appeals subject to Infant Class Size Legislation

Department for Education (DfE) has suggested that admission authorities should make sure parents understand the nature and severity of the restrictions placed on Appeal Panels, when considering appeals for Key Stage One class size prejudice i.e. would mean the school would have to take qualifying measures (additional accommodation, reorganization or staffing) to comply with the legal duty to limit infant classes to 30 pupils for children in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**.

An appeal **WILL BE TURNED DOWN** unless 1 of the 3 clearly defined grounds set out below can be proven:

A) The child would have been offered a place if the admission arrangements (which are published in the "Information for Parents" book) had been properly implemented; or

B) The child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had not been contrary to mandatory provisions in the School Admissions Code and the SSFA 1998; and/or

C) The decision to refuse admission was not one which a *reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case. *i.e. it was 'beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker' or 'a decision which is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or of accepted moral standards that no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it' To reiterate the Appeal Panel can only consider these three aspects of any Appeal relating to Key Stage One class size prejudice admission. This advice has been given by the DfE to provide you with a more realistic view of the limits imposed on the Appeal Panel, and to avoid any misconceptions you may have concerning the appeal process. In other words your appeal will be lost unless you can prove one of the VERY limited grounds above.

Second Appeal

The Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals, Section 5 (page 23) covers the issue of second appeals for the same school in the same school year. "Appellants do not have the right to a second appeal for the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority accepts a second application because of a significant and material change in circumstances."

The information contained in this policy is correct at the time of going to press (October 2026) but minor amendments may be made without notice, for example to comply with new statutory requirements or due to circumstances beyond the control of Quest Learning Trust including information published by Worcestershire County Council.