The Woodlands Community Primary School

A member of the Community Academies Trust

Admissions Policy and Admission Arrangements 2028-2029

The governing body of **The Woodlands Community Primary** School applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced a new framework for school admissions as of September 2000. This policy conforms to the regulations that are set out in that Act and also further explained in the statutory School Admissions Code of Practice and the statutory Appeals Code of Practice.

Aims and objectives

We are an inclusive school that welcomes children from all backgrounds and abilities.

All 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 enforce the procedure set out below in order to determine whether a child is accepted or not. It is our wish to allow parents the right to have a place at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to the excess demand on the school places available.

The level of ability of a child or any special needs that s/he may have plays no part in the admissions policy of this school.

How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to our school

As our school is a community school, the school determines the admission arrangements in agreement with the LA. The LA is therefore the 'Admissions Authority' for our school. The regulations/dates for entry to each school, where the Admissions Authority is the LA, are published each year by the LA and all information is available on www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions. Parents can receive a copy of these regulations directly from the LA.

The LA publishes a composite admissions prospectus each year, which gives information about how parents can apply for a place in the school of their choice. Parents have a right to express a preference for the school of their choice and they should do so on the online application form. Expressing a preference does not, in itself, guarantee a place at that school. The LA notifies parents about the school place as soon as all the applications have been considered.

In this area, children enter school in the academic year they become five. There is one admissions date per year, early in September (i.e., at the start of the school year) and all pupils are admitted part time to begin with. Therefore, parents who would like their child to be admitted to this school during the year their child is five should ensure that they complete the online application form on www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

Admission to year groups other than Reception.

Applications can be made directly to the school. In the first instance it is advised that parents visit the school.

Oversubscription criteria

If the total number of preferences for admission to the school exceeds the school's published admission number (PAN) of 30, the following order of priority is used to allocate the available places.

1) Children in care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order), 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 school rather than any other school.

   Exceptional circumstances must relate to the 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 school rather than any other school.

   and

   Test 2: the child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend the 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 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 parent's 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 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 school will allocate the available places in accordance with the remaining criteria. If for instance, all the catchment area children cannot be accommodated, children who are resident within the catchment area will be arranged in order of priority according to the remaining criteria.

Additional notes

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the local authority or school.

Admissions for the normal age of entry are administered through a coordinated admission scheme and preferences for maintained schools will be processed centrally by the School Admissions and Transport Service at Staffordshire County Council. Each child will receive only one offer of a place at a Staffordshire school.

In accordance with legislation, children who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) that names the school as being the most appropriate to meet the child's needs must be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to other applicants.

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).

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supportive information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the school will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

On behalf of the school, 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 local authority 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.

The home address is considered to be the child's along with their parent/carer's main and genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e., where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than legal guardianship) the friends or relatives address will not be considered for allocation purposes.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week, parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

It is expected that parents will agree on school places before an application is made, and it may be necessary to request evidence from you to confirm that this is the case. The local authority is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the local authority immediately. Where there is a proposed house move taking place during the admissions process the school will only accept the revised address for purposes of allocation where parents/carers can provide documentary evidence of the move by 1 March 2028. It will be necessary for sufficient evidence of a permanent move to be provided by the applicant by this date before it will be taken into account for allocation purposes at the national offer date.

If a place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from the child's normal and permanent home address at the time of allocation of places then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

If there are a limited number of spaces available and we cannot distinguish between applicants using the criteria listed, such as in the case of children who live in the same block of flats, then the

child or children who will be offered the available spaces will be randomly selected. This process will be independently verified.

Deferred entry to reception class

Parents may request that their child be admitted to reception class on a part-time basis, or that their child be admitted to school later in the same academic year until the child reaches compulsory school age (i.e., beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday). The effect is that the place will be held for the child in reception and is not available to be offered to any other child within the same academic year in which it has been offered.

Before deciding whether to defer their child's entry to school, parents should visit the school to clarify how we cater for the youngest children in reception and how the needs of these children are met as they move up through the school.

Admission outside of the normal age group

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of summer born children may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group to reception rather than Year 1.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the governing body who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

Waiting lists

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria stated above and not based on the date their application was received. There will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date, they will be offered according to the child at the top of the waiting list.

The waiting list will operate until the cohort concerned leaves year 2 and parents will be written to each year to ask whether or not they wish their child's details to remain on the list.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at the school.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e., they can go up or down the list since each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the oversubscription criteria.

Children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the fair access protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Late applications

Preferences 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 preferences will be considered only after those that were made before this point.

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 school 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 admission" arrangements

Parents or carers seeking to be admitted may make an application directly to the school 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 in the case of transfers between local schools, any date set for joining the 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.

Admission appeals

If the LA do not offer a child a place at this school (for entry into Reception) or the school do not offer a place (into any other year group other than Reception), it is because to do so would prejudice the education of other children by allowing the numbers of children in the school to increase too much.

If parents wish to appeal against a decision to refuse entry, they can do so by applying to the LA. An independent appeals panel then meets to consider all appeals by parents who have been refused a place at our school and who wish to appeal against this decision. An appeals panel's decision is binding for all parties concerned. If the appeals panel decides that we should admit a child to our school, then we will accept this and continue to do all we can to provide the best education for all the children at our school. (Details of appeal arrangements are set out in the Code of Practice on School Admissions Appeals, which came into force in September 1999.)

The planned admission number

The planned admission number (PAN) is the number of children the school can accommodate as agreed annually by the governors. The standard number for our school is **30**. We keep this number under review and the governors will apply to change the number if circumstances allow.

Infant class size

We teach infant children (aged five to seven) in classes that have a maximum number of 30 children.

Induction

Parents are able to visit the school before making their choice and we hold open days for this each Autumn term.

Parents are invited to an evening meeting in May once places have been offered. A series of meetings for pupils & parents are arranged in June & July.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body or as required by changes to legislation / LA Policy.