Admissions Policy

2026 - 2027

Audience:	Parents REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
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Other related policies:	
Policy owner:	Calum Marriott, PMO
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Introduction to Five Spires Academy

Five Spires Academy (the School) is a primary academy located at Cherry Orchard, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9AN, and is part of REAch2 Academy Trust (the Trust).

The School is a one form entry school in Lichfield. The school opened as a new academy in September 2015 to meet the increasing demand for primary school places in Lichfield. There school serves from Nursery to Year 6. Five Spires Academy is a happy, thriving school that is proud to be part of our local community. We like to think of Five Spires as a family that embraces everyone in its community, from pupils and staff to governors, parents and carers. As a school, we live and breathe our school motto: Everyone Inspire, Everyone Aspire'. This message underpins everything that we do, be that in the classroom, on the sports field or in the wider school community.

More information about the School is available on its website: www.fivespiresacademy.co.uk

The Trust is the admission authority for all schools within the REAch2 family. The arrangements, set by the Trust are in accordance with the School Admissions Code and the school admission appeals code. The Trust's aim is to ensure all of its academies have simple, consistent admission arrangements that focus on serving the local community and reflect the Trust's vision and values.

The Trust has developed this policy in full compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Trust recognises and adheres to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, especially in relation to children with protected characteristics.

More information about the Trust is available on its website: www.reach2.org

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



Definitions & Interpretations

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

EHC Plan - An education, health and care (EHC) plan for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC Plans are prepared under the Children and Families Act 2014. They identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

In-Year Admission - An in-year admission application is one that is made outside of the normal admissions round, for example when a family moves house part way through a school year or is for admission into a year group other than Reception.

Oversubscribed – Having more applications than available places.

PAN – Stands for "published admission number" and is the number of pupils the school will admit in to Reception.

Parent - Means a natural or adoptive parent of the child, as well as a person who is not the natural or adoptive parent of the child, but who has care of the child, or parental responsibility for the child. This is the legal definition of a 'parent' in education law.

Statutory Maximum infant class size – The requirement in law that infant classes (i.e. classes in Reception year, year 1 and year 2 class) with a single school teacher are not permitted to contain more than 30 pupils, except in certain circumstances. Some children are deemed to be 'excepted pupils' as listed in the School Admissions Code

Home address – The address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is 'ordinarily resident'. This is generally, the address of the Parent. In some cases, children may be 'ordinarily resident' for the majority of the school week, including overnight, with another relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where the child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application will be processed on the basis of the address where the child resides for the majority of the school week and proof of residence and address arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer for the majority of the school week. Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be considered childcare arrangements, and the child will deemed to not be 'ordinarily resident' with that person. In all cases, we expect the adult with whom the child is 'ordinarily resident' receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

The exceptions to this rule are the children of UK Armed Forces service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in the area, for whom an application for admission may be made in advance of their move where it is accompanied by an official letter that confirms the intended relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address for the child.

Summer born children – Children born between 1 April and 31 August.

Policy In Detail

The published admission number (PAN) for Five Spires Academy is 30 pupils.

The School will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applications than this are received, the Trust will offer places at the School to all those who have applied.

Applications in the 'normal round' (that is the main cycle of applications for Reception places from the beginning of the school year) are administered on behalf of the Trust by Staffordshire County Council in accordance with the local coordinated scheme. Admission to primary and middle schools - Staffordshire County Council

Oversubscription criteria

When the School is oversubscribed (that is, there are more applications than places available), after the admission of any pupils with an EHC Plan that names the School, priority for admission will be given to those children based on the criteria set out below, in the order shown:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Children with one or more siblings in the School
3. Children of School staff fulfilling a skills shortage role
4. Other children, with priority for admission given to those whose home address (as defined by this policy) is the shortest distance from the School. Children in this criteria will be ranked in order of distance.

Definitions relating to the criteria

1. A 'looked after child' is one who is (a) in the care of a Local Authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of its social services functions, in England.

   A 'previously looked after child' is one who (a) was looked after in England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order, or (b) appears to have been in state care outside of England (i.e. in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider, whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society) but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

   Applications in this category may need to be supported by documentary evidence such as a signed letter from the child's current or former Social Worker confirming their status, and/or an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. In the case of children adopted from state care outside of England, evidence of having been in state care outside of England and of being adopted may be required, ideally accompanying the application.

   When considering the evidence provided, the DfE's current guidance will be followed. Where the Virtual School Head (VSH) at the Local Authority has already verified the child's status and LPS is able to confirm this with them, there will be no need for evidence to be provided with the application.

2. 'Siblings' – For applications made in the normal admission round a sibling means a brother or sister, legally adopted brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, foster brother or sister, or the

child of a parent's co-habiting partner; living in the same family unit in the same family household and address who attends the School at the date of application in any year group excluding the final year. Biological and legally adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year will also be treated as siblings irrespective of place of residence. Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings. For in-year applications a sibling is a brother, sister, legally adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school at the time of application and determination and with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission.

3. This criterion only applies in relation to staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, with a permanent contract to work predominantly at the School (not Trust employees in the REAch2 cluster or central teams). The application of this criterion will be subject to confirmation by an independent Trust non-executive that, on the evidence available, the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skills shortage. Staff must contact the School Headteacher when applying for a place under this criterion. The Headteacher will provide a letter to the Trust and Local Authority Admissions Team confirming the staff members' permanent employment. For the purposes of this criterion, 'children of School staff' is taken to include a son, daughter or step-son/daughter, or child who is adopted or fostered or for whom a special guardianship order is in place, in all cases providing they are living at the same address as the parent who is employed at the School

4. "Distance" is defined/measured as a straight line distance between an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. Distances are measured using the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS)

Tie Breaker
Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category '4' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the School is the same. This process will be independently verified. If a tie-break is required in earlier categories to decide who has priority for admission between two children, distance from the school will be used to decide as measured above.

Where multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family are tied for the final place, we will admit them all, as permitted by the infant class size rules and exceed our PAN.

Deadline for Applications
Applications for admission into Reception as part of the normal admissions round must be submitted by 15th January. Applications received by the Local Authority after this date may be considered as late applications.

Children with an EHC Plan
Children with an education health and care plan (EHC plan) are admitted to the School under separate statutory procedures managed by the child's Local Authority, and not under this policy.

Where a child with an EHC plan which names the School will be admitted in the 'normal admission round', they will be allocated places in Reception Year before other applications are processed, which will reduce the number of available places within the PAN. At all other times, the child will be admitted even where this means exceeding the PAN.

Deferred entry for Reception places

Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child takes up the place, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Children reach compulsory school age on 31 August, 31 December or 31 March – whichever of those three dates follows (or falls on) the child's 5th birthday.

Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Admission of children outside their normal age group, including for 'summer-born' children

Parents of summer born children who are not yet of compulsory school age may request to delay their child's admission until the September after they turn 5. Those parents should apply for a place within the normal admissions round and follow the process below.

In all cases where parents want their child to be educated outside of their chronological age group, an application should be made in writing to the school office at the same time as the application for a place. This should explain why the parents wish for their child to be educated outside of their chronological age group and enclosing any evidence that supports it. Parents of summer born children who are not yet of compulsory school age should specify whether they wish the child to start school in Reception class or join their normal age group peers in Year 1.

Parents will be notified of the decision on their application for admission outside of normal age group in writing once it has been made. This decision will be based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child. The committee will take in account all of the factors set out in paragraph 2.19 School Admissions Code 2021. This decision as to whether or not to agree or refuse the request is separate to the decision on whether a place is granted. If a request is refused, parents will be notified in writing with the reasons provided; there will be no right to a statutory appeal, however, a complaint may be submitted under the school's complaints policy.

We recommend that parents contact the school to discuss admission within the admission round of the child's chronological age group. This enables the school to assess the best interests of the child and discuss how the curriculum may be tailored to meet their needs within the chronological age group.

Children at the School's Nursery

Parents should note that children who attend the School's nursery will not automatically transfer to Reception Year at the School. An application for admission to Reception Year must be made in the normal way.

Waiting Lists

Where the school receives more applications for Reception places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until 31st December after which parents must re-apply for a place in Year 1. The waiting list will be maintained by the Local Authority and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria (not by date in which the child's name was added). Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

Appeals

Parents have a statutory right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at the School for their child. Admission appeal panel hearings are conducted strictly in accordance with procedure and criteria set out in the School Admission Appeals Code 2022, which is accessible on the Department for Education's website: **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code**

For more information on how to lodge an appeal please visit Admission Appeals - Staffordshire County Council

In-year Admissions

To make an in-year application, please visit In-year school admissions: Overview - Staffordshire County Council

Fair Access Protocol

Five Spires Academy participates in Staffordshire County Council's fair access protocol. For a copy of Staffordshire County Council's fair access protocol, please visit – In year fair access protocol - October 2023 - Staffordshire County Council

Withdrawing Places

In certain circumstances the Trust may decide to withdraw a place offered if one of the following circumstances occurs:

- Where a parent has not responded to the offer of a place, even after chasing;
- Where fraudulent or intentionally misleading information is used as part of the application; or
- Where the offer has been made in error.