



ADMISSIONS POLICY

**Whitchurch Infants and Nursery CofE
Academy**

Admissions 2027-2028

Admissions Policy

Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy welcomes children from all backgrounds, faiths, and those of no faith. The Governors of the Academy are committed to developing an inclusive school that reflects the diversity of the local community.

As well as being an inclusive academy, as a Church of England school we have a distinctive ethos and character that reflects the teaching of the Bible and Christian values. All parents applying for a place at our Church of England Academy are asked to respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. It is hoped that all children who attend our Church of England Academy will be able to participate (as appropriate) in the religious life of the school (including collective worship and religious education). This does not affect the right of parents who are not Christian to apply for a place. Indeed, through our commitment to inclusivity, families from other faiths and no faith are warmly welcomed.

For admissions to Reception application must be made through the home local authority (Shropshire Council for Shropshire residents) by 15th January in the academic year prior to which your child is due to start school. All applications received by this date will be considered and parents will be informed by the home local authority on 16th April (or next working day) if they have been allocated a place for their child. Please see the Parents Guide to Education booklet on the website, www.shropshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions and also for details of the admission arrangements.

Please also note that an application must be made for all children who wish to join Reception, even those that already attend the Academy nursery.

Admissions Criteria:

Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan, which names the school which the child should attend because their needs can be met best by that particular school, will be offered places before other children.

The admission of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs/Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are dealt with by a separate procedure. These children will be admitted to the Academy if our school is named on the statement/EHCP. This is a statutory entitlement under S.324 of the Education Act 1996.

After which places are allocated up to the Published Admission Number of 90 according to an agreed set of criteria in strict order of priority as shown below.

1. Looked After Children

'Looked after children' or children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order¹ including those who appeared to the admission authority Whitchurch CE Infant & Nursery Academy to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

2. Very exceptionally, priority may be given to a child who has a particular health reason requiring them to attend a specific school. This will only be allowed if parents/carers can provide written evidence from a medical professional that in the view of the admission authority confirms that attending that particular school is essential to the medical well-being of the child. The Trust reserves the right to contact medical professionals to ascertain the relevance of the medical condition.
3. Children living inside the designated catchment area will have next priority of admission. If there are not enough places for all the children in the catchment area, then the following criteria for admission will apply in order:
 - 3a. Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area who have a sibling at the Academy on the day they are due to start school.
 - 3b. Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area who have a sibling at Whitchurch CE Junior Academy on the day they are due to start school.
 - 3c. After that, priority will be given to other children who live within the catchment area.
4. If there are spaces still available after the above criteria have been applied, children living outside the designated catchment area will be offered places according to the following criteria:
 - 3a. Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area who have a sibling at the Academy on the day they are due to start school.
 - 3b. Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area who have a sibling at Whitchurch CE Junior Academy on the day they are due to start school.
 - 3c. After that, priority will be given to other children who live within the catchment area.

Each category will be rank ordered according to the distance from home to school as a straight-line measurement.

Notes: A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

¹ An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).

A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

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).

A sibling connection is defined as a brother or sister, step-brother or step-sister, half-brother or half-sister, living at the same address as part of the same family unit and of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 – 16 years). Fostered and adopted siblings are also included. Older siblings must be attending the Academy on the date the younger sibling is due to start there. However, cousins or other relatives who take up residence in a home in order to establish an 'in catchment area' address will not be given priority under the sibling criterion.

If a child lives with parents with shared responsibilities, each for part of the week, the 'home address' will be the one at which the child is resident for the greatest part of the school week. Where this is equally shared, the home address will be the one used when applying for child benefit.

For admissions purposes all distances are measured as a straight-line distance on a computerised mapping system between the home address and the nearest entrance gate of the relevant school by pinpointing their eastings and northings. The shortest distance being given highest priority. Where two addresses are within the same block of flats, the lowest number of flat nearest the ground floor will be deemed to be the nearest in distance.

In the event that two applications are exactly the same after all other criteria have been taken into account a tie breaker will be used. This will be by random allocation and overseen by an independent party not connected with the admissions process.

RECEPTION ADMISSIONS ONLY: If unsuccessful on allocation day, a child will automatically be added to the waiting list of their preferred school. Should a vacancy become available the highest ranked application held in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria will be offered a place at the school by Shropshire Council on behalf of the trust.

RECEPTION ADMISSIONS ONLY:

Shropshire Council will continue to maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants.

Applications for a place outside the normal cohort (e.g. deferred Reception) will be processed in accordance with Shropshire Council's admission arrangements. Please contact the Admissions Team for more information.

Where a family are moving to a new address in Shropshire Council's area, the new address will only be taken into consideration when formal confirmation (signed tenancy agreement when no property is owned, or exchange of contracts) of the address has been received.

All applicants are required to give correct information about the genuine residential address of the child. Where any information regarding a home address is found to be fraudulent or misleading a school place may be withdrawn even if the child has been admitted to the Academy.

Mid-term or In-Year applications (RECEPTION, YEAR ONE, YEAR TWO ADMISSIONS ONLY)

The Academy has devolved the responsibility for the coordination and processing of any and all applications for places at each of its schools to Shropshire Council. However, The School Trust still makes all decisions regarding admissions of children to their schools.

Mid-term applications will be dealt with using the same admissions criteria given above. Applications must be made via the Shropshire Council online portal ([Synergy - Homepage](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk) [shropshire.gov.uk](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk)) If there is a space in the relevant year group a place will be offered. A formal letter from Shropshire Council's Admissions Team will be sent to the parent on our behalf, advising them of our decision to offer a place and the need to contact school directly to arrange a start date.

If there are no vacancies in the year group, Shropshire Council's Admission Team will speak to the Headteacher to consider whether additional places can be offered. A decision must be notified to parents within 15 days of making the application.

If a place cannot be offered, parents will receive a formal letter and information on how to appeal against the decision from Shropshire Council's School Admissions Team on our behalf.

Shropshire Council will maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants. If any vacancies arise, places will be offered to applicants included on the waiting list in strict accordance with normal published oversubscription criteria. If a place can be offered the applicant will be expected to take up the place within 6 school weeks or by the start of the next half term, whichever is the earliest date, with the exception of Reception children who have deferred entry until later in the same academic year. If an offer of a place is refused, the name will be removed from the waiting list.

Applying for a place out of cohort

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. Admission authorities must make decisions based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The process for requesting such an admission outside the normal age group, is as follows:

With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (state which one), and the reasons for that request. Further evidence may be requested. Requests for

admission outside of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time.

Shropshire Council does not offer the option for a child to start primary school before they are eligible.

When can my child start school?

Children can attend primary education from the September following their 4th birthday. The law requires that children attend school from the prescribed day⁴ following their 5th birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year, or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that year. They can also request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age. However, the offer of a place cannot be held over until the next academic year.

NB: Children become of compulsory school age on the first prescribed day following their 5th birthday: 31 August, 31 December or 31 March (or on that day if any of these dates are the child's birthday).

Deferred Transfers

Children born from 1 April to 31 August – known as summer born children – do not need to start school until the September after their fifth birthday, a year after they could first have started school. **Most summer born children start at age 4 with no issues.**

Parents of summer born children have two options if they feel their child is not ready to start Reception with their natural cohort. These are outlined below:

Option 1 - Delayed Start

If a parent of a summer born child does start school aged 4, they can, if they wish, agree with the allocated school a pattern of part time attendance or a deferred start until later in that school year for your child. You can discuss this with the school. This will require the parent to apply on-time (by 15 January) using the application process provided by Shropshire Council. Once places are allocated on the 16 April the parent can contact the Headteacher to discuss the delayed start.

Option 2 - Defer for a full year

If a parent decides their summer born child will start school aged 5 and wants their child to start school in reception (not Year 1), they need to make a request to the school's admission authority. This is called requesting admission out of the normal age group – because children born from 1 September in one year to 31 August the following year are normally educated together in one year group.

To defer for a full year parents must submit a request for admission out of the normal age group ideally by 15 January. Shropshire residents can email school-admissions@shropshire.gov.uk to request this. The admission authority decides whether children who start school at compulsory school age should be admitted to reception or year 1. They must make this decision in the child's best interests. The nursery provision (in the case of Reception deferrals) and primary schools (in the case of Secondary deferrals) will need to complete forms and assessments and submit to The School Admissions Team at Shropshire Council for processing. Deferral requests ideally need to be submitted no later than the deadlines for the respective transfer groups (15 January for Reception). We do appreciate that in extenuating circumstances, submitting such a request before the closing date does present a challenge. Should this occur, the Admissions team at Shropshire Council will do

their best to process prior to the end of the academic year, though there is no guarantee of this.

If a summer-born child defers for a year, it's currently a requirement to make another request to defer their entry to the next phase of their education. When a child of year 6 age is being taught in year 5, an application for secondary school and a request to defer their entry to secondary school will need to be made.

If parents do not make a request for admission out of the normal age group your child will start school in year 1. Parents should consider the potential impact of missing the reception year. The admission authority makes the decision in the child's best interests. The government believes it is usually not in a child's best interests to miss the teaching that takes place during the reception year, and that it should be rare for a child to start school in Year 1.

It is important to advise a parent that, should their summer born child defer for a year, they will reach school leaving age at the end of year 10, rather than year 11. The school will not ask them to leave, but they will no longer be required by law to attend school and the school may not be able to enforce their attendance. Children usually take their GCSEs in year 11.

