

Trust admissions policy

For academic year 2027/2028

September 2025

Arrangements determined February 2026

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1 Policy Statement

Vision, mission and values

We are committed to providing an admissions process that ensures fairness, transparency and equal opportunity and follows legislation.

Purpose and intent

The admission authority for Diverse Academies Trust is the Board of Trustees, who adopt the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Local Authority admissions protocols and as such participate in their coordinated admission arrangements. These arrangements are in line with legislation and the [DfE School Admissions Code September 2021](#) and designed to ensure there is a fair admissions procedure for all applicants.

Roles and responsibilities

Admission arrangements are determined by the admission authority, which is our trust.

We set out ('determine') our admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements we will publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, we will consult at least once every 7 years. Consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply (the determination year)

Benefits

- We are open and transparent and treat people fairly
- Parents/carers have clear guidance on the admission process
- We comply with relevant legalisation and are consistent when allocating places

2 Policy

This overarching policy is to be read in conjunction with respective local academy admissions appendices, including specific over-subscription criteria and published admission numbers (PAN).

This policy covers admission arrangements relating to the following Diverse Academies Trust academies within Nottinghamshire County Council:

Bracken Lane Primary Academy DN22 7EU

www.brackenlaneprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

East Leake Academy LE12 6QN

www.eastleake-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

Hillocks Primary Academy NG17 4ND

www.hillocksprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/how-to-apply

Queen Elizabeth's Academy NG19 7AP

www.queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk/admissions/how-to-apply

Retford Oaks Academy DN22 7NJ

www.retfordoaks-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

Samuel Barlow Primary Academy NG21 9DG

www.samuelbarlowprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

The Holgate Academy NG15 6PX

www.holgate-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

Thoresby Vale Primary Academy

<https://www.thoresbyvaleprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/how-to-apply/>

Thrumpton Primary Academy DN22 7AQ

www.thrumptonprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/how-to-apply

Tuxford Academy NG22 0JH

www.tuxford-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

Tuxford Primary Academy NG22 0NA

www.tuxfordprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/apply

Wainwright Primary Academy NG19 6TF

www.wainwrightprimary-ac.org.uk/admissions/how-to-apply

Within Lincolnshire County Council:

Walton Academy NG31 7JR

www.walton-ac.org.uk/admissions/admissions

All academies within Diverse Academies must have admissions arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at a respective academy. The academic ability of the child does not come into consideration when places are being allocated. No academy within Diverse Academies is selective, although one of Queen Elizabeth's Academy's over-subscription criteria is faith based (see academy admission local appendix for information).

Parents are invited to express a preference for the relevant academy.

The Trustees of Diverse Academies Trust have delegated authority to the governors of each academy listed above to manage admission arrangements, both in the intake year and any in-year admissions.

Parents are encouraged to visit any academy with their child if they are planning to apply for a place and each academy has several open days during the year (please see local academy website or contact the academy directly for details). Arrangements for visits outside of these dates can be made through the respective academy office.

Diverse Academies expects any academy that wishes to change its admissions arrangements, to receive approval from Board Trustees, following which, and in line with the Admissions Code 2021, they may be required to conduct a public consultation. In all cases, each academy must consult every 7 years even if there have been no changes during that period, and for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January in the school year before the academic year admissions process come into force. For example, for applications in the September 2027 intake, the consultation must be completed by 31 January 2026.

Objections to the published admissions arrangements must be referred to the schools adjudicator by 15 May in the school year before those arrangements are due to apply.

These arrangements will apply to all admissions from September 2027 including in-year admissions.

Closing date for applications for school year 2027/28:

31 October 2026 for secondary places

15 January 2027 for primary places

Any applications received after this date will be considered after those applications received before the closing date.

How admissions work

This policy sets out how children will be admitted. The criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school can be found on each academy's website.

Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities (Diverse Academies Trust)

We set out ('determine') our admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements we will publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, we will consult at least once every 7 years. Consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply (the determination year).

Determination

Once we have determined each academy's admission arrangements, we will notify the appropriate bodies and will publish a copy of the determined arrangements on each school's website by 15 March in the determination year and continue displaying them for the whole offer year (the school year in which offers for places are made). We will also send a copy of our full, determined arrangements to the local authority as soon as possible before 15 March in the determination year. Queen Elizabeth's academy, as a school designated with a religious character will also send a copy of their arrangements to the diocese.

In the normal admissions round (reception, transfer from primary to secondary (year 7) parents apply via their home local authority where the child lives, irrespective of which local authority area the academy is in. Parents are able to express a preference for at least three schools. The application can include schools outside the local authority where the child lives. A parent can apply for a place for their child at any state-funded school in any area. If a school is undersubscribed, any parent that applies must be offered a place.

Admissions will normally be agreed up to the published admission number which applied for the normal year of intake. If there are more applications than places available, the oversubscription criteria will be used to determine which places will be offered. Each academy will rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the local authority.

A separate application must be made for any transfer from nursery to primary school and from primary to secondary school. Please refer to the specific academy website for further information.

National offer day

This is the day each year on which local authorities are required to send the offer of a school place to all parents in their area.

- For secondary pupils, offers are sent out by the home local authority on 1 March.
- For primary pupils, offers are sent out by the home local authority on 16 April.

These dates are relevant to all on-time applications in the coordinated admissions rounds.

If offer day falls on a non-working day, information will be sent on the next working day.

The home local authority where the child lives will communicate the decision:

- for parents who have applied online, notification of the outcome of their preferences will be made available online; and
- for all other applications, notification of the outcome of the application will be sent by email if an email address has been provided or by second class post.

All preferences are collated and parents then receive an offer from their home local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available. The offer is made on national offer day.

Parents, and in some circumstances children, have the right to appeal against an admission authority's decision to refuse admission.

Accepting an offer of a place

An offer of a place at the respective academy may be withdrawn if the parent has not responded by the deadline for acceptance as outlined in the original offer. A reminder letter will be sent to anyone who has not responded by this date. If the academy has still not received confirmation that the place is required by the extended deadline outlined in the reminder letter, it will be assumed that a place is not required, and the offer will be withdrawn.

The offer of a place will also be withdrawn if it has been obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

Parents are advised not to decline any offer of a school place until an alternative allocation has been made.

Fraudulent or misleading information

Where an offer of a place is found to be based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information provided on the application, and this effectively denied a place to a child with higher priority for the place at the school, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Where the allocation has been withdrawn, the application will be reconsidered, and the usual statutory right of appeal will be made available if a place is subsequently refused.

Each academy will check the home address on any applications where there are doubts about the information provided.

In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child has been at the school will be taken into account. For example, we might consider withdrawing the place if the child has been at the school for less than one term.

Waiting lists

If applications exceed the number of places available, children's names will be added to the academy's waiting list if they are refused a place after the academy has applied the oversubscription criteria to determine which children are offered a place.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the

oversubscription criteria set out in each academy's admission arrangement appendix. No reference is made to the date an application has been received, the date their name was added to the list or whether a parent has appealed against a decision. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

If any applications are received that have higher priority within the admission oversubscription criteria, these will be placed higher than applications that may have been on the list for some time. Being on a waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

Looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place in accordance with a fair access protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Places on the waiting list may go up or down depending on whether places become available. If a place becomes available, the place will be allocated at that time, to the child who has highest priority on the waiting list according to the admission oversubscription criteria.

Each of our academies will keep a waiting list for all year groups until the 31 May in each school year of application. Following the closure of the waiting list, repeat or new applications will be dealt with as and when received. Following the closure of the waiting list, applicants would need to reapply for a school place. If an application is received for the same school year, no further right of appeal will be given unless there has been a significant or material change in the circumstances of the child or the school.

Oversubscription criteria

Where there are more applications than places available, the oversubscription criterion are used to determine the priority of applications for school places and how these are allocated. The first criterion represents the group of children most likely to get a place at the school. The last criterion represents the group of children least likely to get a place. The over-subscription criteria for each academy are included in their own admissions appendix and can be found on their website.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

All children with an education, health and care plan that names the school will be admitted. These documents state the education provision required for an individual child.

Looked after and previously looked after children

The School Admissions Code 2021 states that all admission authorities must give highest priority to this group of children and provides the following definition:

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 in accordance with section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application to a school.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to 'child arrangements order' or special guardianship order). Further references to previously looked after children means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and 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.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Oversubscription criteria must then be applied to all other applicants in the order set out in the arrangements. This includes:

- Children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 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).

Special consideration

Governors at each academy will consider applications where the application can be supported by written evidence from a doctor, social worker or other relevant professional stating why the

academy is the only school which could cater for the child's particular needs. The evidence must be presented at the time of application. Where it is agreed that the academy is the only school that could meet a child's needs, the application will have priority following the allocation of looked after and previously looked after children.

Home address

The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home, other than in the case of children fostered by a local authority, where either the parental address or that of a foster parent(s) may be used. If a child's parents live at separate addresses, the address where the child permanently spends at least three 'school' nights (that is, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday) will be taken to be the place of residence. Addresses of other relatives or friends will not be considered as the place of residence, even if the child stays there for all or part of the week. Evidence that the child's place of residence is permanent may also be sought and this should prove that the child lived at the address at the time of the application.

Informal arrangements between parents will not be taken into consideration.

Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces)

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area, or crown servants returning to live in the area from overseas, the governors will use the address at which the child will live when applying the oversubscription criteria, provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date, a unit postal address or quartering area address and the parent provides some evidence of their intended address.

Overseas nationals

Overseas nationals entering the UK, who wish to apply for a state-funded school place, are advised to check that they have a right of abode (www.gov.uk/right-of-abode) or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permit access to a state-funded school.

Catchment areas

Where an academy has a catchment area a map of the catchment area is available here www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/search-for-a-school and on the academy's website.

Catchment areas do not prevent parents who live outside the catchment of a particular school from expressing a preference for the school.

Feeder schools/linked primary phase school

Some of our academies may name a primary/primaries as feeder schools. The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion, where applicable, will be recorded on each academy's admission appendix.

Sibling (brother or sister)

- Brothers and/or sisters who share the same parent(s).
- A half-brother, half-sister or legally adopted child living at the same address.
- A child looked after by a local authority placed in a foster family with other school age children.
- A stepchild or children who are not related but live as a family unit, where parents both live at the same address as the child.

Multiple births (twins, triplets etc)

Where one child of a multiple birth can be admitted through the normal admissions process, the other child/children will also be admitted.

Parent

- The mother of the child.
- The father of the child where he was married to the mother either when the child was born or at a later date.

- The father of the child if (since 1 December 2003) he was registered as the father on the birth certificate.
- An adoptive parent.
- Any other person who has acquired 'parental responsibility' through the courts; evidence of this may be required.
- Authorisation may also be given for another person to speak on the parent's behalf.

The person making the application must hold parental responsibility.

Children of school staff

We will give priority in our oversubscription criteria to children of staff who have a permanent contract in either of the following circumstances:

- a) where the member of staff (regardless of role) has been working at the academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the academy for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Staff who work within a central function and can prove that they work at an individual academy for more than 50% of their time will be considered within this criterion. Confirmation of this is to be received in writing from HR.

A letter from HR will be required to confirm that the member of staff meets the demonstrable skills shortage criteria.

Distance measurement

Within each of the criteria as set out in each academy's appendix on their website, priority will be given to children who live nearest to the school as the crow flies (by straight line). Distances are measured from the main administrative point at the school campus to an address point (using eastings and northings as defined by Ordnance Survey) to the child's home using the local authority's computerised distance measuring software.

If the measurements remain equal, for example children living in the same block of flats, lots will be drawn, and the process will be independently verified.

Three documents to confirm proof of address may be required in the form of:

1. solicitor's letter confirming completion of a house move, signed tenancy agreement, or rent book;
2. utility bill, driving licence or evidence of council tax payment schedule; and
3. child benefit book, child tax credit record or doctor's record.

Infant class sizes

Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of five, six or seven during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. The Schools Admission Code 2021 states that additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances.

These children will remain as 'excepted pupils' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

The excepted children are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with education, health and care plans specifying the school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) children admitted after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes; and/or within the mainstream school.

For late applications for reception processed after 16 April 27 (offer day) and before 31 August 27 and for all in-year applications for reception to year 2, the governors will also consider whether the limited exceptional circumstances could apply. A child who falls into any of these categories will not automatically be admitted as an excepted child.

Starting school

Compulsory school age

A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. Children must be attending school the term following their fifth birthday.

Deferred entry to school

All children can start school full time in reception in the September following their fourth birthday. However, parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the school year, 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. The school year is also referred to as the 'academic year'.

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.

Parents must ensure that they apply for a school place before the closing date of **15 January 2027**, if they want their child to start in the reception class. Requests should be made to the allocated school.

Delaying admission (summer born children)

More information can be found Department for Education guidance can be found at [summer-born-children-school-admission](#)

The parents of a summer born child (born between 1 April and 31 August) may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday. Typically, this means their child will start school in year 1, forfeiting reception. If a parent wishes to delay their child's admission to school until compulsory school age, and wants their child to be admitted to reception, the parent must request that the child is admitted out of the normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Parents should discuss the request with the principal of each of their preferred school.

The academy governors are responsible for making the decision about which year group a child should be admitted to and designated officers will consider the circumstances of each case, the child concerned and their best interest and take account of the views of the principal. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, the child's 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 for not being born prematurely.

Requesting a delayed admission

Parents considering delaying their child's admission should submit their request to the academy in the first instance. This request should be made at the same time as submitting an application within the coordinated scheme to the home local authority (usually Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire County Council's school admissions team) by the closing date (15 January for reception age/year 3 places; 31 October for secondary school places).

- Where a request to delay admission is agreed, the child's application will be processed as part of the main admission round.
- If a request is not agreed, parents can continue with an application for a reception school place at the normal time, or delay admission until compulsory school age and apply for a place in year 1.

In all cases, the application will be considered on the basis of the determined admission arrangements only.

For requests submitted before the national closing date for applications, parents will be notified of the admission authority's decision on whether the request to delay has been agreed before national offer day.

Admission of children outside the normal age group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside the normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented, has experienced ill health or is a summer born child wishing to start school in reception instead of year 1. This is not limited to applications for those starting school for the first time but includes children moving from infant to junior/primary schools and from primary to secondary schools.

The local academy committee, in conjunction with senior leaders at the academy, will make a decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

This will include taking 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.

When parents are told the decision about the year group to which the child should be admitted, they will also be given reasons for the decision. Where it is agreed that a child will be admitted out of the normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to an intake age group (for example, reception), the academy will process the application as part of the main admissions round, unless the request was submitted after the closing date and it is too late for this to be possible.

Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

Nottinghamshire's /Lincolnshire's arrangements for in-year applications to Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire schools

As each of the academy's referred to above conforms to the Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire County Council scheme, all applications, must be made to Nottinghamshire County Council or Lincolnshire County Council (for Walton Academy) in the first instance.

Admission authorities may refuse to admit a child if it has good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour. Applications can be referred to the local authority for consideration under the provisions of the Fair Access Protocol. Schools should not request information about a child's history of behaviour unless an application meets fair access protocol requirements.

Applying for an in-year place in a Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire school

Parents are encouraged to visit any academy with their child if they are planning to apply for a place. Arrangements for visits can be made through the respective academy office.

Parents can make applications up to six weeks, or during the preceding school half term, before the date when they would like their child to start at the preferred school. School places cannot be reserved, and places are allocated in line with this policy.

How in-year applications are processed

Applications for in-year admissions to any year group will be considered in line with the school admissions code.

If places are available within the year group, the child will normally be admitted to the academy without condition or the use of any oversubscription criteria.

Where the year group is oversubscribed and there are more applications than places available, applications are strictly dealt with according to the oversubscription criteria contained within each academy's policy appendix and will be considered by the local academy committee, acting as the admissions authority.

Applications will be added to the waiting list. See *waiting lists* on page 9.

All applicants have the right to appeal.

Taking up the allocated in-year place

Parents should contact schools directly to arrange a start date and the place must be taken up as quickly as possible, especially where the child is out of school.

In all cases, places allocated must be taken up by the start of the next half term.

For places allocated in the summer term the child must be on roll at the allocated school before the end of the summer term. If the place is not taken up by the end of the summer term, parents would need to make a new application for the following academic year.

If places are not taken up within these timelines, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Admissions into sixth form

School sixth form admission arrangements for external applicants will be consulted upon, determined, and published in accordance with the same timetable as for admission arrangements for other entry points.

External applicants will follow the same application procedure outlined in this document. Where there are more external applications that meet the entry criteria than places, the oversubscription criteria for the relevant secondary academy's sixth form will be applied.

The published admission number for the sixth form (Tuxford Academy, Retford Oaks Academy, East Leake Academy, Walton Academy, The Holgate Academy and Queen Elizabeth's Academy), is available on the respective academy website.

Both internal and external applicants must have met the minimum academic requirements to gain entry to the sixth form. All internal applicants that meet the entry criteria will be offered a place. These minimum requirements are set out in the respective academy admissions appendix.

Appeals

When an application for a school is refused, the parent has a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Parents are informed of this when they receive their outcome and to lodge an appeal, parents should contact Nottinghamshire County Council for an appeal to a Nottinghamshire school. Further information is available at

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-admissions/appeal-a-school-admission-decision

Or if an appeal is for an academy in Lincolnshire, complete the appeal form on the academy's website.

Further information can be found at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/appeal-school-place/2

An appeal can only be considered if the correct procedures have been followed in accordance with the above.

The independent appeal panel will act in accordance with the framework set out in the [School Admission Appeals Code 2022](#). To ensure a fair appeals process, Diverse Academies Trust uses the relevant local authority's appeals panel.

A child can be on an academy waiting list while lodging an appeal and the appeal will not affect their position on the list. The decision of the appeals panel is binding on the admissions authority.

Repeat applications will not be considered in the same school year unless there has been a significant and material change in the circumstances of the application or those of the academy.

A significant and material change in circumstances is something that alters the decision already made. A house move may not necessarily be considered a substantial change and will not give a further right of appeal.

Diverse Academies adheres to advice in conjunction with the [School Admission Appeals Code 2022](#), the [School Admissions Code](#) and other laws that affect admissions and admission appeals

in England.

Fair access protocol

Our academies participate in the [fair access protocol](#) which is implemented by each academy's respective local authority and is set out in the [School Admissions Code](#) at point 3.14 onwards.

In circumstances set out in the respective local authority's [fair access protocol](#), Diverse Academies may refuse to admit a child outside the normal admissions round even though places are available using section 3.12 of the [School Admissions Code](#).

Relevant legislation

The academy complies with the regulations and legislation set out in the [School Admissions Code](#), and the [School Admission Appeals Code 2022](#) including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Policy review

This policy and the local academy admission appendices will be reviewed annually during the Autumn term.