

Admissions Policy 2026-27

This document sets out the admission arrangements for Meadow Park Academy for the year 2026-27. The admission arrangements in this policy were determined on 10 December 2024.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how parents/carers can apply** for a place for their child at the School
- Set out the School's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply
- Explain **how parents/carers can appeal** against a decision not to offer their child a place

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, the School is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

The admission authority is Anthem Schools Trust (Anthem). Reference in the codes and elsewhere to admission authorities shall be deemed to be references to the Anthem Community Council acting on behalf of Anthem.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. In respect of admissions, the school will not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief); sex; sexual orientation; age or marital or civil partnership status, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a student. All students and prospective students are treated equitably.

The School will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority and will adhere to the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol. Local authorities are required to agree Fair Access Protocols in order to make sure that unplaced students, who live in the home local authority, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting students above the published admissions number to schools that are already full. Students allocated under fair access protocols will take precedence over those on a reserve list or awaiting appeal. Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct the School to admit a named student on application from the local authority. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the School.

How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round parents/carers should use the application form provided by their home local authority (regardless of which local authority the School is in). Parents/carers can use this form to express their preference for a minimum of three state-funded schools, in rank order.

Parents/carers will receive an offer for a school place directly from their local authority.

For applications outside of the normal admissions round, please see the section entitled 'In-Year admissions' below.

Consideration of applications

The School will consider all applications for places. The School has an agreed admission number of 60 (the Published Admission Number – PAN) pupils for entry in reception.

The PAN is the maximum number of pupils that the admission authority will admit to each year group. The PAN relates only to the year of entry – referred to in the School Admissions Code as 'relevant age group' (Reception, Y3, Y7 or Y12). There is no PAN for year groups to which there is no intake.

Where fewer than 60 applications are received, the School will offer places to all those who have applied. We reserve the right to check any address and other information provided so we can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly. As an admission authority we have the right to investigate any concerns we may have about your application and to withdraw the offer of a place if we consider there is evidence that you have made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information, for example if a false address was given which denied a place to a child with a stronger claim. If a place is withdrawn, the application will be considered afresh and you will be advised of your right of appeal if a place is refused.

Before setting a PAN higher than its agreed admission number, the School will inform the local authority and reference this change on the School's website. Students will not be admitted above the PAN unless exceptional circumstances apply, and such circumstances shall be reported to the Secretary of State.

Procedures where the School is oversubscribed

If the School is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named in the EHCP, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:

- Looked after children and all previously looked after children¹. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).
- Children with a sibling attending the school at the time of application². In the event of there being more siblings than there are remaining places in a year group, it is possible that a sibling under these circumstances would not be offered a place. Where siblings exceed the remaining places in a year group, places will be allocated by the drawing of lots.

¹ 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) 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 the 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).

² 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as half, full, step, adoptive or foster brother or sister living predominantly in the same home as the child at the time of application and/or at the time of admission.

- Children of staff at the School, in either of the following circumstances:
 - a) The member of staff has been employed at the School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the School is made, or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Other children by distance from the School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the School. The distance is measured in miles as a straight line between the Ordnance Survey data point for the child's home address and the School using Reading Borough Council digital mapping software. The home address is considered as the address where the child lives for the majority of term time with a parent (as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996) who has parental responsibility for the child (as defined in the Children Act 1989). Where a child lives normally during the school week with more than one parent at different addresses, the home address accepted for the purposes of school admissions will be the one where the child spends the majority of term time. If a parent can show that their child spends an equal amount of time at two addresses during school term time with a parent, they can choose which address to use on the application. If a parent has more than one home, we will accept the address where the parent and child normally live for the majority of the school term time as the home address.

Tie-break

The oversubscription criteria are listed in the order we apply them. If it is necessary to distinguish between more than one applicant in any criteria, the next criteria will be applied until the tie-breaker is used. In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the School will use random allocation as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This process will be independently verified by someone who does not work at the school.

Multiple births and siblings in the same year

In the case of multiple births (e.g. twins, triplets) and where there is only one place available in the School, these will be considered together as one application and the School is authorised to exceed its admission number.

If brothers and sisters in the same year group are split by operation of the oversubscription criteria, the school will go above its published admission number to accommodate all children unless this would make the class too large and prejudice the education of the other children or when this would breach infant class size limits.

Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)

In order to support the military covenant aimed at removing disadvantage for UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces), and Crown Servants returning from abroad the following arrangements will apply:

- If an application is supported by an official letter declaring a posting and a relocation date then an intention to move to a confirmed address or quartering within the UK will be accepted. The new address will be used to consider the application against the

oversubscription criteria. A unit postal address can be used if the family do not have a confirmed address at the time of application.

- Where an application is not supported by an official letter, or is not being made due to a new posting then the current address will be used to examine the application against the oversubscription criteria until the family are formally resident in the new address.
- Proof of intended occupation of the residential address such as mortgage statement, exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement will be required. For applicants participating in the Future Accommodation Model trial, a letter accepting an address under the scheme will be accepted if a signed tenancy agreement cannot be provided. An offer may be withdrawn if a child does not reside at the address listed on the application form if the school is oversubscribed and use of an incorrect address has resulted in a place being denied to another child who would otherwise have been offered the place.
- In all cases where parents can demonstrate that the child is a child of a crown servant returning from abroad or is a child of a serving member of the armed forces, we will consider whether to offer a place at a school even if the school has reached its official PAN. When making the decision whether to offer over PAN we will consider the circumstances of each case including:
 - If the applicant would have been offered a place had they applied on time in the admissions round of the year of entry.
 - Whether there is any child on the reserve list with higher priority under the oversubscription criteria.
 - Whether admission of a further student would prejudice the efficient education and efficient use of resources and this prejudice would be excessive.
- The School has discretion to admit above the admission number in these circumstances but they are not obliged to do so. If a place is refused, parents will be informed of their right of appeal.

Children below compulsory school age

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place at the School, they will be entitled to attend the School full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following his/her fifth birthday (or on his/her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days correspond to school terms. They are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

Parents/carers may defer their child's entry to the School until later in the School year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the School year the offer was made for. 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/carers must contact the Headteacher to make these arrangements.

Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents/carers are entitled to request 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. 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. It is important for parents/carers to note that they will have the opportunity and responsibility to provide whatever evidence they wish to support their request. Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents'/carers' 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
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The Headteacher's views

If applying during the normal admissions round, parents/carers must apply for a place in the child's normal age group at the usual time. At the same time, parents/carers may make their application for admission out of the normal age group. Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents/carers will be informed of the School's decision before April 16 and will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Once informed of the School's decision, parents/carers may withdraw their application for the normal age group if their application for deferment is agreed or decide to accept the offer of the normal age range if they are refused. Alternatively, they could refuse this offer and make an in-year application (see below). Parents/carers do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the School but it is not in their preferred age group.

Operation of waiting lists

Where in any year the School receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This will be maintained by the School and it will be open to any parent/carer to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list for admissions will be ranked again every time a child is added, in line with the published oversubscription criteria. For the intake year the list is held until the end of December. You must confirm in writing if you want your child to stay on the list after this.

In-year applications

Parents/carers can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. Applications for in-year admissions should be made online via Brighter Futures for Children. If you are unable to apply online you can contact the Brighter Futures for Children school admissions team to request a paper form, on 0118 937 3777. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHCP names the School will be admitted.

If the student has an EHCP in place which does not name the school, then the parent/carer needs to contact the local authority so that they are able to consult on whether we will be able to meet the need of the student.

If there are spaces available in the year group, parents/carers are applying for, the child will be offered a place. However, the school may refuse a place if the admission of an additional child would:

- Prejudice the provision of efficient education and/or
- Prejudice the efficient use of resources

Also note the exemption relating to challenging behaviour set out above.

If there are no spaces available at the time of the application, the child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by 1 of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed above on this policy. Please see above for how the waiting list is operated

Parents/Carers will be notified of the outcome of their in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

Further information about in-year applications is available on our School website.

Appeals

If an application for a place at the school is unsuccessful (whether made during the normal admissions round or in-year), parents/carers will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If parents/carers wish to appeal, they must set out the grounds for the appeal in writing and send it to Reading Borough Council:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/schoolappeals>

Further details on the school's appeals timetable can be found on our website.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Anthem every year.

Whenever relevant changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the School will publicly consult on these changes in accordance with the Admissions Code.

If nothing changes, we will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.