

**WIMBORNE ACADEMY TRUST**

**MERLEY FIRST SCHOOL**

**ADMISSIONS POLICY 2017/18**

All admission authorities operate an equal preference admissions system. This means that all first, second and third preference applications are considered together. The local authority will offer the highest ranked preference possible.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by a local authority naming Merley First School will be admitted to the school before preferences are considered for admission in September.

Where there are more applications than places available the following criteria will be used, in numerical order, to decide the priority list for the offering of places up to the school's Published Admission Number for the admission year group:

1. A "Looked After Child" or who was a "previously Looked After Child" (see Note 1).
2. Children who live (see Note 2) within the school's catchment area. If there are too many applications from the catchment area, criteria 3 (a) to (c) will be used in order to prioritise the applications with criterion 4 used as the final determining factor.
3. Children who live (see Note 2) outside the school's catchment area, in the following priority order:
  - a) Children who have a sibling (see Note 3) who is already on the roll of the school and will continue to attend the school at the time of admission.
  - b) Children and young people who have a significant medical or psychological condition. Written advice from an NHS Consultant (for medical grounds), or an NHS Consultant Psychiatrist (for psychological grounds) that documents the child or young person's medical or psychological needs must be included with the application. Children will only meet this criterion if Merley First School is the only school that can meet any specific medical or psychological needs identified.
  - c) All other children who do not qualify in any of the categories (a) and (b) above.
4. If a school is oversubscribed in any of the categories 1, 2, and 3 (a) to (c) above, children who live (see Notes 2 and 4) closest to the school will be given priority. The distance is measured by a Geographical Information System (see Note 4). If the distance measurement is equal for two or more applicants the place will be allocated by the drawing of lots (See Note 5).

## **Admissions arrangements**

Admission to all Poole schools will be in accordance with the agreed scheme for co-ordinated admission arrangements 2017/18.

### **Entry to Reception including deferred entry**

All children can start in Reception on a full-time basis in September 2017. Parents/carers may discuss with the Headteacher as to whether their child should start on a part-time basis, but the final decision will rest with the parent/carer of the child. Children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age (by the start of the term following their fifth birthday).

Parents can defer the date their child starts school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age (i.e. by the start of the term following their fifth birthday) or, for children born between 1 April and 31 August, not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year (i.e. the term that starts after the Easter/Spring holidays) for which the offer was made.

The school place offered cannot be deferred until the following academic year – it must be taken up in the academic year for which it is offered. Parents and carers who do not take up the offer of a place during the Reception year will need to reapply for a school place the following year. Places offered but not taken up by the beginning of the final term (i.e. the term that starts after the Easter/Spring holidays) will be withdrawn.

If parents/carers want to apply for the following year they would normally be expected to apply for a place in Year 1. Parents and carers need to be aware that Year could be full at this stage.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for a year group different to that determined by their child's date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children need to refer to the section headed "Applications for a place in a year group different to that determined by date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children" which can be found later in this document. Parents considering this are advised to contact both the school and the Local Authority at the earliest possible opportunity (preferably before 31 October 2016) to ensure a decision has been made before the national closing date for applications to Reception and Transfer to Junior School 2017/18.

### **Applications for a place in a year group different to that determined by date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children**

Applications for children to be educated in a year group different to that determined by their date of birth, including delayed admission to reception for summer born children, will be considered on their individual merits by the Trust at a Panel comprising: the Headteacher of the school, the SENCO of the school, and a senior member of staff from another First School within the Trust.

The Trust will consider evidence relating to all aspects of the child's development and needs in coming to a decision. Issues to be considered will include:

For requests for change of year group where a child is already in school:

- Whether there is clear evidence that the child has previously been educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth and that this has had positive benefits.
- Whether there is clear, documented evidence that to place the child in his/her normal age group would be detrimental to his/her educational progress or likely exam performance.
- Whether there is clear evidence that it is in the interests of the child's social and emotional development to be educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth.

For requests for delayed admission for summer born children the Panel will consider the following:

- The needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class.
- In the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth.
- Whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school.
- Relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children.

### **Excepted pupils for infant classes (Years R, 1 and 2)**

Infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' 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:

- Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with Education, Health and Care Plans or Statements of Special Educational Needs specifying a school;
- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- 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;
- Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;

- Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- 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 within the mainstream school.

### **In Year Fair Access**

All the admission authorities in Poole have established an In Year Fair Access Protocol. The purpose of the In Year Fair Access Protocol is to ensure that – outside the normal admissions round – unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. Cases are considered by a Panel comprising Headteachers and/or their representatives. When seeking to place a child, the Panel will consider all schools in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. Decisions of the Panel may mean that individual schools admit children above the Published Admission Number. Admission authorities will not normally be asked to admit a child to an infant class where there are already 30 children in the class.

### **In Year Admissions – Looked After Children**

A Looked After Child (see Note 1) may be admitted to a school above the Published Admission number if it is felt by the local authority that a particular school is the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of the individual child. The local authority has adopted a Protocol for dealing with in year admissions of Looked After Children.

### **Applications from separated parents**

Only one application can be considered for each child. Where parents are separated it is essential that agreement is reached by both parties concerning the nominated preferred schools. If agreement cannot be reached the Trust will only consider the application from the parent who is the prime carer for the child. The prime carer is the parent in whose name Child Benefit payments are made. If Child Benefit payments are not received by either parent, then the address that the child has been registered with a General Practitioner (GP) at will be considered as the address for the prime carer.

### **Applications for children of multiple births**

If there are insufficient places to accommodate all the children of a multiple birth (i.e. twins, triplets etc) in any year group and one child can be admitted, the other siblings of the multiple birth will be admitted over the school's Published Admission Number. If it is in an infant class (Years R, 1 and 2) the additional children over the PAN will be considered as excepted pupils for the entire time they are in an infant class at the school or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014.

## Notes

1. A “Looked After Child” means any child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989. A child who was “previously a Looked After Child” means a child who after being Looked After became subject to an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976 or under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a Residence Order or Child Arrangement Order under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 or Special Guardianship Order under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989.
2. The Trust will consider that a child lives at the address at which he/she lives during the school week. Where a child lives at more than one address during the school week, the Trust will consider the home address as being where the prime carer resides. The “prime carer” is the person in whose name Child Benefit payments for the individual child are made. If Child Benefit payments are not received by either parent, then the address that the child has been registered with a General Practitioner (GP) at will be considered as the home address of the prime carer. The final decision on the home address of a child will be made by the Trust. If any information supplied by an applicant is judged by the Trust to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading the Trust may refuse to offer a place, or if already offered, may withdraw the offer.
3. “Sibling” means:
  - a full brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
  - a half-brother or half-sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
  - an adoptive brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
  - a foster brother or sister who lives with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
  - non-blood related children who, together, all live with one or both parents or carers in the same property during the school week.
- 4(a) The distance from home to school is measured by using the shortest, safe and practicable walking route using the centre line of public roads and footpaths (excluding paths identified for the sole use of bicycles i.e. cycleways) from the nearest point on the public highway to the centre point of the child’s home address (see Note 2 above for definition of home address) to a point opposite the nearest approved access point on school property that is for the use of pupils. The centre point of the child’s home address is the centre of the land parcel that the building resides on. The Geographical Information System (GIS) maps used are provided by Ordnance Survey and represent the position as at the beginning of the annual admission cycle i.e. September in the year prior to admission. Any footpaths or roads added after this time will not be taken into consideration until the next academic year of application.
- 4(b) For applicants living on islands or residing permanently on a boat within Poole harbour, the distance measurement will be a straight line from the centre point of the home address (see Note 2 and Note 4(a) above) to either:

1. the nearest public landing steps at Poole Quay, or
2. a point on the mainland that the applicant proves to the satisfaction of the Trust that he/she can access

and from that point the distance will be measured using the shortest, safe and practicable walking route to the nearest point on the public highway and from there using the shortest, safe and practicable walking route using the centre line of public roads and footpaths (excluding paths identified for the sole use of bicycles i.e. cycleways) to a point opposite the nearest approved access point on school property that is for the use of pupils.

- 4(c) If an applicant advises the Trust that the child would or could use the Sandbanks/Studland Chain Ferry in the journey to school, then the distance will be measured on that basis from the home address (see Note 2 and Note 4(a) above), including the distance travelled by the ferry.
5. If there are insufficient places to accommodate all applicants and the distance criterion is used, the Trust will use random allocation for applicants living an equal distance from the school (up to three decimal points) or at the same address or in the same block of flats who are eligible for the remaining places. Applicants will have their names drawn as lots to see who should be offered the place(s). The person drawing the names will be a member of the Trust who has no involvement in the school admissions process.