

Ascend Learning Trust

# Admissions Policy

## For admissions in academic year 2026-27

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### Version Control

Version	Details	Author	Date
1.0	Policy formation	Jeremy Masson	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Related Policies

## Policy Statement

This policy sets out the admissions policy of Ascend Learning Trust (hereafter referred to as the Trust). However, sections 6 and 7 set the oversubscription criteria, and approach to in-year admissions, specific to Royal Wootton Bassett Academy.

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at a school in the Trust
- Set out the arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place.

## Legislation and Statutory Requirements

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

- School Admissions Code 2021 ([School admissions code - GOV.UK](#))
- School Admission Appeals Code ([School admission appeals code - GOV.UK](#))

We are required by our funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. ([School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#))

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

## Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at a school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

**Looked-after children**, as defined in section 22 of the Children's Act 1989, are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

**Previously looked-after children** are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order (defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of Children and Families Act 2014) or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order (defined in section 14A of the Children Act 1989)

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to 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.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday (or on their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

A **parent** is any individual who holds parental responsibility, as defined under the Children Act 1989, or any person who has care of a child, where the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after that child.

## The normal admission round: How to Apply

For applications in the normal admission round, you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in).

The trust operates schools across two defined areas: Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Council. More information on the admissions process within each local authority is available here:

Swindon Borough Council:

[School places and admissions | Swindon Borough Council](#)

Wiltshire Council:

[Applying for a school place - Wiltshire Council](#)

Broader information on the schools admission process is published by the Government and can be found here:

[School admissions: Choosing schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

Please note, pupils already attending one of our nurseries will not transfer automatically into reception in the attached school (or any of our other schools). A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

## Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical practitioner
- 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 Headteachers' views

Where possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the normal admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed below. 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.

To request admission outside a child's normal age group, this should be indicated via the home local authority at the time of application using the relevant paperwork supplied. Where this process is not available from your home local authority (as it relates to an in-year admissions) please contact the Head of Governance and Compliance at Ascend Learning Trust, who will provide additional information on the process, required paperwork and timescale for dealing with such applications.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place but it is not their preferred age group.

## Allocation of places

### Published Admission Number (PAN)

Royal Wootton Bassett Academies published admissions number (PAN) for entry into Year 7 is 287.

### Over-Subscription Criteria

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plan names Royal Wootton Bassett Academy will be admitted to the school before any other places are allocated.

If Royal Wootton Bassett is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that Royal Wootton Bassett receives more applications than the number of places available, places will be given to those children who meet any criteria set out below, in order, until all places are filled.

a) Highest priority will be given to looked after children and/or all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school. The definition of Looked After Children - A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those 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 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). Proof will be required and must be submitted by the deadline date.

#### b) Vulnerable Children

Children from families registered with the National Asylum Support Service; children or families with a serious medical, physical or psychological condition where written evidence is provided at the time of application from a senior clinical medical officer and the general practitioner or specialist showing that it would be detrimental to the child or family not to admit to the preferred school.

For the purpose of the above criteria the word 'families' is determined as living at the same address at the time of application and also living at the same address on a permanent basis. Proof will be required and must be submitted by the deadline date.

#### c) Designated Area Siblings and Shared Area Siblings

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives within the designated area or shared area at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 11, 12 or 13 of the school at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are included in this category;

#### d) Other Children from the Designated Area or Shared Area

Children resident within the designated area or shared area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

#### e) Other Siblings out of area

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the school as at the deadline date and where the child lives at the same address as the sibling. The sibling must not be in year 11, 12 or 13 at the deadline date. Step, half and foster siblings are also included in this category;

#### f) Children of staff at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

A child is considered under this criterion:

- i. Where 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, and/or
- ii. The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion, then a letter from the Head Teacher confirming one of the above applies to the applicant and this must be provided at the time of application.

#### g) Other children out of area

Children to whom none of the above criteria apply.

## **Tie Break**

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, we will use the distance between the school and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This is called a distance tie-breaker. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the school.

Distance will be measured in a straight line (as the crow flies) from the child's home address determined by Ordnance Survey Data to the school's front gates on Lime Kiln. For the purposes of this policy, a child's home address is defined as the place where they live and sleep for the majority of nights in a normal school week, with their parent(s).

If a child lives in different properties (shared care), parents must provide the address where the child lives for the majority of the week. In cases of equal shared care, both parents must agree which address should be used on the application. For applications in the normal admission round, if there is no agreement, the local authority will decide which address will be used.

Where applicants share the same address, for example live in the same block of flats or a shared house, priority will be given to those closest to the ground floor and then by ascending individual property number (such as flat number).

Where the distance between 2 or more children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be independently verified and will involve drawing random sealed envelopes with the name of one child per envelope.

## **Waiting List**

Our school will maintain a clear, fair and objective waiting list for children entering Year 7 until 31 August of each school year of admission. If your application is unsuccessful, your child's name will be added to the waiting list. Where places become available, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria outlined above. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received, or when their name was added to the list.

Under the School Admissions Code, looked-after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol (see below) must take precedence over those on the waiting list.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

We participate in our local authorities' Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible and before anyone is considered from the waiting list. Eligibility for the Fair Access Protocol does not limit a parent's right to make an in-year application to any school for their child. Any application will be processed in accordance with the usual in-year admission procedures.

## **Challenging Behaviour**

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admission round or at any point in the normal year of entry. The exception to this is where we may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, ie. 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, in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13) apply.

### **Children of UK service personnel and crown servants**

Families of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, will be allocated a place in advance of the family arriving in the area, providing a place is available and the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. This may include a posting note or letter of support from the commanding officer; details should include the relocation date and the unit postal address. Until a fixed address is available the unit postal address will be used, and a school place allocated accordingly.

Where possible, an application must be included in the normal admission round. [Name of school] will not refuse a child of UK service personnel or a crown servant a place because the family does not currently live in the area, nor will it reserve blocks of places for these children.

We will use the address at which the child will be living when applying our oversubscription criteria, provided this is notified to the school. Until a permanent address is provided, the unit or quartering address will be used as in the case of applying oversubscription criteria.

### **Withdrawing an offer of a place**

We will not withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within 28 days, or it was established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

Where a parent has not responded to the offer, we will give them a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not respond within timeframe specified above.

If an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, we will consider the application afresh and a right of appeal will be offered if an offer is refused.

We will not withdraw an offer of a place once a child has started at our school except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In these circumstances, we will consider the length of time that the child has been at the school before deciding whether to withdraw the place.

### **Late Applications**

The closing date set nationally and is advertised on website of your home local authority. Applications received after the closing date for the normal round of admissions will be treated as late and will be considered after all on-time applications have been considered.

## Receiving an offer

The child's home local authority will inform the parent(s) whether or not a place has been offered on the relevant 'National Offer Day.'

## In-Year Admissions

You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admission round, all children whose EHC plans name our school, will be admitted to the school.

Likewise, if there are spaces available at the school in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place. As listed above, admission may be declined in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13) apply.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to the 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 in this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions are made via Wiltshire Council's Admissions Scheme ([Apply for a school place - Wiltshire Council](#))

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

## Proof of Address

The Local Authority (LA) and Ascend Learning Trust reserves the right to ask parents for proof of their address. If the parents' current address is different to that held on the LA's computerised system, the LA may ask parents to provide proof of the new address if one is indicated. Acceptable proof of address includes:

- i. A copy of your Council Tax Bill issued within the last 12 months
- ii. A solicitor's letter stating contracts have been exchanged and specifying a completion date
- iii. A signed and dated tenancy agreement for a 12-month period, plus proof of residency (e.g. copy of a recent utility bill)

If parents fail to provide proof of a new address, the LA will use the old address for admission purposes. If parents notify the LA that they will be moving house, even if they provide the relevant proof of that address, they must move into that property by no later than the end of the first term following the notification. The LA and Ascend Learning Trust reserve the right to check that parents are living in the address indicated within that timescale. If parents are not living there, the applications will be investigated and the allocated place may be withdrawn.



## Appeals

If your child's application for a place at one of the schools in our trust is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals.

Parent(s) have a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel against any decision made regarding the admission of their child. The case will be heard by an independent appeal panel at a meeting to which you will be invited. The panel's decision is legally binding to all parties, and can only be challenged by the Local Government Ombudsman if there has been maladministration, or by Judicial Review. The Local Government Ombudsman can be asked to investigate the appeal if there has been maladministration and an application can be made for a judicial review. Unless there are significant and material changes in circumstances, only one appeal application may be made for each academic year

You can find details of the trust's appeals timetable on the following webpage:

**INSERT LINK**

Appeals for late applications will be included if possible but will be heard within 40 days of the appeal being lodged in accordance with the School Admissions Appeals Code.