

Whittonstall First School



Admissions Policy 2024-2025

Executive Head Teacher: Katie Jacobs

Policy review dates			
Review Due	Changes Made	By Whom	Date Shared
September 2024	no changes made	Katie Jacobs	September 2024

ADMISSIONS POLICY
WHITTONSTALL FIRST SCHOOL

Whittonstall First School is an academy and part of Cheviot Learning Trust. The Trust is the admission authority for the School and is responsible for determining the School's admissions policy.

The published admission number (PAN) for entry into Reception at the School is 14. Where the School receives more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)¹ (formerly known as a Statement of Special Education Needs²) naming the School will be admitted.

Oversubscription criteria

1. 'Looked after' children³ or 'previously looked after' children i.e. children who were previously looked after but ceased to be because they were adopted⁴ or became subject to a child arrangements order (formerly a residence order)⁵ or a special guardianship order⁶.

¹NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

An Education, Health and Care Plan made by a local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special educational provision required for a child.

² A statement made by a local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 specifying the special educational provision for a child.

³

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.

⁴

Adoption includes reference to 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).

⁵

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 replaced residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁶

See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or special guardians.

2. Children with an exceptional social or medical need⁷ (for example, where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only attend the School).
3. Children living in the School's catchment area⁸.
4. Children living in the School's greater catchment area who have a sibling already in the school who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.
5. Children living in the School's greater catchment area⁹.

⁷[Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body or a medical professional, psychologist or equivalent professional involved with the family or the child. The professional body or the medical professional, psychologist or equivalent professional must be independent of both the family and the School. The evidence must relate specifically to the School and the child or family and must explain in detail why the School is the only school or the best school (as opposed to any other school) which can meet the particular needs of the child or family.]

⁸

For details of the School's catchment area please contact Northumberland County Council or the School's office.

⁹[For details of the School's greater catchment area please contact Northumberland County Council or the School's office.]

6. Children living outside the School's catchment area and greater catchment area with a sibling¹⁰ who (a) attends the School at the time of application and (b) will be attending the School at the time of admission.

7. Other children.

Tie break

Within each oversubscription criterion priority will be given to children with a sibling who (a) attends the School at the time of application and (b) will be attending the School at the time of admission.

Priority will then be given to those children who live closest to the School measured as a straight line (i.e. "as the crow flies") from the front door of the child's home address¹¹ to the School's main entrance using Northumberland County Council's computerised measuring system. But, as between two or more children living the same distance from the School, places will be offered by random allocation. The random allocation will be verified by someone independent of the School.

Applications in the normal admissions round

Northumberland County Council is responsible for co-ordinating the allocation of school places in the normal admissions round for children living in Northumberland. Parents¹² should apply to Northumberland County Council (or to their home local authority if they live outside Northumberland)

¹⁰

For these purposes a 'sibling' means (a) natural siblings, half siblings, step siblings, adoptive siblings and foster siblings, whether or not they are living at the same address; and (b) any child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address. Where the School has available places for some but not all siblings from a multiple birth (including twins), the admission authority will exercise its discretion to offer all those children a place even where the total number of offers would then exceed the published admission number.

¹¹

For these purposes the child's home address, as stated in the common application form, shall be the residence where the child usually lives. Where a child's parents live apart and the child lives part of the week with each parent, the child's home address, as stated in the common application form, shall be the home of the parent who claims child benefit (or, if neither parent claims child benefit, the child's primary residence on the child's NHS records). The admission authority may require evidence (e.g. a council tax bill, a tenancy or lease agreement or a contract for sale) showing that a child's parent lives or is due to live at the child's home address stated in the common application form.

¹² For these purposes 'parent' has the meaning given in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 i.e. (a) a natural parent, (b) an individual who is not a parent but has parental responsibility (as defined in Section 3 of the Children Act 1989) for a child, or (c) an individual who has care of a child (i.e. the child lives with and is looked after by that person).

using its (or the home local authority's) common application form before the published deadline.

In allocating school places, priority will be given to those children where the application was submitted and received before the published deadline.

Late applications

If an application is received after the closing date, the application will be treated as late unless exceptional circumstances apply. The admission authority will consider whether any exceptional circumstances apply, taking account of any evidence you may provide, provided that such evidence is received before 31 January and, if the admission authority determines that exceptional circumstances apply, the admission authority will consider the application alongside those application received on time. Examples of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances may include a family who has just moved into the area, in which case the admission authority may require proof of ownership (e.g. a tenancy or lease agreement or a contract for sale) or, in the case of members of Armed Forces, confirmation of the posting (e.g. an official letter stating the relocation date and a postal address or quartering area address applicable to the child).

If the admission authority determines that exceptional circumstances do *not* apply, the application will not be processed until the first round of school offers have been made. Parents should note that submitting an application late is likely to reduce the chance of being offered a place at the School.

Equal preference

The admission authority operates an equal preference system for the processing of applications. This means at the first stage there will be no distinction between first, second or third preference applications. Therefore, all applications will be considered equally against the School's admission policy and oversubscription criteria. If a child qualifies for a place at more than one school, the parent's highest ranked preference will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

Offers

In the normal admissions round parents will be notified of the outcome to their application on national offer day. If you applied online, you will be sent

an email; if you completed a paper application, a letter will be sent by 2nd class post.

Withdrawing an offer

The admission authority may withdraw an offer if it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if the parent does not do so. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application will be re-considered and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

The admission authority will not withdraw a place once a child has started at the School except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the admission authority will take account of the length of time that the child has been at the School.

Waiting lists

If your child has not been offered a place at the School, the School will put your child's name on a waiting list. Children are given a position on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when the child's application was made or received. If pupil numbers subsequently fall below the School's published admission number, a place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list at that point except that priority is always given to looked after children, previously looked after children, and those children allocated a place at the School in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Fair Access Protocol. This means that a child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another child subsequently applies for a place at the School and has greater priority under the oversubscription criteria or in accordance with Fair Access Protocol.

The School will hold a waiting list for one term in that academic year ending on 31 December; no list will be held by the School after this date and new in-year applications will need to be submitted.

In-year admissions

The School's governing body, as its admission authority, and Northumberland County Council have agreed that the Council will co-ordinate in-year

applications for places at the School; parents should therefore make in-year applications via the Council. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their in-year applications and, where a place is not offered, informed of their statutory right of appeal.

The admission authority may admit children in-year even if their admission would then exceed the School's published admission number.

Fair access protocol

The School is committed to trying to provide a place for children who are vulnerable and/or for whom it can be hard to allocate school places because of their specific circumstances, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admission authority may prioritise a child where admission is requested by Northumberland County Council under the locally agreed protocols. The admission authority may offer a place in such circumstances even if it would result in the number of pupils exceeding the published admission number.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

Where the School has offered a child a place, that child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday but parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the School until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach 'compulsory school age' (i.e. the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday) and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the academic year for which the application was made. If parents so wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may wish to seek a place for their child outside of the child's normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. If so, parents should contact the School to discuss the child's specific circumstances. The admission authority will then make a decision about admitting the child outside the child's normal age group in the light of the relevant circumstances and in the best interests of the child, taking account of (amongst other things) 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 any medical professional or psychologist; whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; the views of the School and its head teacher. When informing a parent of its decision on the year group the child may be admitted to, the admission authority will set out clearly the reasons for its decision. Parents will not be given any lower priority for making any such request.

Please note: although parents have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to offer a place at the School, this right does not apply if the admission authority has offered the child a place at the School albeit not in the parent's preferred age group.

Right of appeal

Parents have a statutory right of appeal if, following an application, the admission authority does not offer the child a place at the School. Parents will be given more information about how to appeal when they are informed of the decision not to offer their child a place.