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# WINTER GARDENS ACADEMY ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024-25

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Adopted by the Trust Board:  
Review:

December 2023  
December 2024 (net consultation due 2026 for 2028-29)

## Aims.

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school.
- Set out the school's 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 advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [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](#).

## Definitions.

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

**Looked after children** 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, or ➤ Became subject to a special guardianship order

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 reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

## How to apply.

For applications in the normal admissions round (at the point of entry to the school) you should use the application process/form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). For most of our community, that will be Essex County Council, accessible via this link: [www.essex.gov.uk/apply-for-a-primary-school-place](http://www.essex.gov.uk/apply-for-a-primary-school-place).

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

Please note, pupils already attending our nursery will not transfer automatically into the main school. Attendance at any local nursery or pre-school provision, including any provision made by Winter Gardens Academy directly will not guarantee a place in the main school on entry to reception year, and a separate application to Reception must be made through the local authority for a Reception place.

## 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 in 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 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

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 listed in section 6.

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 at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

## Allocation of places.

The school has an agreed admission number of **60** pupils for entry in Reception.

## Oversubscription criteria.

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

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

Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school. Where more applications are received than there are places available, the following criteria will be used in descending order 1 to 5:

- 1 Looked After<sup>1</sup>
- 2 Children living in the priority admissions area with a sibling<sup>2</sup> attending the school.
- 3 Proximity of home to school measured by straight line distance, those living closest being given the highest priority.

The proximity (straight line distance is calculated by the LA) of the child's home to the school will be taken as a tiebreaker, if necessary, in any category.

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<sup>1</sup>Looked after Children will be allocated a place providing an application is received by the closing date. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after, became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. 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 of the Children's 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.

<sup>2</sup> LA Sibling Definition applies

In the unlikely event of a tie, regarding distance, the tiebreaker will consist of a name being pulled out of a hat by a neutral party. This is the preferred method of Essex Local Authority. Please refer to the 'Primary Education in Essex' booklet for the definition of both 'siblings' and measurement for distance. Essex County Council will keep a waiting list until the end of the first week of the Autumn Term and thereafter by the School until the end of the first term.

### **Deferred entry.**

At Winter Gardens Academy, we strongly promote and actively prepare for all children to start school in the September during the academic year in which they turn four years of age.

As required by law, the school will provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. Therefore, if a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September then they are entitled to that full-time place.

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 the child reaches compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer of admission is made.

Parents can also request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents interested in taking up a part-time place initially should contact the school for further details as to what this would entail.

If you plan to defer your child's start date until later in the school year, you must still apply at the usual time. Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. Where parents choose to defer entry, the school may reasonably expect that the child would start at the beginning of a new school term/half term.

### **Summer-born children.**

Where a parent of a summer-born child (1 April – 31 August) wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, they will need to apply for a place at the correct time for the normal admission round for the following academic year. Supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort should be submitted. The admission authority for the school will then decide whether the application for a Reception place will be accepted or whether it will be treated as an application for a Year 1 place, the child's normal age appropriate cohort. If the application for a Reception place is not accepted, this does not constitute a refusal of the place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

### **Fair Access Protocol.**

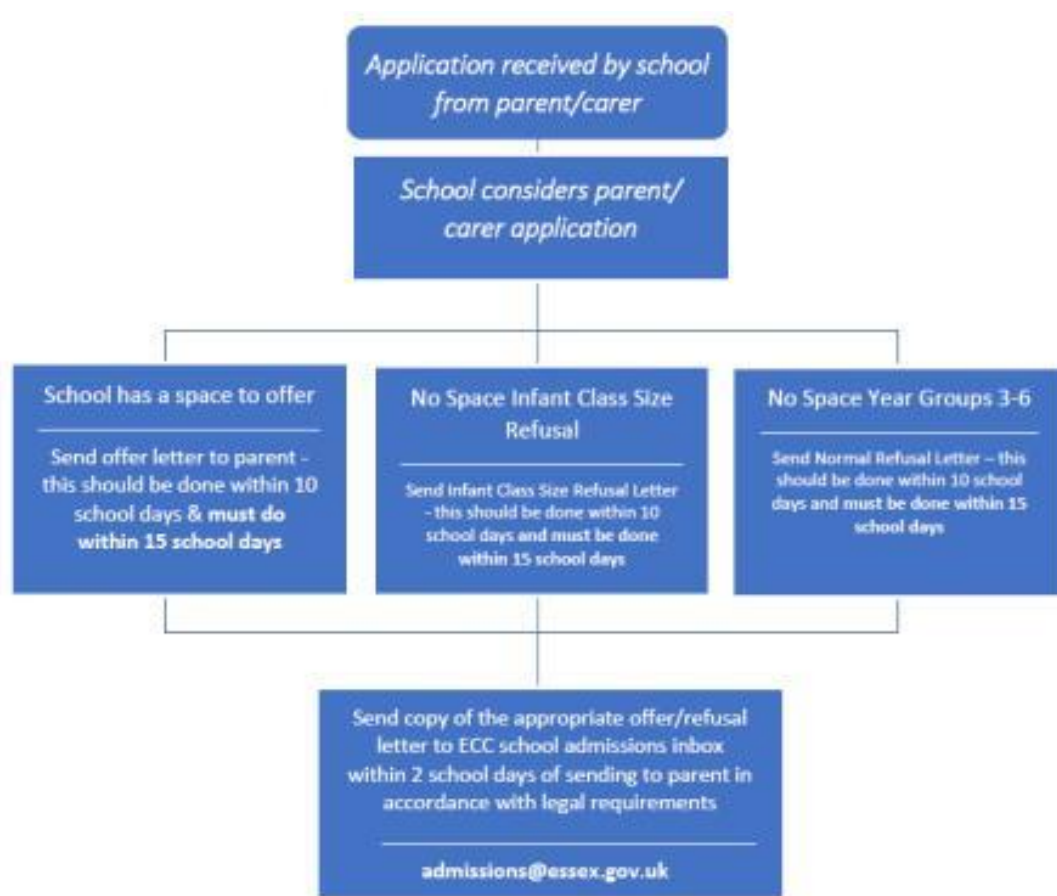
Wherever possible, we participate in Essex County Council's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

### **Mid-year admissions (admission outside of entry in September to Reception).**

Mid-year admissions (all admissions outside of normal entry into Reception in September) are coordinated by the school. Please contact the school office for an application form or visit our school website. Forms should be returned to the school office.

The school will consider your application and where space is available will send out an offer letter no later than fifteen school days later. Where space is not available, the school will send out a refusal letter no later than fifteen school days later. Copies of offers and refusal letters will be sent to Essex County Council's Admissions Inbox ([admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)) within two school days in accordance with legal requirements

When a mid-year application is received, the school will follow this procedure:



## Appeals.

Parents will appreciate that if a school is over-subscribed it will not always be possible to offer a place in their first choice of school. Many parents will wish to make alternative and definite arrangements for their child.

The 1996 Education Act does, however, give parents the right to appeal against the decisions of the Directors regarding Admissions. Parents wishing to appeal should contact the Essex Appeals Team at <http://www.essex.gov.uk/after-your-school-offer/appeals>.

## Monitoring Arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Directors every year. Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.

