School Admissions Policy

Raynsford
Church of England Academy

2027 - 2028

Forgiving **R**espectful **I**nclusive **E**mpathetic **N**eighbourly ***D***etermined

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.
If one person falls, the other can reach out and help"

Reviewed:	November 2025
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Approved by:	Full Governing Body

Our vision, deeply rooted in Christian values is that, all thrive in a safe environment, where they are celebrated for their uniqueness and are empowered to meet their full potential

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Section 1. 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

Section 2. 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.

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

Section 3. 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 the Governing Board to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

School Age

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.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be

on the school roll (not including preschool) of the academy at the time of the application and be likely to remain in the school / academy at the proposed date of admission.

Children of Staff

For the purposes of this policy, *"children of staff"* refers to children of permanent members of staff whether full-time or part-time who:

a) Have 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) Have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

This criterion applies to all permanent teaching and support staff employed directly by the school and preschool. It does not apply to staff working on a casual, temporary, or supply basis (including those employed by third-party agencies).

For the purpose of this criterion, a ***child*** **is defined as the staff member's biological or adopted child, or a child for whom the staff member has legal parental responsibility, or the child of a partner living permanently in the same household.**

A member of staff will be informed at the time of appointment if their post is considered one for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Where both parents meet this definition, the application will be considered under this criterion if either parent satisfies the qualifying conditions above.

Home Address

To identify whether your child lives within the school's **catchment area** please see Appendix 1. A more detailed, interactive catchment map can be found by visiting the Central Bedfordshire website.

A child's **home address** is the child's current permanent home address at the time of application. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address

Section 4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

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

Central Bedfordshire residents can access the online application form at *CBC admissions pages* or contact the School Admissions Team to request a paper application form (0300 300 8037/admissions@centralbedfordshire/gov.uk)

Please note, pupils already attending our preschool will not transfer automatically into the main school. A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

Section 5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

5.1 Request for outside of normal age group.

Parents are entitled to request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group.

Such requests must be made *by letter or email to Mr Wheatley, Headteacher, c/o the School Office* and should attach any supporting evidence which the child's parents wish the Governing Board to take into account when considering their request.

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

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.

5.2 Summer born children

Parents of **summer-born children** (born 1st April to 31st August) may choose to delay their child's start at school until they reach compulsory school age in the September after they turn 5. They would then normally need to make an in-year application for a place in year 1.

However, if parents wish such a child to be educated "out of year group" i.e. in the Reception Year rather than Y1 they may request this and should discuss it with the school as soon as possible.

Parents are advised to submit an on-time application for a Reception place in the child's normal age group and to make a request for admission out of year group to the Governing Board at the same time. If this recommended process is followed then the Governing Board will notify the child's parents of their decision before any offer of a place is made.

If the request is accepted, then the child's parents must make a fresh application for a Reception place as part of the following year's normal admission round.

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.

If the request is refused, the child's parents must decide whether to accept any offer of a place in the child's normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for a place in year 1.

5.3 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.

Parents 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.

Section 6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission number

The school has a published admission number of 30 pupils for entry in reception.

6.2 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.

1. **Highest priority** will be given to **looked after children and all previously looked after** children who apply for a place at the school. This includes children who have been adopted from state care outside England.
2. **Children living in the catchment area with siblings** attending the school at the time of admission (see definitions of home address and siblings)
3. **Children living in the catchment area**
4. **Other children with siblings in the school**
5. **Children of permanent staff members**
    a. where the member of staff has been employed at the school for **two or more years at the time of application**, **or**
    b. where the member of staff has been **recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.**
6. Any other children.

Priority will be given within each oversubscription criterion to those children whose home address is nearest to the school. Distance is determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address. You can view the distance from your home address to the school site via CBC distance measuring tool

6.3 Tie break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated (for example, because two applicants have addresses measuring the same distance from the school), the school will use the *CBC's random database allocation process* as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This process will be independently verified.

6.4 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.

6.5 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Central Bedfordshire'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. Parents of children who are eligible to be allocated a place under the Fair Access Protocol may also make an in-year application to the school.

Section 7. In-year admissions

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

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions

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

Section 8: Waiting list

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your 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 one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.3 of this policy. The waiting list will be re-ranked each time a new name is added to the list and priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest. The waiting list will be held until *the end of each academic year of intended entry*.

Section 9: Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

Central Bedfordshire School Admissions Appeals.

You can find details of the school's appeals timetable on the school website:

Section 10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing board 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.

Raynsford Academy School catchment area.

The school's catchment area is defined as the area enclosed within the red boundary line shown on the map below.