

Admissions Policy 2024/25



Black Firs School

Black Firs School is an academy and a member of TLA Trust this means we determine our own admissions. This policy outlines arrangements with respect to the admission of children to the School for the academic year 2024-2025. We align our admissions with other members of TLA particularly Congleton High School who are also our main transition secondary school. The age range of Black Firs School is 3 to 11 years old.

For children starting in Preschool we process your admission enquires via the School office so please contact us directly; telephone 01260 272935 or email office@black-firs.co.uk. The Preschool is accessible to all children as rising three year olds, ie, the ½ term in which their 3rd birthday lands, subject to availability. This is a sessional ½ day or full day provision. The School is registered to accept 15 hours or 30 hours of free child-care for 3yr olds.

Starting in to Reception class at age 4 is still managed by Cheshire East Borough's Coordinated Admissions Scheme against our School's criteria. Starting in any other cohort yr1 to yr6, if there is a vacant place, is treated as an in-year admission and applications are to Black Firs School, *see below*. The Governors are committed to ensuring that admissions to the School reflect the wide diversity of the community that the School exists to serve.

Procedure for admission into our Reception class

Detailed information and guidance will be published in the Cheshire East booklet. Applications should be submitted on the Common Application form to the Local Authority responsible for the parental address.

Attendance at Black Firs Pre-school

Attendance at our Pre-school does not guarantee admission to the School; parents will still need to apply for a Reception place at the School and all applications will be considered in accordance with the School's admission arrangements but over-subscription criteria is included in criteria four below.

Students will be admitted without reference to ability or aptitude. The age of admission to Black Firs School is currently 4 years old. The planned admission number (PAN) for the year commencing 2024 and thereafter will be 45.

In-Year Admissions

In Year admission applications should be made by emailing directly Black Firs School office office@black-firs.co.uk. On receipt of an in-year application Black Firs will notify the Local Authority of both the application and its outcome within 10 school days. Admissions to the Black Firs will be determined on the basis of whether the admission of the applicant would prejudice the efficient education of others or efficient use of resources. ([*see further information below*](#))

Over-subscription Criteria

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after is eligible for admission under this criterion. Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and accordingly the application would be prioritised under this criterion. Children who were not "looked after" immediately before being adopted, or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under this criterion.

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*). Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after and those children 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. (*see notes below*)

2. Children whose sibling attends the School and who is expected to continue at the School in the following school year. This also includes half-brothers / sisters and unrelated children living together as part of one household.
3. Children of staff with more than two years' service, or those new members of staff recruited to meet a particular skills shortage.
4. Children attending Black Firs Preschool who are on roll for a minimum of two days per week.
5. The Governors reserve the right to admit children with proven and exceptional medical and social needs where admission to the School might best help satisfy those exceptional needs, providing that such application is submitted with appropriate evidence or reports from a doctor or social worker. (*see note below*)
6. Admission of all other children will be on distance; prioritising children living nearest to Black Firs. (*see note below*)

Notes: 'looked after child' definition has been amended in accordance with paragraph 1.7 (*footnote 17*) of the School Admissions Code that came into force on 1st September 2021. Children who were adopted are those who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Child arrangements orders (as defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014) replace residence orders. A 'special guardianship order' is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians) (as defined in section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

If Black Firs is named in an Education Health Care Plan the Governors have a duty to admit the child to the School.

Children of multiple births. Exceptionally it may be necessary to offer places over the published admission number to ensure that, as far as possible, siblings (i.e. twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) can attend this School.

Where capacity is exceeded in any of the above admission criteria a place will be allocated to the child living nearest to the School measured using an 'address-point system'. (*i.e. the Local Authority distance measuring system - children living nearest to the school measured using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) which measures straight line distances in miles from the school's coordinate point to the point of residence's coordinate point.*)

Proof of address and residency may be required and the Governors retain the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

When a child lives at more than one address e.g. spends part of each week at different addresses, full details of the arrangements must be included on the application form (or by means of an accompanying note) to enable the Governors to decide which address (or, exceptionally, addresses) to use for admission purposes.

Supporting evidence from a registered professional such as a medical practitioner, psychologist or social worker, must be provided which sets out the particular reasons why Black Firs is the most suitable School and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The Governors, if it is considered appropriate, will seek the views of the School Doctor or Educational Psychologist in the event of parents requesting admission on medical or psychological grounds. This criterion cannot be considered if the required documents have not been received.

Late applications for places will be considered after all applications received on time. (Please see the Local Authority guidelines for more information on late applications).

Parents can find Key Dates for the application process on [Cheshire East Council website](#)

The Governing Body expects that all students selecting Black Firs School would contribute to achieving the aims set out in its Mission Statement.

If a child is a "summer born child", parents may request that the date their child is admitted to School be deferred to later in the school year. However, the child must start school before the end of that school year. If a parent wishes their child to be educated outside of their normal chronological school year, i.e. to be kept back a year, they must discuss this with the School before applying. However, the final decision on this rests with the Headteacher. Parents may request that their child attend school part-time until he/she reaches their fifth birthday.

'In-year' Admissions – Application Process

In Year applications are those made during the school year into any year group other than the normal point of entry, i.e. our Reception class. Applications for school places *received after the first day of the School year* into the relevant age group must be made by emailing directly Black Firs School office office@black-firs.co.uk. This may include applications from

parents of children moving into Cheshire East from another local authority's area, moving within Cheshire East, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.

Parents seeking school places 'in year' at Black Firs will be required to complete the ['in year' application form available from this link](#). The Form link is also available on the School's website and will be available in hard copy on request, applications can also be made over the telephone 01260 272935.

Parents will be invited to provide information in support of their application. They will be asked to provide details, where applicable, of any siblings attending Black Firs at the time of application and who will be attending at the time of admission, details of the current school attended and the length of time resident at the address provided.

Personal data including that of sensitive nature (including special category information) provided for the purpose of school admissions will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and its principles. Details of which are published on the TLA website under "Data Protection". Full details of the way your data is stored and used can be found in the TLA's Privacy Notice, which can also be found on TLA website.

To ensure that a place is offered as quickly as possible, some applications will be processed in accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. The operation of Fair Access Protocols is outside these admission arrangements and is triggered when a parent of an eligible child has not secured a school place under in-year admission procedures. Parents will receive full information before this procedure is implemented. The Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol, agreed in partnership with Black Firs School, does not affect the parent's right to express a preference or to challenge unsuccessful applications through the appeals process. Permanently excluded children ready to be admitted into a new school will be admitted under the Fair Access Protocol. Information about the process is published on the Council's website.

The Local Authority will publish on its website information on vacancies in Cheshire East publicly funded schools.

Parents of children who are seeking a transfer to an alternative school for reasons other than a house move will be strongly advised to discuss the proposed transfer with the current school before applying. Black Firs will also consider the views of the head teacher of the child's present school.

The process of completing the application for a School place can be facilitated by Black Firs by inviting the parent to complete an online application during a school visit or by the parent prior to contacting or visiting the School. Hard copy application forms are available on request from the School Office office@black-firs.co.uk

Applications will not normally be accepted more than 6 school weeks prior to the intended date of admission. An exception to this is where an application is made during the summer term, for admission at the beginning of the following September. In this case, applications will be accepted up to 8 school weeks prior to intended date of admission.

Processing in-year Applications

All applications should be processed within no more than 10 school days from the receipt of application. Different timescales will apply to applications processed in accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.

Where there are spaces in the relevant year group a place will normally be offered to the parent.

If the year group in question is full because School feels that further admissions would result in a breach of infant class size legislation or that it will prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources, the application will be referred to the LGB applications committee for a decision on whether to refuse admission.

Decisions will be confirmed in writing to the parent by the LGB applications committee and the letter /e-mail will include information about the legal right of appeal and a start date, where relevant.

Where a preference has been unsuccessful, written correspondence will confirm the decision on the application and will advise the parent to contact the Local Authority for advice about alternative schools with vacancies.

Written correspondence confirming offers will advise the parent to contact the School office to accept or decline the School place within no more than 10 school days from the offer date. Successful applicants will normally be expected to take up their offer of a school place within 10 school days from the offer date.

Decisions on applications will be notified to the Local Authority to enable the Local Authority to keep up-to-date records.

Children whose applications are unsuccessful will be placed on a 'reserve list' for one term after the start of the academic year in case any further places become available.

Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parent's or School's circumstances have changed significantly since the original application was made. Full details of the change of circumstances must be provided on the applications form for consideration.

Appeals

Parents/ Guardians/ Carers whose children are not offered a place have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Parents wishing to appeal should obtain an appeal form from the School. The form should be sent to reach the Clerk to the Appeal Panel, care of Black Firs School, within 20 days of the date of the letter confirming the Governors' decision not to offer a place. Should an appeal be unsuccessful, the Governing Body will not consider further appeals within the same academic year unless there have been significant or material changes in the child's circumstances.