



Admissions Policy 2025-26

St Mary's CE Primary School

Believe and Achieve

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The Directors of The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust welcome children from all backgrounds, faiths and no faith. The Directors are committed to developing inclusive schools that reflect the diversity of the local community. Admission to the school is not dependent on being a member of a particular faith community.

As well as being an inclusive neighbourhood school, as a Church school St Mary's has a distinctive character and ethos that reflects the teachings of Jesus Christ and Christian values. We ask all parents applying for a place here to respect this ethos and its importance to the school community. We hope that all children in the school will be able to participate (as appropriate) in the religious life of the school (including collective worship and religious education). This does not affect the right of parents who are not Christians to apply for a place. Indeed, through our commitment to inclusivity, we actively welcome families from other faiths and no faiths.

Note: Parents have a statutory right of withdrawal from Collective Worship and Religious Education.

Admission Number

The Board of Directors is responsible for the admission of pupils to the school and admits children each year in accordance with the published admission number for the school. The number is reviewed annually.

For the academic year commencing in September the number is 15 for compulsory school aged children and 11 per session for part-time Foundation Stage children. The closing date for applications for reception children and for nursery education will be the same as the Local Authority's.

Admissions

Children will be admitted to nursery in the academic year that they turn four. The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust has one admittance date in September. However, should places be available, parents are able to apply throughout the year.

Full time places in reception classes will be available in September of the academic year within which the child becomes five years old.

It is the Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust's policy to try and meet parents' wishes where possible, however in some cases there may be more applications than there are places available. Admission where the school is oversubscribed is determined by the oversubscription criteria detailed below.

Admissions for Reception – Year 6 are administered through a co-ordinated admissions scheme. Applications on a single common form may be submitted directly to Staffordshire Education Authority, or submitted on-line.

Applications for our nursery are processed by the Trust. Applications should be made using the Application Form on the Trust website, and sent to TSSMAT by post or using office@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk

Oversubscription Criteria

Children are considered for admission to the school irrespective of gender, race, creed, background or disability within the maximum admission number each year.

If the total number of preferences for admission to a school exceeds the school's Published Admission Number (PAN), the following order of priority is used to allocate the available places.

- 1) Looked after children (LAC), all previously looked after children (PLAC), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England (IAPLAC), and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order, as defined by the Children Act 1989.
- 2) Children who satisfy both of the following tests:

Test 1: the child is distinguished from the great majority of other applicants either on their own medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances.

Medical grounds must be supported by a medical report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application). This report must clearly justify, for health reasons only, why it is better for the child's health to attend the preferred school rather than any other school.

Exceptional circumstances must relate to the choice of school and the individual child, i.e. the circumstances of the child, not the economic or social circumstances of the parent/carer. They should be supported by a professional report (obtained by the applicant and provided at the point of application), e.g. social worker. This report must clearly justify why it is better for the child to attend the preferred school rather than any other school.

and

Test 2: the child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend the preferred school.

Hardship means severe suffering of any kind, not merely difficulty or inconvenience, which is likely to be experienced as a result of the child attending a different school. Applicants must provide detailed information about both the type and severity of any likely hardship at the time of application.

- 3) Children living within the catchment area.
- 4) Children who have an elder sibling in attendance at the preferred school (or in the case of an infants school, the affiliated Junior school) and who will still be attending the school at the proposed admission date; (For admission purposes, a brother or sister is a child who lives at the same address and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parents marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the same address, whose parents live as partners.)
- 5) Children whose parents regularly attend a Church of England church, or a church in communion with the Church of England, or of a church which is affiliated to the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or the Evangelical Alliance. Evidence of such attendance will be required in the form of a letter from a minister of the Churches concerned (Only certain Voluntary Controlled Schools use this criterion, see additional notes below). Regular attendance is defined as attendance at a church service (or an explicitly defined church activity) on a Sunday or weekday on at least two occasions per month for at least two years.
- 6) Children who regularly attend a place of Christian worship other than the Church of England. Evidence of such attendance will be required in the form of a letter from a minister of the Churches concerned (Only certain Voluntary Controlled Schools use this criterion, see additional notes below). Regular attendance is defined as attendance at a church service (or an explicitly defined church activity) on a Sunday or weekday on at least two occasions per month for at least two years.
- 7) Other children arranged in order of priority according to how near their home addresses are to the main gate of the school, determined by a straight-line measurement as calculated by the Trust's Geographical Information System.

Where it is not possible to accommodate all children applying for places within a particular category then the Trust will allocate the available places through random selection. This process will be supervised by someone independent of the Trust, and a fresh round of random allocation will be used each time a child is offered a place from a waiting list.

Additional Notes

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from <https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/scc/schooldetails/details.aspx?SchoolID=142096&Easting=412197&Northing=316805&Results=20&SchoolMap=1#map> .

There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a school.

Admissions for the normal age of entry are administered through a coordinated admission scheme and preferences for maintained schools will be processed centrally by the School Admissions and Transport Service.

Please note that the offer of part time Foundation Stage education does not guarantee a full time place when the child is of compulsory school age. A separate application for children of compulsory school age must be made the following year.

In accordance with legislation, children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names a particular school as being the most appropriate to meet the child's needs must be admitted to that school. This will reduce the amount of places available to other applicants.

Children in care means children who are looked after by a Trust in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a Trust, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Trust in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

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

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supportive information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the Trust will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

The Trust uses a Geographical Information System (GIS) to calculate home to school distances in miles. The measurement is calculated using Ordnance Survey (OS) data from an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. The coordinates of an applicant's home address is determined and provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and OS Address Point data.

The requirement for the Trust to meet the Infant Class Size legislation may result in the refusal of catchment area or sibling applications where a class has already reached its limit of 30 pupils. However, as an exception, the Trust will give careful consideration to offering places above the published admission number to applications from children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted even when there are no other vacant places.

The home address is considered to be the child's along with their parent/carer's main and genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e. where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than legal guardianship) the friends or relatives address will not be considered for allocation purposes.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week, parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

It is expected that parents will agree on school places before an application is made, and it may be necessary to request evidence from you to confirm that this is the case. The Trust is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Trust immediately. Where there is a proposed house move taking place during the admissions process the Trust will only accept the revised address for purposes of allocation where parents/carers can provide documentary evidence of the move by 13 March in the year of applying. It will be necessary for sufficient evidence of a permanent move to be provided by the applicant by this date before it will be taken into account for allocation purposes at the national offer date.

If a place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from the child's normal and permanent home address at the time of allocation of places then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

If there are a limited number of spaces available and we cannot distinguish between applicants using the criteria listed, such as in the case of children who live in the same block of flats, then the child or children who will be offered the available spaces will be randomly selected. This process will be independently verified.

Deferred Entry to Reception Class

Parents may request that their child be admitted to Reception Class on a part-time basis, or that their child be admitted to school later in the same academic year until the child reaches compulsory school age (i.e. beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday). The effect is that the place will be held for the child in Reception and is not available to be offered to any other child within the same academic year in which it has been offered.

Admission Outside of the Normal Age Group

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. In addition, the parents of summer born children may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted outside of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Trust who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the Headteacher of the school concerned. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

Waiting lists

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria stated above and not based on the date their application was received. There will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date they will be offered according to the child at the top of the waiting list.

For cases where the infant class size regulations apply, the waiting list will operate until the cohort concerned leaves Year 2 and parents will be written to each year to ask whether or not they wish their child's details to remain on the list.

For all other cases, waiting lists will be kept until 31 December 2023.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at the school.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e. they can go up or down the list since each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the oversubscription criteria.

Children who are subject of a direction by a Trust to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Late Applications

Preferences received after the closing date will be considered alongside those applicants who applied on time wherever possible. Where it is not practicable because places have already been allocated, or are shortly to be allocated, then late preferences will be considered only after those that were made before this point.

A late application does not affect the right of appeal or the right to be placed on a school's waiting list.

Repeat Applications

Parents do not have the right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Trust has accepted a second application from the appellant because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission. **"In-Year Admission" Arrangements.**

Appeals

Parents who are not offered a place for their child have the right (except for applications to Foundation Stage) to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Further details can be found within the Admissions Appeals Policy. Should some appeals be unsuccessful, The Board of Directors will not consider further applications from those parents within the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in their circumstances.

There is no statutory right of appeal for admission to this nursery setting. Any disputes over the administration of the policy will be dealt with by the Trust's complaints procedure.