



**SYNERGY**  
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# Admissions Policy

## 2024-2025

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## Statement of intent

**Synergy Education Trust** is the admission authority for the academies within the Trust. The allocation of school places has been delegated to the Local Authority School Admissions Team, in line with the Synergy admissions criteria.

### 1.Scope of the policy

This policy applies to those Blackpool Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for which Blackpool Council is the Admissions Authority, and for the Blackpool Academies that have adopted this Policy. The Trust Board of Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies and Free Schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admissions criteria and for determining the allocation of school places in accordance with their published admission policy. Synergy Education Trust has adopted the Blackpool Council Admissions Policy wholly.

### 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.

### 3.Application process - Mainstream Schools only

Applications must be made using the Common Application Form, which will be made available by the Local Authority's (LA) School Admissions Team. Applications can also be made online via the LA's website: [www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or paper copies can be requested from the LA's School Admissions Team from 1 st September 2024.

Applications must be made direct to the LA no later than 15th January 2025.

All places will be offered by the LA's School Admissions Team on behalf of the Governing Body, within the primary co-ordinated admissions scheme operational in the Local Authority's area. The offer date this year is 16th April 2025.

You must apply to the authority where you live. If you are unsure, for example if you live near council boundaries, it is whichever LA you pay your council tax to. You can apply for a primary school in any area, but you must apply to your home authority. If you live outside the Blackpool area, please contact your home authority to request an application.

A Lancashire County Council application can be requested by ringing the Pupil Access Team on 01524 581134 or writing to the Area Education Office (North), PO Box 606, White Cross Education Centre, Quarry Road, Lancaster LA1 3SQ. Online application via website.

#### **4.Coordinated admission arrangements**

In accordance with the Education (Coordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2006, Blackpool has coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admissions. Blackpool also coordinate cross border requests with Lancashire County Council and other local authorities if required. This is for annual intakes each September (primary reception intakes and secondary year 7).

#### **5.Admission to nursery class**

This policy does not apply to requests for nursery and early years placements – including nursery provision delivered in schools or co-located children's centres.

Where schools have a nursery facility, they must publish separate admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

The heads and local governing board manage admissions to a nursery on behalf of the Trust. Admissions are made with reference to criteria that give due priority to looked after (or previously Looked After)\* children, children with specific educational, social or medical reasons for admission.

Where schools have a nursery attached as part of a children's centre, they must publish the admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Where schools or academies have a private or voluntary provider nursery facility, that provider should publish its own admission arrangements for entry to the nursery.

Attendance in any nursery class that is attached to a primary school or academy does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education. Likewise, schools cannot insist that children attend any nursery class in order to guarantee admission to that school's reception class. Schools may sometimes give priority to children in their nursery, but parents are advised to check individual admission policies (this does not often happen).

Admission details for other pre-school settings, including those for nursery aged children, is available from the Blackpool Family Information Service, telephone 0800 092 2332.

## **6.Starting primary school**

The Education Act 1996 states that every child is legally required to attend primary school from the start of term following his or her fifth birthday. All children are however entitled to a primary school place in the September following a fourth birthday.

## **7.Deferred entry**

Parents may defer primary admission by up to two school terms. Parents must agree a start date with the school or academy. Schools and academies must ensure that the Council's School Admission Team knows about the agreed deferrals. Schools and academies will reserve reception places where they have agreed deferrals with start dates within a child's reception year. In these cases children must start school no later than the first day of the final term within their reception year.

If a child has a fifth birthday during the summer term (1 April to 31 August) and parents/carers wish to defer entry until the following September, they can opt to do so and to miss the reception year. We will not reserve a place in these circumstances. Parents would have to apply for a Year 1 place (for the

September after the child's fifth birthday). There is provision for parents to apply for and to provide evidence to support a full year deferral with a retained reception start. This is by agreement with individual admission authorities. Further information is available on the council's website - see summer born guidance.

### **8. Infant class sizes**

The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1973) as amended by SI 2006/3409 prescribed that infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. (The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 introduces certain exceptions relating to children of multiple births and children of UK service personnel).

### **9. Applying for a school**

Blackpool residents should apply for places using the council's online application (or obtain a paper form). Lancashire residents and those living in areas must apply via their own local authority.

[Blackpool families can make applications on the Blackpool Council website.](#)

Paper applications are available on request from Blackpool primary schools/academies or school admissions team - [schoolaccess@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:schoolaccess@blackpool.gov.uk)

Submission of a late application (after the relevant national statutory closing date) will often reduce the chance of a place at a preferred school.

### **10. Allocation of places**

Blackpool Council operates equal preference admission arrangements and this is a national statutory requirement.

There are national statutory closing dates for primary and secondary applications (new intakes each September). Blackpool Council will monitor and coordinate the process for allocating places within the requirements of the school admissions code (September 2021 - plus subsequent updates) and associated legislation. The council will allocate places for all community and

voluntary controlled schools (and academies, which adopt these arrangements). We will aim to allocate in accordance with parental preference for as many applications as possible.

There is a statutory limitation contained in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which states that a local authority need not comply with parental preference, "if compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources".

Where demand for a school exceeds the available places (there are more applications than available places) we will allocate places objectively using only the determined oversubscription criteria - see page 7 (or that of individual academies which have adopted these arrangements).

### **11. Published admission numbers**

The published admission number (PAN) indicates the number of pupils offered places in the normal year of entry (reception and year 7).

When setting the PAN, the local authority has due regard to the available space within the school as defined by the school's net capacity.

Where any school or academy is oversubscribed (has more applications than available places), only the relevant determined admission arrangements must be used to allocate the available places.

Academy trusts and governing boards of voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools in Blackpool are responsible for setting their own admission arrangements including PANs.

### **12. Children with an education, health and care plan**

When a child has an education, health and care plan that names a particular school, all admission authorities must admit the child as required by Schedule 27, Section 324 of the Education Act 1996. This applies whether they have available places or not (the council will strive to confirm offers in time for statutory offer dates in the majority of cases).

### **13. Equal preference scheme**

All councils and admission authorities are required to have an equal preference scheme for school admissions. The Department for Education (DfE) considers that these maximise meeting parental preferences.

Applicants are entitled to express preferences, in priority order, for three schools, and to give reasons for their preference.

We will consider all preferences equally. If we are able to offer more than one school or academy place, then we will confirm only a single offer per child. This will be for the school or academy that the applicant(s) ranked highest.

The council make a single offer of a place in accordance with Blackpool's co-ordinated admission arrangements, (see the relevant co-ordinated admission scheme - appendices 3 and 5). The council will make the offer on or by the national statutory offer date (1 March for secondary, 16 April for primary).

Expressing a preference does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an offer of their highest ranked school/academy. Furthermore, some applicants may not receive an offer of a place at a lower ranked school.

#### **14.Oversubscription criteria**

The academy published admission number (PAN) determines the number of available places.

Where there are more preferences for a particular school than there are places available, the council will use the determined oversubscription criteria to allocate places at that particular school.

In the event of the admission number being reached within any one of the oversubscription criteria in the order listed below, the distance criteria will be used as a 'tiebreaker'. In the event of equal distance, a random allocation will be used to determine who takes priority for a place.

If we are unable to offer a place at any one of the preferred schools or academies, we will then offer a place at the nearest community school with an available place, or at the nearest academy that is able to offer a place.

After we have confirmed initial offers, parents can add a child's name to any school or academy waiting list. We will advise you about any vacancies which then arise. Any offers from a waiting list are still in accordance with the determined admission arrangements for that school or academy.

The over subscription criteria is applied in the following order:

- *Looked after children*

Blackpool Council gives the highest priority to Looked After Children (LAC), as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Admission of LAC) (England) Regulations 2006.

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that Authority, as defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of application and allocation.

Under legislation, children who leave public care through adoption, a residence order or special guardianship order, will continue to be given the same priority although they are no longer looked after by the state.

Also children who were previously in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as they have been adopted. These are children who were looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious group or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Parents and carers will be expected to provide evidence of previous looked after status.

- *Medical/Social/Welfare reasons*

Children for whom the council accepts that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons associated with the child and/or family which are directly relevant to the school concerned.

Only exceptional reasons which are directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. If you feel that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons associated with your child and/or family which support admission to a particular school you must indicate that this is the case on your application.



All applications will be considered but supporting professional evidence will be required to demonstrate exceptional or compelling reasons why only a specific school can cater for a particular child's needs. This must set out the reasons and the level of risk to the child or family and why the school in question is the only suitable school; plus any difficulties which would arise if the child had to attend an alternative school.

It should be noted that all schools can make provision for special educational needs, and can also manage common conditions e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes.

Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to a particular school will be considered. Priority will be given to the child for the preferred school only if the submitted evidence unequivocally proves the circumstances and demonstrates why any alternative schools would be unsuitable.

- *Siblings*

Priority will be given to brothers and sisters of children already attending the school at the time of application and allocation (the national statutory offer date).

This includes full brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, step brothers and sisters and adopted and foster brothers and sisters who are living within the same family at the same address.

Full brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will still be given priority as siblings. Half, step, adopted and foster brothers and sisters who do not live at the same address will not be classed as siblings.

- *Distance*

Blackpool Council determines the distance from the applicant's home address to the school with the nearest to a preferred school having priority for a place.

We measure the distance between the applicant's home and school or academy as a straight line between the council Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address point of the applicant's home address and of the school. The LLPG

is a point within the boundary of the property and is usually located at its centre. Distances are measured using the council's geographic information system.

If the council is unable to determine eligibility on distance, for example two or more addresses are equal distance from the school, then a random allocation will determine the offer. In the event of a random allocation is required, somebody independent of the children's services department and of the school or academy would supervise the process. We would invite parents to attend.

### **15.Late application**

We will not process applications submitted after the statutory closing date at the same time as applications received by the set deadlines. This included those instances where an applicant has registered details on Blackpool's online system and then has not pressed the "submit" button.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where appropriate evidence is provided, will those applications received after the closing date (but before offers of places have been finalised) be considered concurrently with those applications received on time. We usually finalise offers around 2 weeks prior to the national statutory offer date.

The circumstances that might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the illness of a single parent/carer (during the application period), which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time.

For under subscribed schools it may be possible to consider late applications up to the school's published admission number.

We will refer late applications for Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies to the admission authority who will liaise with the school admissions team.

### **16.Change of preference**

Applicants may not change their preference once the closing date has passed, unless there is a significant reason for doing so, for example a house move. Any requests must be made in writing, with evidence to demonstrate the reasons.

## 17. Waiting lists

The school admissions team will establish and maintain a waiting list for each school for which it is the admissions authority, and any Academy, which has delegated this responsibility. We keep a waiting list until the end of the autumn term in the admission year (31 December).

After we have confirmed offers, parents may request that their child's name is placed on the waiting list for any school or academy. Parents/carers may also request that the child is placed on the waiting list for a school/academy that was not an original preference (this includes those who relocate within the area after initial offers and new to area children in the relevant year groups).

If a vacancy occurs, which will take the school below its published admission number (PAN); the place will be offered from the school or academy waiting (reserve) list in accordance with its admission policy.

The school admissions code requires that the waiting list reflect the priority for admission determined within each school or academy's determined admission policy. Priority is not associated with first come first served or length of time resident within an area. A new applicant, who has a higher priority according to the admission criteria, would be ranked higher than those that have been on the list for some time.

Parents who intend to appeal against the local authority's decision not to offer a place at a preferred school(s) should do so irrespective of having their child's name placed on the waiting list. An independent appeal panel cannot consider a child's position on the waiting list. The independent appeal panel cannot allocate places above a published admission number based on waiting list priority.

## 18. Appeal arrangements

Parents have the right to have an appeal for any school or academy place where they have applied for a place and have been refused admission. This includes all three initial preferences and any refusals generated by later enquiries.

Applicants can also appeal for a school/academy that was not an original preferred school.

Applicants who intend to appeal for a community or voluntary controlled school must complete a Blackpool Council appeal form –available from school admissions team.

Please also complete this form when appealing for an Academy or Free School that has delegated the responsibilities relating to appeals to the council.

Applicants who wish to appeal for a place in a voluntary aided school/academy, or certain academies and Langdale Free School, should contact the school/academy directly to request an appeal form. The school admissions team can provide information and advice on the appeal process.

### **19.Fraudulent applications**

Where we have allocated a place because of inaccurate or misleading information – for example, in relation to a false address –then we can withdraw the original offer. We will investigate any discrepancies which become known in liaison with our own admission authorities where required. Where places are withdrawn we will then reconsider the application and confirm a school or academy offer (which may be different to the initial offer). Parents retain their rights of appeal.

### **20.Admission to Blackpool schools after 1 September 2024**

In relation to new to area applications and transfer requests the amended school admission code (september 2021 – and updates) requires local agreement about coordinating new to area applications and transfer requests. Details will be available on the council's website. Please note that Blackpool schools and academies operate a locally agreed first day of the next school term protocol for the majority of transfer requests.

Where any admission authority refuses a request for a school place, they must give you the reason for this and inform you about your right of appeal. These are statutory requirements.

### **Fair access protocol (FAP)**

Blackpool council has a fair access protocol that operates for in-year admission requests (outside of the annual intake process). This aims to ensure that unplaced and vulnerable children who may present challenging behaviour receive an offer of a school place or alternative provision as quickly as possible.

Blackpool council's FAP follows the requirements of the school admissions code. We have agreed the local FAP (for secondary and primary) with schools and academies. Details of the FAP are on the council's website.

The FAP allocates places via a monthly meeting and can allocate to year groups in schools and academies, which are already full or oversubscribed.

School	Admission number
Boundary Primary School	60
Stanley Primary School	90
Moor Park Primary School	60

## **21. Admissions Process- Special School provision only**

As an academy trust, we do not manage our own special school admissions; they are managed and coordinated by Blackpool SEND team. If the local authority chooses to name a Synergy academy on a child's EHCP plan, they will admit the child or young person.

All children or young people must have an EHCP in place to apply for a special school place. The EHCP indicates the pupil's primary needs and the provision required to meet their learning and additional needs

### **Visits of interest**

If parents wish to visit one of our special schools as part of the consultation process this must be coordinated with the Blackpool Council SEND team. Schools are unable to arrange their own visits of interest.

### **In-year admissions**

If a pupil is allocated a school place in the middle of a school term, the local authority will agree a suitable start date for the pupil with the Head, giving consideration to the wider needs of the cohort of pupils they will be joining.

### Dual placements

On request by the local authority, pupils may attend one of our special school's as part of a dual placement. This enables children to have support from both a mainstream and a special school. This can help to prepare children for mainstream education and enable mainstream and special schools to share and develop their expertise in supporting children with different types of SEN.

### Arrangements for pupils under statutory school age

- Pupils who have a special school named on their EHCP are entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday.
- Parents can defer the date their child is admitted until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.
- Parents can have the child attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

### Admissions when school has reached their published admission number (PAN)

In this circumstance, the local authority will consider the number in the class to which the child would be admitted rather than the total for the whole school.

School	Admission number
Highfurlong School	130
The Maple School	48

### Assessment place

In exceptional circumstances, the local authority may place a child or young person in a special school as part of the statutory assessment of their needs;

this does not automatically mean a child or young person has a school place if an EHCP is issued.

## **Appeals**

All appeals are dealt with by Blackpool Council SEND team.

### **Blackpool Council SEND team**

Blackpool  
Special Educational Needs and Council  
Disabilities  
P O Box 4, Blackpool, FY1 1NA

Email: [send@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:send@blackpool.gov.uk)

Tel: 01253 476602 or 01253 476553