

Unity Academy
An Academy within the
Fylde Coast Academy Trust

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR
2024 / 2025

Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) is the admission authority for the academies within the Trust and the allocation of school places has been delegated to the Local Authority School Admissions Team, in line with the FCAT admissions criteria.

Unity Academy operates an equal preference scheme and welcomes all children.

The planned admission number for 2024/25 is 60 for places in Reception and 120 for places in Year 7.

Application Procedures

If your child is due to start **primary** school in September 2024, you can apply for a Reception place between 5th September 2023 and 15th January 2024.

If your child is due to transfer to **secondary** school in September 2024, you can apply for a Year 7 place between 5th September 2023 and 31st October 2023.

Applications must be made using the Common Application Form which will be made available by the Local Authority's School Admissions Team.

Applications for **Reception** must be made direct to the Local Authority no later than **15th January 2024**.

Applications for **Year 7** must be made direct to the Local Authority no later than **31st October 2023**.

You must apply to the authority where you live. If you are unsure, for example if you live near council boundaries, it is whichever Local Authority you pay your council tax to. You can apply for a school in any area, but you must apply to your home authority.

If you live in Blackpool you can apply online at www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Alternatively, you can request a paper application form from Blackpool School Admissions or from the academy.

If you live outside Blackpool, you can apply online at [Lancashire County Council School Admissions](#).

All places will be offered by the Local Authority on behalf of FCAT, within the primary / secondary coordinated admissions scheme operational in the Local Authority's area. The national offer date for admissions to Year 7 will be **1st March 2024**, and admissions to Reception will be **16th April 2024**.

Infant Class Size

Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children are:

- a) Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with Education, Health and Care Plans specifying the school;
- b) Looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) Children admitted after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admissions authority or local authority in the initial application process;
- d) Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds the appeal;
- e) Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- f) Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- g) Children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

Deferred Entry and Admissions Outside of the Normal Age Group

Where a child has been offered a full time place in the September following their fourth birthday, parents may defer the date of admission until either the pupil's fifth birthday but not beyond the start of the final term of the school year. If you wish to defer entry this must be agreed with the school. Where deferred arrangements are agreed, school places will be reserved.

If your child has their fifth birthday during the summer term and you wish to defer entry until the September, you can opt to miss the reception year. School places cannot be reserved in these circumstances and you would have to apply for a Year 1 place during the summer term.

Alternatively, you may submit a request for your child to be admitted out of their normal age group in order to start in reception rather than in year 1. Parents should read the following government guidance prior to making an application: [DfE Summer Born Children](#). Application and further guidance can be sought from the appropriate local authority school admissions teams.

Admission to nursery classes

This policy does **not** apply to children being admitted to nursery education, applications are available online at <https://www.unity.blackpool.org.uk/information/Nursery>

Attendance in our nursery class at Unity Academy does not guarantee admission to the academy for primary education. Likewise we cannot insist that children attend our nursery class in order to guarantee admission to the academy for primary education.

Oversubscription Criteria

The Academy Trust will not place any restrictions on admissions unless the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of students with Education and Health Care Plans where Unity Academy is named, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

1. **Looked after children and previously looked after children.** This includes any "looked after child" and any child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. This criterion will also apply to children who were previously in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as they have been adopted.
2. **Medical, Social or Welfare reasons.** Where there are exceptional serious, sensitive and compelling circumstances that are directly relevant to the academy, priority may be given. Professional evidence to demonstrate exceptional or compelling reasons why only this academy can cater for a particular child's needs on any of these grounds must be provided with the application. The evidence must set out the reasons and level of risk to the child or family and why the academy 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 and diabetes.

Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to the academy will be considered. Priority will be given to the child only if the submitted evidence unequivocally proves the circumstances and demonstrates why any alternative school would be unsuitable. Parents are responsible for providing the evidence.

3. **Pupils already in Year 6** at Unity Academy at the time of secondary applications are already on roll and guaranteed a place in Year 7 at the Academy unless the parent/guardian requests a place at another secondary school for Year 7. Priority is then given to pupils joining Year 6 at Unity Academy after the time of secondary applications.

4. **Children who will have a sibling** in attendance at Unity Academy at the time of transfer. The term “sibling” includes stepchildren, half brothers and sisters and adopted and foster children who are living with the same family at the same address.
5. **Children of staff employed by *name of academy***: this applies to all staff, full and part time who have been employed by Unity Academy for two or more years, or who have been recruited meet a skills shortage.
6. **Distance**: All other pupils, with priority given to those that live nearest to Unity Academy. The measurement will be taken in a straight line from the centre point of the residence to the centre point of the Academy, using the Local Authority’s geographical information system (GIS). Where a child lives with one parent for part of the week and another for the rest of the week only one address will be accepted for a school admission application. This will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of school days (Monday to Friday). Proof of residence may be requested at any time throughout the admissions process.

Tie Break

Where there is oversubscription within any of the determined criteria, then priority for places will be decided in a straight line distance measure, (home to academy,) using the local authority’s measuring system. The nearest to the academy will have priority for admission.

Additional Information - Reception Admissions - twins/ multiple births:

Where there are twins or triplets wanting admission and there is only a single place left within the admission number, then the Trust will exercise as much flexibility as possible within the requirements of infant class sizes. In exceptional circumstances we are now able to offer places for both twins and all triplets even when this means breaching infant class size limits. This may also apply to children who are siblings within the same year group.

There will be a right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel for external applicants refused admission. Parents have 20 school days to compile and lodge hearings.

Late Applications

Applications received after the published closing date will be treated as late applications.

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 made) be considered concurrently with those applications received on time.

The circumstances which might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the illness of a single parent/carer which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time or where a family has just moved into the area.

Change of Preference

Once an application has been submitted, and the closing date has passed, a change of preference can only be actioned if there is a significant change in circumstances, i.e. a house move.

You will be unable to access the online system after the closing date. Any requests for a change of preference should be made in writing to the Local Authority Admissions Team, to include evidence demonstrating the reasons for your changes.

Fraudulent Applications

If it is found that a child has been allocated a place due to misleading information having been provided, for example an incorrect address, then the offer of a place may be withdrawn and the offer of an alternative school will be made by the Local Authority.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be set up in the week following the offers being sent to parents. As places become available, the child highest on the waiting list will be offered the place. This is not dependent on whether an appeal has been submitted.

Children will be placed on the waiting lists using the oversubscription criteria. Late applicants will be slotted into the list according to where they meet the oversubscription criteria. Therefore a child who moves into the area later can have a higher priority than one who has been on the waiting list for some time.

Looked after children or previously looked after children allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

The School Admissions Team will maintain the waiting list until the end of the Autumn Term.

Appeal Arrangements

Where the Academy Trust is unable to offer a place because the school is oversubscribed, parents have the right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel, set up under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2002.

You should contact the School Admissions Team to request an appeal form. You will have the opportunity to submit your case to the panel in writing and also to attend in order to present your case. You will receive 10 school days' notice of the place and time of the hearing.

In Year Applications

If you move into Blackpool after the 1st September 2024, or wish to transfer your child from another Blackpool primary school, please contact the School Admissions Team at Blackpool Council for an in-year application form.