



# Birches First School

*Believe, Grow, Succeed*



## Admission Arrangements/Policy

**Normal Age of Entry:** Academic Year 2020/2021

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

Whilst parents have the right to express a preference for the school that they wish their child to attend, there is no guarantee of a place being offered at their preferred school. In some cases there may be more applications than there are places available. Admission is determined by the oversubscription criteria detailed below.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

If the total number of preferences for admission exceeds the academy's Published Admission Number (PAN), the following order of priority is used to allocate the available places. The PAN at Birches First School is 30.

1) Children in Care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order).

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 Birches First 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 Birches First School rather than any other school.

and

Test 2: the child would suffer hardship if they were unable to attend Birches First 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 who have an elder sibling in attendance at Birches First 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.)

4) Children living within the catchment area of the Academy.

5) 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 Local Authority's Geographical Information System.

Where it is not possible to accommodate all children applying for places within a particular category then the Academy will allocate the available places in accordance with the remaining criteria. If for instance, all the catchment area children cannot be accommodated at a school, children who are resident within the catchment area will be arranged in order of priority according to the remaining criteria.

### **Additional Notes**

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the Academy or Local Authority.

There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to Birches First School.

Admissions for the normal age of entry are administered through a coordinated admission scheme and preferences will be processed centrally by the School Admissions and Transport Service. Each child will receive only one offer of a place.

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

Children in Care means children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social - 4 - 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 Academy will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

The Academy uses the Local Authority's 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 Academy 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 Academy 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 Academy 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 Local Authority immediately. Where there is a proposed house move taking place during the admissions process the Local Authority will only accept the revised address for purposes of allocation where parents/carers can provide documentary evidence of the move by 13th March 2020. 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.

Any Staffordshire child not obtaining a place at any of their parent's preferred schools will be allocated a place at their catchment area school (if places remain available) or the next nearest school with a space available and advised about the independent appeals process.

### **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.

Before deciding whether to defer their child's entry to school, parents should visit the Academy to clarify how they cater for the youngest children in Reception and how the needs of these children are met as they move up through the school.

### **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 Local Authority who will take into account the circumstances of

the case and views of the headteacher. 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 2020.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at the preferred 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 local authority 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 Academy 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**

Parents or carers seeking to transfer to the Academy may make an application using the appropriate application form. This application will be processed in line with the procedure outlined in the determined admission arrangements and parents and carers need to be aware that any date set for joining the new school may be after the next term or half term holiday and those parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child continues to receive appropriate education in the interim.

**Key Admission Dates 2020-21**

CLOSING DATE - all applications to be submitted to School Admissions and Transport Service	15 January 2020
Parents notified of outcomes.	16 April 2020