

ADMISSIONS POLICY – NELT Academies Northumberland Academic Year 2024/2025

Introduction

The North East Learning Trust is the admissions authority responsible for determining and applying this policy in the following Academies:

- Meadowdale Academy
- Ashington Academy
- Bedlington Academy

The Trust will consider all admission applications sent to them by the local authority (LA) and will apply the policy fairly and consistently to every application received.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

The PAN is the number of places we intend to make available for our normal intake. Once the PAN has been set for an Academy, we will not refuse any applications submitted during the normal admission round for Year 7 where the PAN has not been exceeded.

However, if there is an unexpectedly high demand and the Trust believes we could admit additional children, we will inform the LA and either admit children above the agreed PAN or increase the PAN accordingly to accommodate more children.

The current PAN for Northumberland Academies within the Trust is:

Academy	Phase	PAN
Meadowdale	Primary	30
Ashington	Secondary	180
Bedlington	Secondary	150

Meadowdale Academy – Primary Normal Admission Round

Applying for a place in Reception at Meadowdale Academy

To apply for a place at Meadowdale Academy within the Trust parents/carers should complete the common application form supplied by Northumberland County Council. The completed application form must be returned to the local authority by no later than **15 January 2024**. Any application forms received after that date will be classed as 'late' and will not be dealt with until all applications received on time have been through the application process.

Address

The address given must be where the child and parents/carers live permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, child tax credit letter, child benefit letter, medical card, or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. *If there is*

Issue No:	4	Quality Document Type:	Policy
Reviewed:	Autumn Term 2022	Ref:	TRUST/ADMISSIONS/NORTHUMBERLAND
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joint custody for the child, then the address of the parent/carer receiving the child benefit will be used.

Oversubscription criteria for Meadowdale Academy

1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after including those children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care because of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See 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 arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

2. Medical reasons

Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement (for example the child or one or both parents/carers has a disability that means the child can only attend one school).

Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body involved with the family or child. A letter from the child's GP, parents/carers GP or other relevant professional **MUST** be submitted with the application. The evidence must relate to the school for which the application is being made and must demonstrate clearly why the Academy is the only school that can meet the child's needs. No assumptions should be made that the submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself be sufficient to allocate a school place.

3. Sibling links

Children who have a sibling already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at the time of admission. Children who have a sibling already attending the Academy and who is expected to be on roll at the school in Reception to Year 6 at the time of admission. This includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address.

4. Children of staff employed at the Academy

Children of staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Issue No:	4	Quality Document Type:	Policy
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5. Distance

Children who live nearest the school measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies') from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. All distance measurements are based on the distance checker contained within the EMS school admissions software using GIS data. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered, and two or more applicants live equidistant from the Academy, random allocation (names out of a hat or other suitable container) will be used. This process will be supervised by a person independent of the Trust.

Tie Breaker

Where an Academy is oversubscribed within categories 1,2 3 and 4 distance from home to school will be the deciding factor, with preference given to those whose home address is nearest to the school when measured as the crow flies from the front door of the child's home address to the main gate of the school using the local authority's computerised measuring system.

Notification of Places

The formal offer of a place will be issued by the LA who will write to parents/carers on **16 April 2024**.

Reallocation of Places

Places that have become available since offer day will be offered to applicants who submitted their application on-time on 8 May 2024 (first waiting list process).

Late applications for a place in Reception

If your application is late and is not considered as exceptional, you will not be offered a place on 16 April 2024. From 29 May onwards places will be offered as and when they become available in priority order based on the over-subscription criteria (second waiting list process).

Admission of children below compulsory school age and admission of children outside their normal age group

A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March, and 31 August. A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday.

There is flexibility for parents/carers who do not feel their child is ready to start school before compulsory school age. They may defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year following their child's fourth birthday, providing they do not defer beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond

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the start of the final term of that school year. Alternatively, their child may attend school part-time until they reach compulsory school age.

Children born in the summer term, 1 April to 31 August, are not required to start school until a full school year after the point at which they could first have been admitted – the point at which other children in their age range are beginning year 1. While most parents/carers are happy for their child to start school in the September following their fourth birthday, some parents/carers will have concerns about whether their child will be ready for school at this point and will consider delaying their entry to Reception until compulsory school age.

The admissions authority will expect parents/carers to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case. This should demonstrate why it would be in the child’s interests to be admitted to reception rather than year one. In some cases, parents/carers may have professional evidence that it would be appropriate for them to submit, for example, when a child receives support from a speech and language therapist. However, there is no expectation that parents/carers will obtain professional evidence that they do not already have. Admission authorities must still consider requests that are not accompanied by professional evidence. In such cases the supporting information might simply be the parents/carers statement as to why they have made their request.

Where a parent/carer wants their child to be admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority has two separate decisions to make:

- it must first decide on the age group the child should be admitted to
- only once that decision has been made can it apply its oversubscription criteria to decide whether a place can be offered in that age group.

Although it is not always easy for admission authorities to make a decision about a child more than a year before the point at which they may be admitted, particularly as it is difficult to know what progress they may make in the intervening period, parents/carers should know the outcome of their request for admission out of the normal age group in time to make an informed decision about whether their child will start school before compulsory school age.

The process in place:

- requires the parent/carer to make an application for their child’s normal age group at the usual time, but enables them to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time
- ensures that the parent/carer receives the response to their request before primary national offer day.

Issue No:	4	Quality Document Type:	Policy
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If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a request from a parent/carer is agreed, a new application **MUST** be made as part of the main admissions round the following year.

The admissions authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents/carers, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the usual year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the Headteacher to decide how best to educate them. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. Any decision to move a child to a different age group will be based on sound educational reasons and made by the Headteacher in consultation with the parents/carers.

Where a child has been educated out of their normal age group, the parent/carer may again request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to junior or secondary school. It will be for the admission authority of that school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. The admission authority will make a decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the child's best interests and will bear in mind the age group the child has been educated in up to that point.

Where an application for September 2024 has been received by 15 January 2024 for a child's admission to Reception instead of Year 1 (which is the child's normal age group cohort) and this has been agreed, the application will be considered alongside all other applications that are received by this date. The application will not have lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted outside their normal age group.

Waiting lists/appeals

The Trust will maintain the waiting list. Positions on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Those parents/carers whose application for admission has been unsuccessful will be notified of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 gives this right to all parents/carers whose application for a school has been unsuccessful. The decision of an Appeal Panel is binding on both the admissions authority and the Academy. The School Admissions Appeals Code can be found on the DfE website at: www.DfE.gov.uk.

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Unsuccessful applicants may also contact Mrs J Barker, Governance Manager, North East Learning Trust by telephone 0191 5634190 Option 1 or email schooladmissions@nelt.co.uk to be advised of their right to an Independent Appeal Panel and/or request to be included on the waiting list.

There will be no waiting list available after 31 December 2024.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if:

- It was made in error.
- Parent/carer fails to respond to the offer of a place within the agreed deadline.
- It is established that the offer of a place was obtained through fraudulent or misleading application.

Ashington Academy and Bedlington Academy – Secondary Normal Admission Round

Applying for a place in Year 7 in Ashington Academy and Bedlington Academy

To apply for a place at a secondary Academy within the Trust parents/carers should complete the common application form supplied by Northumberland County Council. The completed application form must be returned to the local authority by no later than **31 October 2023**. Any application forms received after that date will be classed as 'late' and will not be dealt with until all applications received on time have been through the application process.

Address

The address given must be where the child and parents/carers live permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, child tax credit letter, child benefit letter, medical card, or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. *If there is joint custody for the child, then the address of the parent/carer receiving the child benefit will be used.*

Oversubscription Criteria for Ashington Academy and Bedlington Academy

1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after including 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 or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a

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local authority in the exercise of their social services functions. (See 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 arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

2. Medical reasons

Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement (for example the child or one or both parents/carers has a disability that means the child can only attend one school).

Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body involved with the family or child. A letter from the child's GP, parents/carers GP or other relevant professional **MUST** be submitted with the application. The evidence must relate to the school for which the application is being made and must demonstrate clearly why the Academy is the only school that can meet the child's needs. No assumptions should be made that the submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself be sufficient to allocate a school place.

3. Sibling links

Children who have a sibling already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at the time of admission. Children who have a sibling already attending the Academy and who is expected to be on roll at the school in years 7 – 11 at the time of admission. This includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address.

4. Children of staff employed at the Academy

Children of staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post in the Academy where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

5. Distance

Distance from the front door of the child's home to main gate of the school will be the deciding factor with preference being given to those whose home address is nearest to the school as measured in a straight line ('as the crow flies'). The distance checker is contained within the EMS school admissions software using GIS data. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement.

This will be based on the child's address. Where the last place to be allocated would mean that a multiple birth sibling group i.e., twins, triplets, or other multiple birth sibling groups, would be split, the sibling group will be given priority over other children.

Issue No:	4	Quality Document Type:	Policy
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Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered, and two or more applicants live equidistant from the Academy, random allocation (names out of a hat or other suitable container) will be used. This process will be supervised by a person independent of the Trust.

Tie Breaker

Where an Academy is oversubscribed within categories 1,2 3 and 4 distance from home to school will be the deciding factor, with preference given to those whose home address is nearest to the school when measured as the crow flies from the front door of the child's home address to the main gate of the school using the local authority's computerised measuring system.

Notification of Places

The formal offer of a place will be issued by the LA who will write to parents/carers on **1 March 2024**.

Reallocation of Places

Places that have become available since offer day will be offered to applicants who submitted their application on-time on 20 March 2024 (first waiting list process).

Late applications for a secondary school place

If your application is late and is not considered as exceptional, you will not be offered a place on 1 March 2024. From 18 April 2024 onwards places will be offered as and when they become available in priority order based on the over-subscription criteria (second waiting list process).

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Where a child has been educated out of their normal age group, the parent may again request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to secondary school. It will be for the admission authority of that school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. The admission authority will decide based on the circumstances of each case and in the child's best interests and will bear in mind the age group the child has been educated in up to that point.

The process in place:

- requires the parent/carer to make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time, but enables them to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time
- ensures that the parent/carer receives the response to their request before secondary national offer day.

If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to

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accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 8 for the following September.

Where a request from a parent/carer is agreed, a new application **MUST** be made as part of the main admissions round the following year.

The admissions authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents/carers, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the usual year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the Head of School to decide how best to educate them. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. Any decision to move a child to a different age group will be based on sound educational reasons and made by the Head of School in consultation with the parents/carers.

Where an application for September 2024 has been received by 31 October 2023 for a child's admission to Year 7 instead of Year 8 (which is the child's normal age group cohort) and this has been agreed, the application will be considered alongside all other applications that are received by this date. The application will not have lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted outside their normal age group.

In-year admission

The Trust are responsible for managing in-year admissions, further information can be found in the Trust's In-Year Admission Policy.

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