ADMISSIONS POLICY 2027/2028

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Approved Signature (Executive Principal):	 **Date (27 January 2026)**
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The following, up to a specific academy heading, is applicable to all Sussex Learning Trust Academies. After the academy heading are detailed the local arrangements that complement this policy but reflect local criteria and practice.

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at each Academy within the Trust
- Set out the arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code

We are required by our 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at a school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked-after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked-after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their 5th birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round, you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). Each Academy will be part of the local authority's coordinated admissions. This requires parents to complete a Common Application form, which will be provided by the local authority. Copies of the form are available from West Sussex County Council online at www.westsussex.gov.uk. You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

Only one application per child will be accepted. Parents with shared parental responsibility should agree to their child's school preferences before making an application.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority. You will receive an email from the Pupils Admissions Office under West Sussex County Council guidelines, offering you a school place on the following dates:

- Reception - 16th April 2027 or the next working day
- Year 7 - 1st March 2027 or the next working day

Please note that emails will be sent out throughout the day. Those without an email address or who applied on a paper form will be sent a letter by second class post, posted during the day. No information is given to parents over the telephone. Applicants to whom places are offered will be required to inform the Governing Body of their decision whether to accept or reject the offer by the date given in the letter of offer.

Any applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2027 for primary and 31 October 2026 for secondary will be considered as late applications. Applying after the closing date means that your preferences will be considered after all the preferences received on time have been allocated.

Please note, pupils already attending Warden Park Primary Academy Nursery will not transfer automatically into reception in the attached school (or any of our other schools). A separate application must be made for a place in reception.

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. Parents wishing to request admission outside a child's normal age group should do so via the West Sussex County Council Admissions website.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- Headteachers' or Principals' views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of places

Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Governing Body of each Academy.
Once admitted to the school pupils will automatically transfer from one key stage to another up to the end of KS4.
The Admissions policy has been designed to give every child a fair and unbiased chance of entry to each of our Academies.
All applications for places at each school will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below and in each Academy's local policy.

6.1 Admission numbers

Each Academy will publish its admission number (PAN) for entry for each year of entry in its local Admissions policy.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care plans (EHCP) name one of our Academies will be admitted to the school before any other places are allocated. If this is the case, fewer places will be available to applicants admitted via the school's determined admission arrangements.

If any of our Academies is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that one of our Academies receives more applications than the number of places available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out in the Academy's local policy, in order, until all places are filled.

The decision about whether an admission application qualifies to be considered under the oversubscription criteria category - "Children who need a place at the school on exceptional and compelling social, psychological or medical grounds" will be made by the LGB, in agreement with the Trust CEO.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the week, then the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives the majority of the week. Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to support the address used.

6.3 Tie break

Each Academy will outline its process for tie break situations in their local admissions policy.

6.4 Waiting lists

Waiting lists will be ordered by the same criteria outlined in each Academy's oversubscription section (6.2).

The School Admissions Code prohibits waiting lists from being ordered by date of application or length of time on the list. A child's position may change on the waiting list as other children join or leave the list. If a place becomes available, the waiting list, and any new applications for the school, will be considered.

The place will be offered to the child with the highest priority based on the over-subscription criteria. We are unable to give any indication as to when this is likely to happen, if at all.

Starting school (Reception) and secondary transfer

The waiting lists for all intake groups will be established after the national offer date for that intake year group. The date is given in the relevant key dates for secondary school places and primary school places.

If your child has been refused a place in writing they will automatically be added to the waiting list.

Waiting lists are held until the end of the summer term in July of the academic year applied for. Children applying for September 2027 will remain on the waiting list until July 2028.

6.5 Children below compulsory school age

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents may defer their child's entry to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year the offer was made for.

Where the parents wish children to attend part-time until later in the school year they should liaise with school staff. Any arrangement to attend part-time will not extend beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

6.6 Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with EHC plans.

6.7 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in our local authorities' Fair Access Protocol. This helps make sure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

7. Appeals

If your child's application for a place is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal via the West Sussex County Council admissions website. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties. Please note that appealing for a school place does not give priority on a waiting list.

You can find details of the appeals timetable on our Trust and each Academy's webpage.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees every year. The local policy for each Academy, as referenced throughout, will be reviewed by each Academy's Local Governing Board every year.

Whenever changes to the admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the PAN), the board of trustees will publicly consult on these changes.

The board of trustees will consult on the admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

The following information will be added the Trust and each academy website

Appeals Timetable

Admissions Appeals:

Please read the following information from the DfE:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/admission-appeals-for-school-places

Appeals resulting from in year admission applications will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Appeals for September 2026 resulting from year of entry or transfer applications:

School	Offer	Appeals lodged by	Appeals to be heard by
Primary	16 April 2027	10 May 2027	12 July 2027 (40 School days)
Secondary	1 March 2027	28 March 2027	12 July 2027 (60 School days)

NB: Appeals will not start being heard until after the relevant closing date has passed.

Appeals lodged after these dates will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of being lodged, whichever is the later date.

Appellants will be sent notification of their appeal hearing at least 10 clear school days in advance of the hearing. Appellants will be sent a copy of the school's case 7 clear working days in advance of the hearing.

Appellants must ensure that any further evidence not included with their initial appeal, is received by 5pm on the day on the day notified in the letter with details of the hearing. Any additional evidence or information received after this date might not be considered at the appeal hearing.

Further advice to parents wishing to appeal for a school place is available on WSCC https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-places/apply/make-an-admissions-appeal/

Our admissions policy is written to reflect the inclusiveness of our school and to ensure that there are no barriers to a child's success. The CFS admissions policy welcomes all pupils and therefore truly reflects the broad community we live within.

Admissions Arrangements 2027/2028

CFS is a publicly funded, co-educational, all-through school and will have the following agreed admission number for **new** pupils in the academic year 2027/2028;

Reception 60 pupils
Year 7 60 pupils

Future years	Reception	Year 7
2027/2028	60 pupils	60 pupils
2028/2029	60 pupils	60 pupils
2029/2030	60 pupils	60 pupils

(These numbers are new admissions only and do not include existing pupils coming up through the school.)

- The maximum number of pupils per year group when the school is at capacity is;
  - ⇒ Reception to Year 6 60 Pupils
  - ⇒ Year 7 to Year 11 120 pupils

- Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with the Governing Body of CFS.
- Once admitted to the school pupils will automatically transfer from one key stage to another up to the end of KS4.
- The Admissions policy has been designed to give every child a fair and unbiased chance of entry to CFS.
- All applications for places at the school will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

1. Applying for a Place

CFS will be part of the local authority's coordinated admissions. This requires parents to complete a Common Application form, which will be provided by the local authority. Copies of the form are available from West Sussex County Council or online at www.westsussex.gov.uk.

2. Late Applications

Any applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2027 for Primary and 31 October 2026 for Secondary will be considered as late applications.

3. Consideration of Applications

CFS's Admissions Committee will consider all applications for places at the School. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, CFS will offer places to all those who have applied.
The School will provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday.

In addition, parents can;

a) request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age; and
b) request that their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

4. Offer of places

a) If your application has been successful and you applied online, you will receive an email from the Pupils Admissions Office under West Sussex County Council guidelines, offering you a school place on the following dates. Please note that emails will be sent out throughout the day. Those without an email address or who applied on a paper form will be sent a letter by second class post, posted during the day. No information is given to parents over the telephone.

Reception, 16th April 2027 or the next working day
Year 7, 1st March 2027 or the next working day

b) Applicants to whom places are offered will be required to inform the Governing Body of their decision whether to accept or reject the offer by the date given in the letter of offer.

5. Appeal Procedure

a) Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful will be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with the statutory provisions in force at the time.

b) The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

c) Full details of the procedure will be sent to parents with the decision letter.

6. Waiting List

a) In addition to the right to appeal, unsuccessful applicants can join the Waiting List which will operate until the 31st August. After that date, parents will need to reapply to remain on the waiting list for an in-year admission. Please apply in writing directly to CFS, details of the address are available on our website or via the office on 01243 792690. Alternatively you can email admissions@chichesterfreeschool.org.uk

b) Where places become vacant, children on the Waiting list will be ranked in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and the place allocated to the child matching the highest criteria.

7. Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

CFS will admit any pupil with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) where CFS is named on the EHCP.

8. Over-subscription Criteria

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below.

a) A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order. A 'looked after child' is a child who is either in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority as part of their social services function (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989).
Evidence is required to support applications for looked after children or previously looked after children who ceased to be so because they were adopted (or become subject to a residency order or special guardianship order). Applications for looked after children should be made by the relevant social worker. Applications for children who are adopted should be supported by a copy of the adoption order and the new birth certificate. Applications for children who are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order should be supported by a letter from social services confirming the details of the arrangements for the child.

b) Children for whom it is essential to be admitted to this school because of special circumstances to do with significant medical, social, pastoral or psychological needs evidenced by written professional advice, explaining why these needs can realistically only be met by CFS. Decisions relating to admissions based on these needs will be made by the Board of Governors following advice from the Admissions Panel and in consultation with an appropriately qualified professional who is deemed expert in the particular field concerned.

c) Children who, on the date of admission, will have a sibling attending CFS. Sibling means a full, step, half, adopted or fostered brother or sister, but not cousin, who will be living permanently with them at the same address at the date of their entry to the school; the school may require proof of relationship.
Note – At the discretion of the Chairman of Governors and the Executive Principal acting together on behalf of the Governing Body, in the event of oversubscription, siblings with the same date of birth, such as twins and triplets or same-year siblings may be deemed to conform to a single admission and places will be offered to all those children (where necessary, taking the school over its published admission number). The school will only exceed its PAN if, in the Governing Body's opinion, there is sufficient space to do so without any detrimental effect on the overall quality of the education provided on balance to all students within the school. The legal maximum PAN is 30 pupils for infant classes (reception and years one and two), however if the 30th pupil admitted is a twin, triplet etc. all the children will be admitted and will be classified as permitted exceptions under Infant class size legislation.

d) Children of staff in the following circumstances:
   i. Where they have been employed at the school for two or more years, at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made.
   OR
   ii. Where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

e) If there are still places to be filled after the above four criteria have been applied, and there are still more applicants than places, then the remaining places will be filled by random allocation. Those applicants unsuccessful after random allocation would then be offered a place on the waiting list.

Tie-breaker: In the event of two or more applicants tying when any of the admission criteria is applied, positions will be determined by random allocation.

9. In Year Admissions

Applications for vacancies that arise outside the normal annual admission round will be considered at any time during the year. Where there is more than one application for a vacant place, the offer of a place will be determined in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. All in-year admissions will be managed by CFS.

Notes

The School may refuse admission to applicants who have been permanently excluded from two or more other schools. The ability to refuse admissions runs for a period of two years since the last exclusion. Exclusions which took place before the child concerned reached compulsory school age do not count for this purpose. The school will consult and co-ordinate its arrangements, including over the rapid re-integration of children who have been excluded from other schools and who arrive in an area after the normal admissions round, in accordance with local in-year fair access protocols for securing schools for unplaced children.