



NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School

Admissions Policy 2024/2025

Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust school, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

Lead Person:	Headteachers
Creation date:	September 2021
Version:	3
Last updated and approved:	November 2022
Latest edits (please give brief overview)	Remove oversubscription criteria 5 and change criteria 2 to “children who already have a sibling at the school” removing “and live in the catchment area”.
Next review due by:	November 2023
Approved by:	Local Governing Body
Statutory Requirement:	Yes / No



1. Admissions Authority

The Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority and follows the Northumberland County Council admissions procedures for admission to NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School. The Trust will comply with the School Admissions Code issued by the Department for Education in September 2021.

Arrangements for applications for places at the school will be made in accordance with the Northumberland County Council's (NCC) co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form (CAF) provided and administered by NCC.

Admission into the Nursery provision is direct to the school. Decisions on eligibility to enter the school in Reception are made by the Academy Trust and any appeals should be made to the Local Governing Body in accordance with the procedures set out under the paragraph on 'Appeals' below.

2. Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

The school has set the admission numbers (PAN) as follows:

Nursery: 104 part-time places.

Reception: 70 places.

The school: admits up to 70 pupils in the relevant year group.

3. Admissions General

If in any year group the school is not oversubscribed then the school will offer children who apply to that year group a place.

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) plan that specifically names NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School will be admitted to the school.

4. Early Years Centres Admissions

Children aged two and three are eligible to be admitted to the school's Early Years Centre. The maximum number of children at the school is 20 in the morning session and 20 in the afternoon session.

Preference will be given to children with LA funding. If there are no places available parents can opt to be put on a waiting list. The waiting list will be organised in order of birth date with the oldest admitted first.

5. Nursery Admissions

A child cannot be considered for admission until the term following his/her third birthday. If a place is available the child will be admitted into Nursery the term after his/her birthday, with the cut off dates of 31st August, 31st December and 31st March. If there are no places available, parents can opt to be put on a waiting list. The waiting list will be organised in order of birth date with the oldest admitted first.

6. Reception Admissions

Applications are made through Northumberland County Council. Attendance at the school's part time Nursery provision does not guarantee admission to the school for primary education and a separate application must be made for transfer from the Nursery provision to primary provision.

Admission will normally be once a year on a full time basis in September if the child is aged four on the previous 31st August. However, some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents are entitled to request in writing to the Principal that:

- their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age, or
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age.

The child must, however, start formal education full-time in the term after their fifth birthday; that is when the child reaches compulsory school age.

When a child's fifth birthday falls in the summer term (1st April – 31st August), parents may request that entry is deferred until the beginning of Year 1, but there can be no guarantee that a place will be available if the school is oversubscribed and a new application for the school year must be submitted. In such cases, the school is not obliged to admit children into a year group other than that of the child's chronological age but will consider all of the relevant circumstances where any such request is made in accordance with the Admissions Code.

Further information and advice on the admission of summer-born children is available from the Department for Education in 'Summer Born Children – Starting School, Advice for parents – September 2020'.

7. Casual admissions

The school only admits to Reception as a whole year group. Any other applications for pupil entry, not into Reception in September, are classed as casual admissions. These include September admissions to year groups other than Reception and any admissions during the academic year.

8. Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. Parents should apply in the normal way together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the requested year group in September the following year providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

9. Oversubscription Criteria for Admissions to Reception, KS1, KS2

Where the number of applications for admission to the school is greater than the published admission number (PAN) for that year group, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. The criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) plan naming the school will always be offered places.

If there is then greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

- i. **Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after**, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order (see note 1). This includes children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (see note 2).
- ii. **Children who already have a sibling at the school.** . (N.B. This criterion does not include younger siblings who are or will be in the Nursery at the same time.) (Sibling is defined in note 3).
- iii. **Children whose normal home address is in the catchment area of the school** and who can provide firm evidence that this will be the case on the appropriate admission date (See note 4).
- iv. Children on whose behalf evidence of exceptional medical need that make it essential their child attends the school is presented. Evidence must be supported in a written statement by a professionally involved third party, for example, a doctor. Supporting evidence should be submitted at the time of application and should set out the particular reasons why the school provision is the most suitable provision and the difficulties that would be caused by the child attending an alternative provision.
- v. **Children living outside the catchment area of the school.**

Tiebreaker

Within each of the above criteria, in the event that there is still an oversubscription after the criteria above have been applied and a tiebreaker is required, then the child living closest to the school will be admitted. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the front door of the child's home to the front gate/main entrance of the school. Random allocation will be used as a tie-break to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same. This process will be independently verified.

10. Multiple Births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number for Reception or the number of places in other year groups in the relevant admission year.

11. Waiting Lists

Unsuccessful applications for a place at NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School will, if requested, be placed on our waiting list. This list is ranked according to the same criteria as those used for admissions to the relevant age group. When a child is added to the list, the list will be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria detailed above. Parents should notify the school that they wish to be held on this list and will be contacted directly a place is available. Waiting Lists will be maintained until 31 December in the admission year.

12. Appeals

Parents may appeal against the decision not to offer a place and must do so in writing to the Local Governing Body within 14 days of being notified that they have not been offered a place at NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School. An independent appeal panel will hear the appeal. A copy of the appeals procedure is available from NCEA Grace Darling C of E Primary School or by emailing admingd@gracedarling.ncea.org.uk

Notes

Note 1 By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. An adoption order is one made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A ‘child arrangements order’ is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A ‘special guardianship order’ is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order).

Note 2 Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child’s parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

Note 3 By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent’s/carer’s partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 4 By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child’s parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents

- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Appendix 1: Catchment map

