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Admissions Introduction

Every school needs an Admission Policy and as our school is a foundation school, the Governing Body determines the admission arrangements. The Governing Body of Maple Tree Primary School is therefore our 'Admissions Authority'.

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- Set out the school's 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 advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the 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 his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth 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 the local authority. Forms can be found on the [Central Bedfordshire website](#).

The allocation of places will take place after the deadline and parents will be notified on the national offer day by the Local Authority of whether their applications have been successful. Parents, who make applications after the official deadline, even if they live in, or move into one of the catchment area will **not** be entitled to automatic places if this would mean exceeding the Published Admission Number.

Those parents not offered a place at the school of their choice will be advised of the appeal procedures by the Local Authority.

Please note, pupils already attending our pre-school will not transfer automatically into the main school. 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.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in 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
- The headteacher's 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 at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission number

The statutory maximum infant class size for Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2 is 30 pupils per teacher.

The admissions number for classes within KS2 is also 30. We keep this number under review and the governors will apply to change the number if circumstances allow. Exceptional circumstances may be considered but never to more than a total of 32.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plans name the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled:

1. Highest priority will be given to looked after children or children who were previously 'looked after', including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school. Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former pupils of the school.
3. Children living in the catchment area.
4. Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school.
5. Children who live nearest to the school determined by a straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address.

6.3 Tie break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the school will use the distance between the school and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the school's front gates on Hawk Drive. A child's home address will be considered to be where he/she is resident for the majority of nights in a normal school week.

Where the distance between 2 children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be witnessed and recorded.

6.4 Children below compulsory school age

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place at the school, 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 may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

6.5 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 listing the school.

6.6 Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Central Bedfordshire's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure 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. In-year admissions

7.1 Applying for a place in other year groups

Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available, it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.3 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address:

office@mapletreepriaryschool.com or sent to the school, Maple Tree Primary School, Hawk Drive, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WA.

Parents will be notified of the outcome of your in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

7.2 Waiting List

Where there are more children than places available, waiting lists will operate for each year group according to the oversubscription criteria without regard to the date the application was received or when a child's name was added to the waiting list.

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year. The waiting list will be held open until 31st August each year.

Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

8. Pre-School Admissions

8.1 Applying for Pre-School Places

Pre-School for 2 Year Olds

Maple Tree's first point of entry is the pre-school which takes children from the age of 2 years old. You can register for the waiting list at the main school office. Parents are invited to visit before the child attends the pre-school and are able to tour the school and pre-school before making a choice.

Children enrolled in pre-school will automatically move into the pre-school class for 3/4 year olds the term after they turn 3 years old. There will be an opportunity for you to defer at this point if it is in the best interests of the child. This request should be made in writing to the Head teacher.

Pre-School for 3 Year Olds

Children can also enter Maple Tree Pre-School in the term after they are three (Jan-April births Summer term start, May-Aug births Autumn term start, Sept-Dec births Spring term start.)

Therefore, parents who would like their child to be admitted at this stage should ensure that they contact the school, as soon as possible, to enter their child's name into the school's waiting list. Parents need to complete the necessary application form for their child to start pre-school.

Visits to the school are encouraged to help make an informed choice. Parents should complete the school's pre-school admission form and return to the school office. Places are offered the term before i.e. place offered in Spring Term for a Summer Start, offered Summer Term for an Autumn start or Autumn Term for Spring start. Applications received after an intake will be added to the waiting list and will be offered if a place is available or at the next intake if a place is available. Parents will be able to defer their child's place should they so wish and their child's name will be kept on the waiting list until the next intake. However, parents should note that a place cannot be guaranteed for the next intake.

You will be informed about the school's acceptance of the children and the start date, the session and times, and the home visit. Your child will normally be invited to a "taster session" the half term before they start.

The children will normally have a staggered start to the pre-school to ensure a smooth transition from home.

8.2 Waiting List for Pre-School

Where there are more children than places available, waiting lists will operate for pre-school children according to the points below:

- 🏰 Maple Tree can take a maximum of 45 children per session across the pre-school and no more than 12 2 year olds in any one session.
- 🏰 Maple Tree Governing Body is the admissions authority for Maple Tree Primary and Nursery School and will apply the following criteria (in the rank order shown) to decide the order in which places will be allocated when there are more requests from parents than the number of places:
 - 1) All 'looked after' children or children who have been previously 'looked after'.
 - 2) children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
 - 3) children in catchment with siblings at Maple Tree.
 - 4) children in catchment.
 - 5) other non-catchment children with siblings at Maple Tree.
 - 6) other non-catchment children by distance.
- 🏰 Maple Tree School cannot guarantee parents of children who are under 3 years old a place. Priority will be given to 3 year olds who are entitled to the universal 15 hours funding.
- 🏰 The school will be able to take 2 years old the term after they turn 2.
- 🏰 The waiting list is structured in date-of-birth order so that the following sections of the community are not excluded:
 - people who have recently moved to the area
 - people whose first language is not English
 - parents of children who attend a cultural setting who are not familiar with the pre-school
 - Looked after children
 - whenever possible (and if financially viable) a place will be kept vacant to accommodate an emergency admission.
- 🏰 The waiting list will be reviewed on 31st August each year.

Inclusion in the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

8. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school 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 in writing and submit your appeal electronically via the [Central Bedfordshire Council website](#).

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.