



POLICY FOR ADMISSIONS

Document Detail	
Category	Statutory
Department	All Academies within the Trust
Responsible Officer	Headteacher of Academy
Status	Approved
Reviewed on:	Term 2 – 2019 <i>LM Cook</i>
Next review:	Term 2 - 2021

Admissions

This policy applies to admissions to all schools within the Ad Meliora Academy Trust and abides by the provisions of The School Admissions Code, issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and published in December 2014.

The local authority with the responsibility for co-ordinating admissions for families in the locality is Norfolk County Council.

The admissions authority is responsible for abiding by the admissions code and its operation as set out in this policy, ensuring fair access to places where they are available and enforcing the oversubscription criteria in a fair and transparent issue where this is an issue.

Where appeals are to be heard, independent panels will be arranged by the Trust, in line with the code. Any parent wishing to appeal should state their intention to appeal to the school that has refused a place. The school will provide acknowledgement of wish to appeal and a form to complete stating reasons for appeal (see appendix 1a-c). A parents' guide will also be provided (see appendix 2). The letter will state what date the completed form should be returned by and upon receipt, the Ad Meliora Trust Central Administrative team will arrange the hearing and notify parents of the date of the hearing.

The Trust will set admissions arrangements annually and must ratify these each year even if no changes are proposed. This will be done by 28th February in the determination year.

The admissions arrangements will be available via the Trust website and the arrangements for any proposed new academy will also be published online for comment, by 15th March in the determination year. Should no changes be made to the admissions arrangements over time, they will be consulted upon at least once every seven years.

Consultation

Where we seek to alter the admissions arrangements, we will do so by consulting with relevant parties before the proposed arrangements are due to apply.

Any consultation will as a minimum include parents, the local authority and the local community.

The Trust does not need to consult on changing its admissions arrangements should it wish to increase the Planned Admission Number (PAN) or otherwise alter the policy to meet further revisions to the Admissions Code. We will inform the local authority in good time should we wish to increase the PAN at any academy to allow for the co-ordination of places to operate smoothly.

Over-subscription

Where an academy is oversubscribed – more parents choose the academy as their first preference than there are places available – applications will be ranked in order against the published criteria and a list of places offered returned to the local authority. We will not withdraw an offer of a place unless it has been

offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable time period or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

The Local Authority may recommend that an academy admits a particular child and wherever possible we will work with them to come to an agreement. However, the Local Authority does not have the power to direct an academy to accept any child. The Local Authority can though ask the Secretary of State to intervene, with he or she having the power to direct an academy to admit any child.

First admissions

Blenheim Park Academy

Pupils are admitted into primary at the age of four (in the term after their fourth birthday) without reference to ability or aptitude.

Reffley Academy

Pupils are admitted into Nursery at the age of three (in the term after their third birthday) and into primary at the age of four (in the term after their fourth birthday) without reference to ability or aptitude.

St Edmund's Academy

Pupils are admitted into Nursery at the age of 'rising three' (in the term of their third birthday) and three (in the term after their third birthday) and into primary at the age of four (in the term after their fourth birthday) without reference to ability or aptitude.

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the Trust can apply the oversubscription criteria within this policy.

Reception aged children are admitted full time in the September of the academic year in which they become five. Children will be admitted in the following order of priority:

1. Children with a statement of special educational needs naming a trust academy.
2. Children in public care who are due to start school.
3. Children who are due to start school, living in the area served by the academy, who have a sibling attending the academy at the time of admission.
4. Children who are due to start school, living in the area served by the academy without siblings at the academy.
5. Children who are due to start school, living outside the area served by the academy, who have a sibling attending the academy at the time of their admission.
6. Children who are due to start school, living outside the area served by the academy, without siblings at the academy.

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the academy. Distance will be measured on a 'as the crow flies' basis using ordnance survey data.

Offers of places for Nursery and Reception children will be communicated by the local authority to families on 16th April or the next working day. Parents may defer the date of their child's admission until a point

later in the academy year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the start of the final term of the school year in which the application was made.

Class size in our Academies

Classes will not contain more than 30 pupils with a single class teacher unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are:

- a) Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plans specifying an academy in our Trust;
- b) Looked-after children and previously looked-after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) Children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admissions authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- f) Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;

Non selective

The Trust and its academies do not select pupils for admission and will consider all applications for places. In year and end of year applications for places at any academy will be made in accordance with Norfolk County Council's (NCC) coordinated admissions arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form (CAF) provided and administered by NCC.

Where children are seeking a place from another school/academy, senior staff will: -

1. Seek information from the previous setting to ensure the necessary support is in place prior to a start date.
2. Once a place has been offered by Norfolk County Council and the parent(s)/carer have accepted the place, academy staff will arrange a meeting with the parents to obtain the necessary information – contact details, emergency contact numbers and medical information. Once this has taken place, a start date is agreed and the child is placed on the academy roll.

APPROVED

Appendix 1 (a)



I wish to acknowledge receipt of your intention to appeal against the refusal to admit «Childs name» to XXXX Academy. Your appeal has now been recorded and will remain so until it has either been 'heard' or subsequently withdrawn by you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I now enclose a form for you to complete, which invites you to state your personal reasons for appealing against the refusal to admit. You should return the form by XX XX XX. It is important for you to do so, as the panel members will be able to acquaint themselves with your reasons for appealing before the hearing. You will, of course, be given the opportunity to amplify or give further reasons, verbally, in support of your appeal at the 'hearing'.

Any appeal lodged for an on time application must be heard within 30 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. The Ad Meliora Trust Central Administrative team will arrange and organise the hearing. You will be written to in due course inviting you to attend the hearing for your preferred academy. You will be given two weeks prior notice of the date, time and venue at which it will be held. You will also be given a copy of the statement by the admissions authority detailing the reasons why it is refusing a place at your preferred academy.



FURTHER INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF AN APPEAL

(PLEASE COMPLETE THE FIRST PART OF THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS USING BLACK INK)

FULL NAME OF CHILD	
DATE OF BIRTH	
NAME OF PARENT(S)	
ADDRESS	
CONTACT TELEPHONE	
CONTACT EMAIL	
CURRENT SCHOOL/ACADEMY	
<u>ALLOCATED</u> SCHOOL/ACADEMY	
PREFERRED SCHOOL/ACADEMY	

I have given notice of my intention to appeal against the decision of the Board of Directors not to comply with my wish for my child to attend my preferred academy stated above. The reasons for my appeal are detailed below. I certify the details on this form are an accurate account of this child's current situation.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please detail below your reasons for your appeal. You may use or attach separate sheets if required.

My reasons for appeal are: -

Continue overleaf as necessary

Appendix 1 (b)



I wish to acknowledge receipt of your intention to appeal against the refusal to admit «Childs name» to XXXX Academy. Your appeal has now been recorded and will remain so until it has either been 'heard' or subsequently withdrawn by you.

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My reasons for appeal are: -

Continue overleaf as necessary

Appendix 1 (c)



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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please detail below your reasons for your appeal. You may use or attach separate sheets if required.

My reasons for appeal are: -

Continue overleaf as necessary

Appendix 2

School Admission Appeals

A Guide for Parents appealing for a place at a school or academy which is its own admission authority

The trust board is the admission authority for the academy and are therefore responsible for organising admission appeals.

Appeals for a transfer admission round (i.e. admission to Reception classes, transfer to junior school and transfer to secondary school) must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. Appeals in respect of in year admissions must be heard within 30 school days of the date of the appeal being lodged with the academy.

What are my rights?

As a parent you have the right to say which school/academy you would prefer your child to go to. This is not the same as having the right to choose which school/academy your child goes to.

The Board of Directors for the Trust is responsible for admissions and must offer your child a place at the academy you would like them to attend UNLESS they can show that doing this will harm the quality of education they provide or make it less efficient.

The legal phrase for this is:

"That to do so will prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources."

This means that the directors of the Trust have agreed that there should be a limit to the number of pupils that can be accommodated at the academy or in an individual classroom. If the academy has to go over that number, then it will cause some difficulties. It is up to the Appeal Panel at an appeal to decide if this limit is reasonable.

If your application for a place has been turned down you have the right to appeal against that decision to an independent Appeal Panel.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, your appeal will need to be made to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

You do not have the right to appeal for an academy if your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools/academies.

Your right to an appeal is set out in Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

How are independent appeal panels set up?

Panels are set up under Schedule 24 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. They are usually made up of either three or five people selected as follows:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| At least one Lay Member | - | Someone who is not directly connected with the Trust, or with any of the academies within the Trust, unless as a volunteer. |
| At least one person with knowledge or experience of education | - | Someone who has experience in education; or who is familiar with schools/academies in Norfolk; or who is a parent of a child at a school/academy (though they cannot be parents of a pupil at the academy concerned in the appeal). |

The remaining panel member(s) will be from either of the above categories.

The independence of Appeal Panels

The law says that Panels must be independent, and there are many ways that we can show this. For example: -

- They are not paid.
- They do not report to, nor are they responsible to, the Trust Board of Directors.
- They must work within the national statutory Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals.
- Members do not sit on Panels where they have a conflict of interest.
- The work of the Panel is monitored by the Council on Tribunals.
- Parents and education representatives are not present when a Panel makes its decisions.
- The decision of the Panel is binding on both the Trust and the parents.

What powers do the Appeal Panel have?

The appeal panel can either refuse or allow your appeal.

The appeal panel cannot: -

- attach any conditions if it allows your appeal.
- hear complaints or wider objections about local admission policies and practice.
- make the Trust board change your position on the waiting list for the academy.

The role of the clerk

The clerk is not a member of the panel but has an important role to play in ensuring that relevant facts are established and that the appeal hearing is fair.

The clerk will be properly trained.

The clerk's key tasks are to:

- explain the basic procedures to parents/guardians and deal with any questions they may have.
- make sure that the facts are presented.
- make sure that the appeal runs smoothly.
- be an independent source of advice on the way the appeal is run.

- write notes of the meeting, decisions and reasons.
- tell all parties of the panel's decision.

How do I prepare for the Hearing?

Normally, at least seven days before the appeal meeting you will be sent a full set of papers which will include: -

- The case for the Board of Directors Body stating why they cannot give your child a place at your preferred academy.
- Your appeal form and/or letter.
- Relevant correspondence between yourself and the Board of Directors.
- Papers you have supplied to support your appeal.

This information will be sent to the Board of Directors, the Headteacher, the Panel and the Clerk.

We would strongly recommend that you attend the hearing and, if you wish, you can bring a friend or representative.

You must provide all the evidence that you want the Panel to consider. If some of your reasons involve for example, medical issues or a house purchase, it would be helpful if you could provide written evidence to support your case.

If you wish to give any further evidence at the hearing, you should send it to the Appeals Administrator (Barbara Kimpton), St Edmund's Academy, Kilham's Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2HU. Please forward any information as soon as possible. If you are not able to send your additional evidence in time then the Panel may be able to look at it if you bring it to the appeal meeting. If you can, please bring several copies. It is much better to get all the information in support of your appeal to the Panel before the meeting because if your evidence is lengthy, the Panel may have to stop the meeting to consider it.

Who attends the hearing?

- The Panel
- A Clerk appointed by the Board of Directors, who takes notes of what is said and gives the Panel legal advice
- The Chief Executive Headteacher and a representative from the academy.
- Sometimes an observer. This may be someone who is training to be a panel member or an appeal clerk

Do I have to attend the meeting?

You do not have to go to the appeal meeting as the Panel will consider your case based on what you've written in your notice of appeal. However, it is better for you to go if at all possible because the Panel may have important questions to ask which could affect the result. If you are unable to go yourself, you may wish to ask a friend or a relative to go on your behalf.

How is the appeal meeting run?

The members of the Panel will be introduced and the Chairman will explain what is going to happen.

The Panel has to go through 2 stages. The first stage is to find out whether the Board of Directors of the academy has good reasons for not giving your child a place. They would have to show that the academy has reached its intake

limit and that the admission of one more child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

If the Panel decides that the Board of Directors has not proven its case, and if there is only one appeal, then your appeal must be allowed.

If there is more than one appeal and the Panel decides that the Board of Directors has not proven its case, it must then decide how many children could be admitted. The Panel will then need to allow appeals up to that number, following the Trust's admissions criteria. The appeals of the other parents will then be considered in the second stage.

If the Panel agrees with the Board of Directors' case i.e. that the academy is full, then the Panel goes into the second stage. This is when the Panel considers whether the details in your case are strong enough to override the grounds established by the Board of Directors.

There may be appeals from a number of parents for places at the same academy. As Board of Directors' case will usually be the same for all the appeals it will only be put to the Appeal Panel once. All the parents involved are invited to attend this part of the meeting first.

If at any time during the meeting you need time to think, for example, if you are taken by surprise by any information given, or if you need to compose yourself, you can ask for a break in the meeting – this is called an adjournment.

What happens at the meeting?

First Stage

This is what happens in the first stage.

1. The Board of Directors' representative called a presenting officer explains their case.
2. Parent's questions.
3. Panel's questions. (These may be asked at any time).
4. Any other points that the Board of Directors' representative and the parents wish to make.

The meeting must be fair. If you do not understand anything that is said, ask for it to be explained.

Parents and the Board of Directors' presenting officer will then leave so that the Panel can make their decision. If the Panel agree that the Board of Directors has proved its case, then the second stage starts.

Second Stage

1. If you are the only person appealing, then it is your turn to speak about the reasons why it is important for your child to go to this academy. This part will take about 30 minutes, although there is no time limit. If there are several parents appealing then you will each have been given a different time to speak to the panel about your case and each case is heard in private.
2. The Board of Directors' presenting officer can ask questions.
3. Panel's questions. (These can be asked at any time).
4. The Board of Directors' presenting officer can respond.
5. Parents' can sum up their case. This means that you have a chance to bring together the main points that you have already made.

Parents and Board of Directors' presenting officer leave so that the Panel can make a decision.

What happens after the appeal?

After the hearing, the Panel and Clerk meet in private to make their decisions. Once the decisions have been made, the clerk will let the Appeals Administrator know the results.

They will try and let you know the outcome of your appeal, by telephone or email, as soon as possible (this is often on the same day as the appeal hearing). You will also receive written confirmation of the decision. The decision letter from them will say the reasons the Panel gave for their decision.

Do I have any further right of appeal?

The decision of the panel is binding on the admissions authority, academy and parents.

There is no appeal against the decision of the Appeal Panel. However, if there are significant and material changes in your circumstances e.g. you move into the catchment area, or a medical condition has arisen since you last applied, you have the right to re-apply for admission within the same academic year. If the academy still cannot admit you, you have the right to a fresh appeal. You may re-apply in the following academic year and you have the right to a fresh appeal if it is still necessary because the year group is still full.

If you believe that the appeal meeting was not properly conducted – this is called maladministration. In this case, you can complain to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. This is not a right of appeal against the decision, as the Ombudsman can only investigate complaints about maladministration on the part of the appeal panel.

If you wish for details about complaining to the Ombudsman please speak to the Appeals Administrator on (01603) 224388.

The only way to challenge a decision made by the Appeal Panel is to apply for a judicial review of the decision. If you wish to consider this course of action you should seek independent legal advice as soon as possible as normally there is a time limit.

Do you have any good tips on how best to make my appeal?

Our advice is:

- Make sure you understand how the appeal will run.
- Make notes of any questions you may have about the appeal.
- Make sure that you have looked at all the papers before the appeal.
- Decide what you would like to say when the panel invites you to give your reasons – it might be helpful to make a note of the main points. Tell the Panel all the reasons why you want a place at your preferred academy. Do not expect the Panel to guess how your child might be affected; remember problems affect different children in different ways.
- Make sure that you have provided all the paperwork to support your appeal e.g. medical evidence, confirmation of your house purchase or rental agreement.
- Check out the alternative schools/academies on offer. Find out for yourself and do not take the word of others.
- Focus on why your preferred academy would be a good choice for your child and why it would be difficult for your child if they could not go to this academy.
- Attend your appeal meeting if at all possible.

Further Information

Any further queries should be addressed direct to the academy.

The Department for Education have produced a booklet “Primary and Secondary School Admissions and Appeals: A Guide for Parents” which is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications or by phoning 0845 6022260 and quoting reference 00160-2008BKT-EN.

Parents can contact the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd, which is an independent national advice centre. They provide clear advice and information particularly for parents on admission appeals through a national advice line and a wide range of publications. Especially helpful is a booklet called “Appealing for a School”.

ACE can be contacted on 0300 0115 142 Monday – Friday (10.00am –1.00pm). Their website address is www.ace-ed.org.uk.

We hope that you have found this guidance note helpful.

If you would like this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Children’s Services on (01603) 224388 and we will do our best to help.