

# **Admissions Policy**

**Academic Year: 2024 / 2025**

**Valid from: September 2024 (for 2024/2025 academic year)**

**Review Date: September 2025 (for 2025/2026 academic year)**

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at Rushden Academy
- Set out the trust's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply to these academies
- 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
- School Admission Appeals Code

As an academy, the school is required by its 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 the Tove Learning Trust 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 the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by North Northamptonshire County Council.

### Looked after children

A 'looked after child' is a child who, at the time of making an application to a school, is:

- a) In the care of a local authority, or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions (see the
- definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

### Previously looked after children

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

- a) were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or the Adoption and Children
- Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders), or

- b) became subject to a child arrangements order (as defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as
- amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or
- c) became subject to a special guardianship order (see Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a
- 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian
- (or special guardians).

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 your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the school is in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

Parents resident in Northamptonshire can apply online at:

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

The Academy will use the LA's timetable for applications to the Academy each year (exact dates within months may vary from year to year):

- In September the Academy will publish its prospectus information about the arrangements for admission for the following September.
- September/October details will be provided about the Academy's Open evening and other opportunities to visit the Academy.
- By 31<sup>st</sup> October parents must complete the common application form (CAF) and return it to the LA administrator (see website address above).
- On National Offer Day (1 March or the next working day) you will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

#### 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. It is considered that children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate and they should be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances.

The decision to allow a child to repeat a year or to admit a child into a cohort outside their chronological year lies with the Academy, in liaison with the Local Authority. 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 Principal'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 appendix A.

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. Parents should contact the school directly if they wish to request a place for a child outside of the normal age group.

## **6. Allocation of places**

### **6.1 Published admission number (PAN)**

The school has the following agreed admission numbers for pupils for entry in Year 7 is 180

### **6.2 Oversubscription criteria for Year 7 entry**

All children whose statement of special educational needs (SEN) or education, health and care (EHC) plan names 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 in appendix A, in order until all places are filled.

### **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 random allocation as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This process will be independently verified.

## **7. In-year admissions**

The local authority will coordinate admissions for in-year applications. You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose statement of SEN or EHC plan names the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for (as agreed by the local authority), 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 appendix A of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

## **8. Appeals**

Parents will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision in relation to the offering of a place for a student to the school. The Appeal Panel will be independent of the school and will be composed of three members who will include:

- At least one person who has no personal experience of Rushden Academy defined as a 'lay member'
- At least one person with experience in education

The arrangements for appeals will be in line with the Code of Practice on Academy Admission Appeals published by the Department for Education as it applies to academies.

Parents will normally have 14 days (10 working days) after notification of a place not being offered at the school to lodge an appeal. The notification will indicate the reasons for refusal of a place and of the right of appeal.

Parents wishing to appeal against an admission decision by Rushden Academy should send a completed appeal form to the Clerk to the Appeal Panel at the address given on the appeal form. Other documents may be submitted in support of an appeal and should be lodged with the Clerk to the Appeal Panel not less than 7 days before the appeal hearing.

Parents will be given 14 days (10 working days) notice of the appeal hearing, unless they agree to a shorter period of notice. At least 7 days before the hearing Rushden Academy will provide the parent with a written statement detailing the reasons why it has not been possible to allow the student to attend the school. The Appeal panel will have the discretion to refuse to admit late evidence.

The Clerk to the Appeal Panel will, if possible, inform parents of the Appeal Panel's decision on the day of the hearing. In the case of the appeal hearings taking in excess of one day the Clerk to the Appeal Panel will contact parents with the decision on the final day of the hearings. The parents will also be informed of the outcome in writing within 14 days (10 working days) of the date of the hearing. In the case of unsuccessful appeals the Appeal Panel will give the parents their reasons for not upholding the appeal.

## **9. Fair access**

Rushden Academy participates in the North Northamptonshire County Council Fair Access Protocol.

The purpose of the Fair Access Protocol is to ensure that vulnerable children are offered a school place as quickly as possible and to evenly spread children with additional needs across all schools in the county. The protocol only applies to mid-term applications; it does not operate when children transfer from primary school to secondary school.

## **10. Fraudulent or misleading applications**

We have the right to investigate any concerns we may have about an application and to withdraw the offer of a place if we consider there is evidence that you have made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information, for example a false address was given which denied a place to a child with a stronger claim. We reserve the right to check any address and other information provided so we can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly.

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the board of trustees every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the trust will publicly consult on these changes.

This policy was been approved by the board on: 6th February 2023

Signature of LGB chair:



Name of chair of the Board: Mr Tim Foster

Date for renewal: 6th February 2024

## **Appendix A – Rushden Academy**

### **1. Oversubscription Criteria:**

If there are more requests than there are places available within the Academies admission number, places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria and in the order shown below:

- a) Children who, at the time of admission, are in the care of a local authority or are provided with accommodation by the authority (looked after children). Also children who were previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order, residence order or a special guardianship order. A looked-after child is defined in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989
- b) Children who live in the catchment area who have a sibling on roll at the Academy at the time of application and who is expected to remain on roll at the point of admission
- c) Children who live in the catchment area and attend Rushden Academy feeder primary schools ie. Alfred Street Junior School, Denfield Park Junior School, Newton Road School, Rushden Primary Academy, South End Primary School or Whitefriars Primary School and continue in attendance until the final offer of places is made
- d) Children living outside the catchment area who have a sibling on roll at the Academy at the time of application and who is expected to remain on roll at the point of admission
- e) Other children

### **Allocation of places up to PAN (Published Admission Number)**

Where there are more children in a particular criterion than there are places remaining to take the school up to its PAN, the children are ranked according to the distance from their home address to the Academy with priority being given to those who live closest to the Academy.

### **Distance measurement**

A straight-line measurement will be made, using a computerised mapping system, from the centre of the child's residence - to the centre of the Academy site. The address used must be the child's permanent home address.

### **Tie-breaker**

Where there are two or more applications that cannot otherwise be separated, a randomiser will be used to decide who is allocated a place.

### **Home address**

A child's home address is considered to be a residential property that is their only or main residence. Proof of permanent residence at the property may be required at any point during the admission process.

Where a child lives with separated parents for different parts of the week, we will consider the child's home address to be where the child sleeps for most of the school week (Sunday night – Thursday night). If a child spends equal amounts of time at the two addresses, parents must name the address to be used for the purpose of allocating a place.



If a place at the Academy is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from a child's normal and permanent home address, then that place is liable to withdrawal.

### **Catchment area**

One of the aims of the Academy is to serve its neighbourhood and develop links with the local community to strengthen the Academy and the community. The area served by an Academy is known as the catchment area. Children who live in Rushden and live closest to Rushden Academy.

Children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants will be treated as meeting the residency criteria for a catchment area once proof of posting has been provided.

### **Siblings**

We see the benefits of children from the same family attending the same Academy and we give priority to sibling connections in our admissions policy.

The definition of sibling includes step-brothers, step-sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters and adopted brothers and sisters and children living in foster care living at the same permanent address. However, where the Academy is over-subscribed no guarantee can be given that places will be available for brothers and sisters.

In the case of twins or other siblings from a multiple birth, where there is only one place available in the Academy, these will be considered together as one application. The Academy's admission number may be exceeded by one.

In the case of siblings in the same year group, where there is only one place available in the Academy, both will be considered together as one application. The Academy may go above its admission number as necessary to admit all the children.

### **Late Applications**

Applications received up to and including 31 October will be treated as on time. Applications received after this date will be treated as late applications and will be processed in the local authority's late allocation rounds.

### **Operation of Waiting Lists**

The Academy will maintain a waiting list for each year group and parents must ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list following an unsuccessful application. The child's name will remain on the list until the end of the school term in which the application was made. If parents wish for their child's name to stay on the waiting list for the remainder of the academic year, they must renew their interest directly to the academy in writing (email or letter) at the beginning of each term (i.e. in January and/or following the Easter break (March/April). Please note that a new application will need to be submitted to the Local Authority if it is for a different academic year.

Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria above (a-e)

### **Process for requesting a place out of normal age group (out of cohort)**

Parents/carers may seek a place for their child out of the normal age group as. If parents/carers wish to do so, they must contact the Principal at the School.

The Trust's Admission Committee will convene a meeting to consider the request and will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of:

- the parent's/carer's views;
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the Principal's views.

Please note – if the Admissions Committee does not agree to this request to be admitted out of cohort, there is no right of appeal against that decision.