

THE WEST SOMERSET ACADEMIES TRUST

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

2023/24

Adopted by the Trust Board on:

7th July 2021

ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR WSAT SCHOOLS

1. West Somerset Academies Trust is an Multi Academy Trust (MAT) of 6 schools:

SCHOOL	FIRST SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER (PAN)
Minehead Middle School		✓	169
Minehead First School	✓		60
St Michael's First School	✓		30
Danesfield Middle School		✓	123
St Peter's First School	✓		24
Old Cleeve First School	✓		30

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Trust Board is the Admission Authority for the MAT. Trustees apply the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend our schools. All 6 schools will comply with the provisions within the Schools Admissions Code and the School Appeals Code available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-admissions>
- 2.2. The Trust has commissioned Somerset Local Authority to be responsible for coordinating all applications for children starting and transferring school.
- 2.3. A Trust Admissions Panel is responsible for confirming admission decisions for children transferring to and for joining Trust schools during the academic year. The Trust Admissions Committee will take decisions after receiving recommendations from the Local Governing Body (LGB) Admissions Advisory Panel.

3. Applications to join WSAT schools at Reception/Year 5

- 3.1. Applications must be submitted to Somerset LA. Applications can be made on-line at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. Paper applications are available to download from the Somerset County Council website at www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions, or upon request by telephoning Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224. Any supporting information must be received by the closing date for applications.
- 3.2. Applications must be received by 23:59 hours on 15 January 2022, otherwise the application will be recorded as late. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. Please see the Primary Admissions Guide for full details.
- 3.3. Outcomes for on time applications will be sent out by email (for on line applicants) or second class post on 19 April 2022 (or next working day if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday).

4. In Year Applications

- 4.1. In year applications must be submitted directly to the school using the in-year application form which can be obtained on the school website or by request to the school office.
- 4.2. The LGB Admissions Advisory Panel will consider batches of applications on a weekly basis with a 4pm deadline every Friday (term time only) for receipt of applications. If more applications are received than there are places available, the over-subscription criteria will be applied
- 4.3. The LGB Admissions Advisory Panel will make recommendations to the Trust Admissions Committee and a decision will be notified in writing to the applicant within ten school days.
- 4.4. Proof of address may be required to be submitted with the application. This will be either the formal 'exchange of contracts' letter from the solicitor for a house purchase, a recent utility bill or the signing of a minimum of a six-month tenancy agreement. LGB Admissions Advisory Panel reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim of residence.
- 4.5. Where there are more applications than places available within a particular year group, applications will be considered against the published oversubscription criteria and allocated up to the admission number/ limit.
- 4.6. Places will not be allocated more than six school weeks or half a term in advance of being required. The only exceptions are children of UK service personnel and other crown servants (including diplomats) returning to the UK with a confirmed posting to the area (see Children of UK service personnel).

5. Oversubscription Criteria

When the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in priority order:

1	Children Looked After– Children who are in the care of a Local Authority or have previously been and are now formally adopted or subject to a residence/child arrangement order or special guardianship order. Children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. (see Important Note)
2	Children living in the catchment area, with a sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.
3	Children living in the catchment area.
4	Children living outside the catchment area, with a sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.
5	Children not satisfying a higher criterion

Important Notes

A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).

For Children Previously Looked After: this includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted Adoption is defined under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002(see section 46 adoption orders).

Tie Breaker

If in categories 1-5 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, the child living closest to the school will be given priority for admission. Distance is measured in a straight line by a Geographical information System (GIS) method from the geocoded point of the school site to the geocoded point of the pupil's home.

Random allocation by drawing lots supervised by someone independent of the school, will be used as a tie-break in categories 1-5 above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between a child's home and the school is equidistant in any two or more cases.

However, if children of multiple birth (twins and triplets) are tied for the final place, those siblings will be admitted over PAN as permitted by infant class size rules.

6. Waiting Lists

The school will operate a waiting list for each year group until the end of the academic year for which a place has been applied. This will be maintained by the LGB Admissions Advisory Panel and any child refused a place will automatically be placed on the waiting list.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

7. Withdrawal of Places

The Trust Admissions Committee will consider withdrawing the offer of a place if;

- The place has been offered on the basis of an application which is subsequently found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading.
- The parent/carer has not responded to the offer within a reasonable period of time and a further opportunity has been given for the parent to respond within 10 days having explained that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not.

8. Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting his or her schooling.

When such a request is made, the Trust Admissions Committee will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account the views of the head teacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The parent is required to make an on-time application for the child's normal age group (if relevant) but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time. The LA will ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before National Offer Day and the reason for any refusal.

Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time. An application from a child who would 'normally' be a year 6 child for a Year 5 place will be considered alongside applications for Year 5.

If a request for delayed admission is agreed, the school place application may be withdrawn before a place is offered and a new school place application will need to be made as part of the normal admissions round the following year.

If a request for a child to transfer school a year early is agreed, the school place application will be processed, and an outcome will be sent on the National Offer Day.

If a request for delayed admission is refused, the school place application will be processed and an outcome will be sent on National Offer Day.

If a request for a child to transfer school a year early is refused, the school place application will not be processed and a new school place application will need to be made as part of the normal admissions round the following year.

There is no right of appeal against the decision not to allow your child to be admitted outside of their normal age group.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

For further information and important things you should consider please visit;

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-learning-and-schools/choosing-a-school/starting-or-transferring-school-early-or-late/>

9. Children from Outside the UK

The Trust Admissions Committee will treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with European Union law or Home Office rules for non-European Economic Area nationals.

The Trust Admissions Committee will process applications for children who are citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) and for UK citizens living abroad. If proof of the Somerset address is not available, the application will be considered on the current address. The only exceptions are children of UK service personnel and other crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the UK with a confirmed posting to the area (see Children of UK service personnel).

The Trust Admissions Committee will not allocate a place to any non-EEA citizen moving into Somerset from outside the UK prior to their arrival in the country. In such cases the Trust Admissions Committee will require copies of the passports, appropriately endorsed visas and proof of residency – see home address definition. Applicants who are citizens of countries from outside the EEA should first check that their visas will not be invalidated by taking up a maintained school or academy place before applying. If in doubt, parents should contact the Home Office.

10. Appeals

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

Details of how to appeal are included in the outcome email or letter.

Information on the timetable for the appeals process is published on our website by 28 February each year.

11. Children of UK Service Personnel

The Trust Admissions Committee endeavours to ensure that their admission arrangements support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. In year applications are usually considered for admission up to a maximum of half a term in advance of the place being taken up. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area where a place can be made available up to a year in advance of being required providing the appropriate documentation is provided as proof of posting (an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting.)

Usually, an in-year place may be allocated prior to actual residency, only on receipt of exchange of contracts or a formal signed rental agreement. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area and crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area. This means that providing the application is accompanied by an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended posting, The Trust will process the application. If a home address is not available at this stage the admissions authority will accept a unit postal address or quartering area address.

If the parent/carer is moving to the area as a result of leaving the armed forces then no special consideration will be given to the application under the grounds of the application being made by a service family.

12. Definitions:

12.1. Home Address

The home address is very important, as school places are allocated on the basis of the home address of each child. A child's home address is considered to be where the child spends the majority of their time with parents or carers.

Documentary evidence of home ownership or suitable rental agreement may be required, together with proof of permanent residence at the property concerned. Places cannot be allocated on the basis of an intended future address, unless the house move can be confirmed through the formal 'exchange of contracts' or the signing of a minimum of a six month tenancy agreement. Please note private letting agreements may not be accepted as proof of residence. An address change due to a move to live with family or friends will not be considered until the move has taken place and suitable proof of residency has been obtained. Proof that a move from the previous address has taken place may also be required eg proof of exchange of contracts, a tenancy agreement showing the end date of the tenancy or a notice to quit from the landlord or repossession notice. The Trust reserve the right to seek further documentary evidence to support a claim of residence which could include contacting the estate agent, solicitor landlord or relevant

professional. A representative of the Trust may carry out a home visit/s without prior notice to verify a pupil's home address.

An address used for childcare arrangements cannot be used as a home address for the purpose of applying for a school place. Fraudulent claims relating to the home address of a particular child may lead to the withdrawal of any offer of a school place.

The Admissions Authority must be notified of any change of address during the admissions procedure.

Where shared residence arrangements are in place and it is necessary to determine the home address, each parent may be required to write to the Trust Admissions Committee and inform them of the number of days each week the child spends with them. Where the child spends equal time with both parents the Trust Admissions Committee may ask for additional information including evidence of which parent/carer is in receipt of child benefit, and/or the name of the GP surgery at which the child is registered.

12.2. Sibling

For the purpose of admissions, a sibling is defined as a child living at the same address as a half or full brother or sister, an adoptive brother or sister or children of the same household.

Please see the information on shared residency arrangements which will apply if necessary, in order to determine the sibling's permanent home address.

12.3. Parent/Carer

Natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law).