Wark
CE Primary School

Admissions Policy 2025/26

'He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

Durham & Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust

Wark C of E Primary School

Policy Documentation

Admissions Policy –2025 admissions

Wark C of E Primary School has set a vision of 'Growing Well' in order that all its children and adults are able to flourish. Our distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, is rooted in Jesus's parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13.31-32.

Our vision says who we are as a school, describes why we are here and then directs how we live as community.

From our vision we draw four values; sowing the seed well, cultivating the ground, tending the growth and welcoming all.

These values are used to ensure that all policies, curriculum and extracurricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners based on the teaching of Jesus found in the bible.

This policy is based on our value of Welcoming all and seeks to provide all with dignity and respect.

We do this by providing an inviting, inclusive school environment where all members of the school community, of all faiths or none, are valued, respected and care for one another.

This policy also looks to develop self-esteem, self-discipline, enquiring minds, independence and high personal aspirations which will enable children to succeed now and in the future.

Staff Consultation	**Mike Boucetla - Headteacher**
Local Academy Council Consultation	**Esther Brown** **Kelly Ritchie**
Arrangements for monitoring	**Yearly review to be updated on school website (Feb)**
Review date	**Annual**
Signature of nominated academy councillor.	
Other relevant policies	
Points to consider at next review.	

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Introduction

The Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust is the Admissions Authority for the school with responsibility for admissions delegated to the Local Academy Council, we intend to admit up to 15 pupils to the reception year group each year. This arrangement follows consultation between the local academy council, the LA, all other schools in the area and all other Admission Authorities in the area.

The school is open to receive applications for admissions from the parents of all children.

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Wark C of E Primary 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***:***

Over-subscription Criteria

Where the number of applications exceeds the places available in a year group, priority will be given to the following categories of pupils: (in the order of priority as follows):

1. 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). including 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)

2. Children who have special medical/social, circumstances (supported by medical/professional opinion) (see note 3).

3. Children who have a sibling (see note 5) attending the school where that sibling is expected to be on roll at the time of admission.

4. Children whose parents worship regularly and frequently (see note 6) at St Michael's Church, Wark, St Mungo's Church, Simonburn or St Giles' Church, Birtley.

5. Other children.

Tie Breaker

Where there are places available for some but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from home to school will be the deciding factor, with preference given to those whose normal home address (see note 4) is nearest to the school, when measured in a straight line (i.e. as the crow flies) from the front door of the child's home address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school (using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system). In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school

Waiting List

The school office will maintain a waiting list of applicants until 31 December each year. In the event of a place becoming available in the appropriate class during the year and there being more applicants on the waiting list than places available, the subscription criteria and tie breaker indicated above will apply and the order of priority does not depend on the date received. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the above oversubscription criteria

Notes

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**).**

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.

3. If applicants are seeking admission under criterion of **special medical needs or other special circumstances**, they will be asked to provide appropriate evidence, e.g. a letter from a doctor or specialist. The local academy council must be satisfied that there is a specified reason which makes attendance at this school essential.

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.

5. **Sibling** means a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of a parent's/carer's partner- in every case the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

6. If applicants are seeking admission under criterion of worshipping regularly and frequently at a Parish Church as above, they will be asked to provide evidence that they worship regularly and frequently, e.g. a letter from the parish vicar or equivalent. Regularly and frequently is defined as attendance at least once per month over the last twelve months from the date of application. It is sufficient for just one parent/carer to attend.

   In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these admissions arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the Chair of the Academy Council at the school address.

If a place is offered on the basis of false information (e.g. address or Church attendance) or if parents do not respond within the stated timescale to the offer of a place the Local academy council reserves the right to withdraw their offer.

The school finds it very helpful to have an early indication of the number of children to be admitted to the reception class the following September. However, it must be stressed that formal written applications for admission must be made on the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA.

Admission outside of normal age range

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday. For summer born children (those born after 1 April) this can sometimes be almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted.

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday and the child's parents are entitled to:-

- defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made; and

- 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

If parents wish to exercise the above rights they should discuss this with the Head Teacher as soon as possible to confirm arrangements and specify their choice in writing as follows: -

- that they wish their child to attend 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. The school will hold any deferred place for the child, although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.
- that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age provided this is not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year.

The child must, however, start school full-time in the term after their fifth birthday.

Admission outside of age range

If parents of summer born children wish to defer entry as outlined above and wish them to be admitted to the Reception Year in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than Year 1, then parents should apply at the usual time for a place in September of the current academic year together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the Reception Year in the September the following year providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. This should be discussed with the Head Teacher as soon as possible. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way for a Reception place in the following year. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in the current academic year (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria in this policy) or to withdraw their application and apply for a Year 1 place in the following year. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the previous Reception Year 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 Local Academy Council 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.

Further information and advice on the admission of summer born children is available from
http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Northumberland-Early-Years-Guidance-on-Deferring-a-Child%E2%80%99s-Entry-to-Reception.pdf

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