

PHOENIX ACADEMY

ADMISSION POLICY 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

Phoenix Academy (“the Academy”) is a primary academy located within East Sussex and is part of STEP Academy Trust, a multi academy trust (“the Trust”) from. The Trust is the “admission authority” for the Academy and therefore responsible for determining and implementing the admission arrangements for the Academy each year in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014 (“the Code”) and other legislation. The Trust delegates this responsibility to the Strategic Governing Body of the Academy (“the Governing Body”).

PARENT

A “parent” is defined in this policy as a natural or adoptive parent of the child, or a person who is not the natural or adoptive parent of the child, but who has parental responsibility for the child, or who is deemed to be a person who has care of the child instead of their natural or adoptive parent(s).

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The Academy is fully inclusive and welcomes applications for the admission of children of all abilities and needs, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The Academy fully complies with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

CHILDREN WITH AN EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLAN

There are separate statutory procedures in place which govern the admission of children with special educational needs (“SEN”) for whom an education health and care plan (“EHC plan”) has been issued by their Local Authority. This means that the parents of children who have an EHC plan should not apply for admission of their child to the Academy under this Admission Policy. If parents have a preference for the Academy to be named as the provider in their child’s EHC plan, the Local Authority needs to be made aware of this so that they can consider whether the Academy is suitable in consultation with the child’s parents and the Academy.

Where a child’s EHC plan names the Academy as the provider, the child will be admitted to the Academy even if this will result in the published admission number (“PAN”) for that year group, or the statutory maximum infant class size, being exceeded. Where admission is to Reception Year in September (i.e. in the normal admission round), the number of places available within the PAN for other children will be reduced.

Where a child is in the process of being assessed by the Local Authority to establish whether an EHC plan should be made, parents should speak to the Local Authority before applying for admission under this Admission Policy, to check the stage the assessment has reached and whether a decision to make an EHC plan will be made before the application deadline as, if it has, an application under this Admission Policy will not be necessary.

CHILDREN WHO ATTEND THE ACADEMY'S NURSERY

The Academy has an on-site nursery called Phoenix Academy Nursery ("the Nursery"). Children who attend the Nursery will not automatically transfer to Reception Year at the Academy when they have completed their nursery education. An application for admission to Reception Year must be made in the normal way at the normal time (except in the case of children with an EHC plan, for which there are different statutory procedures for admission to Reception Year, as outlined above).

Children who attend the Nursery who are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium are, however, given some priority over other children for admission to Reception Year at the Academy, as set out in the oversubscription criteria below.

AGE ON ADMISSION TO RECEPTION YEAR

All children are entitled to a full-time place in Reception Year at a primary school from the September following their fourth birthday. Children do not, however, reach compulsory school age until the first of three prescribed dates after their fifth birthday. These prescribed dates are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

For example, a child who will reach the age of five years on 18 November will not reach compulsory school age until the following 1 January, a child who will reach the age of five years on 22 March will not reach compulsory school age until the following 1 April and a child who will reach the age of five years on 3 June will not reach compulsory school age until the following 31 August.

DEFERRED ENTRY AND PART-TIME ATTENDANCE

Parents who have achieved a place for their child in Reception Year at the Academy can choose to defer their child's start date until they have reached compulsory school age (i.e. on one of the three prescribed dates stated above) and still retain their child's place in Reception Year at the Academy.

However, the start date for a child born between 1 April and 31 August who will not reach compulsory school age until 31 August (known as a "summer born child") cannot be deferred later than the first day of the last term (usually when the Academy reopens after Easter) without losing the place achieved, which will then be allocated to another child. Parents of "summer born children" can, however, choose to delay their child starting school for a whole school year (see below).

Parents may also choose to send their child to school part-time until they reach compulsory school age (i.e. on one of the three prescribed dates stated above). Unlike the right to defer entry, this right can be exercised during the last term in the case of "summer born children", and can also be exercised in combination with the right to defer the child's start date until later in the school year, as set out above.

For example, a child born on 18 November could start school part-time from 1 September and then full-time from 1 January, and a child born on 22 March could start school part-time from either 1 September or 1 January and then full-time from 1 April.

DELAYED ENTRY FOR "SUMMER BORN CHILDREN"

Parents of children born between 1 April and 31 August (known as "summer born children") have the following options in relation to their child:

1. To start school full-time in Reception Year in the September following their fourth birthday in the usual way; **or**
2. To retain the place they have achieved for their child in Reception Year and decide that their child will start school later in the school year (i.e. deferred entry) and/or attend part-time, as set out above; **or**

3. To lose any place achieved for their child in Reception Year and delay (rather than defer) their child starting school for one whole school year (i.e. following September).

Parents choosing to exercise the third option will need to decide whether they want their child to be admitted to Year 1 in the following September with their usual age group (subject to their being an available place in Year 1, as no place will have been reserved for the child) or be admitted to Reception Year in the following September with children below their normal age group. The second of these options will require parents to submit a separate Application for Admission Outside Normal Age Group to the Governing Body of the Academy (see below).

APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP

All parents have a right to apply for their child to be admitted to a year group above or below their child's normal year group, however it is for the admission authority for each school to decide whether to agree to this or not. Parents do not have an absolute right to decide that their child will be educated outside their normal age group.

In order to apply, parents must complete a separate application form (called an Application for Admission Outside Normal Age Group form, which is available for download via the Academy's website or in hard copy from the Academy's office) and submit it to the Governing Body of the Academy with any supporting documentation. Applications should be submitted as early as possible so that all options are kept open before deadlines pass, as a formal application for admission will also have to be made.

On receipt of a completed application form and any supporting documentation, the Governing Body will need to decide whether to agree or refuse the application. This decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The factors the Governing Body will consider include the following:

- The parent's views;
- The Headteacher's views;
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- Where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of their medical professionals;
- Whether the child has previously been educated or attended a nursery outside their normal age group;
- Whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if not for being born prematurely.

Where the application is refused, the Governing Body will write to the parents confirming the refusal, clearly setting out their reasons for their decision. Parents do not have a statutory right of appeal against a decision to refuse an application for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group, however a complaint can be submitted under the Academy's Complaints Policy if the child's parents believe that the Governing Body did not deal with the application properly.

Where the application is agreed in principle, the Governing Body will write to the parents confirming the agreement in principle. Parents should note that an agreement in principle is not the same as an offer of a place in the desired year group - it is simply an indication that the Governing Body will accept an application for admission of the child to the desired year group. Once an application for admission to the desired year group has been submitted, it will be processed with all other applications for that year group, with the oversubscription criteria being applied where more applications are received than there are places available. The application for admission must be accompanied by the letter confirming the Governing Body's agreement in principle.

For the avoidance of doubt, this means that even where the Governing Body has agreed in principle to a child being admitted outside their normal age group, there is no guarantee that a place in the desired year group will be achieved for the child. This is particularly relevant in the case of “summer born children” for whom a place in Reception Year is being sought one year later than usual, as they could be left without a place in Reception Year at the Academy, and the child’s parents will then need to decide whether to submit an application for admission outside normal age group to another school with a place available in Reception Year, or to seek a place in Year 1 at the Academy subject to their being any places available.

PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER (“PAN”)

The published admission number (“PAN”) for Reception Year at the Academy is **30**.

This means that the Academy will admit up to that number of children in the September of the school year to which this policy applies.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

Where more applications are received than there are places available, the available places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

1. Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

Looked after and previously looked after children will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child’s home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

A “looked after child” is a child in public care at the date on which the application is made. A “previously looked after child” is a child who was in public care, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order immediately after being in public care.

To be included in this category, the application for admission must be supported by the relevant Local Authority’s Children’s Services Department. In the case of a previously looked after child, a copy of the adoption or special guardianship order must also accompany the application for admission.

2. Children with a Medical Need to Attend Phoenix Academy Only

Children for whom Phoenix Academy is the only suitable and appropriate school for the child to attend will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child’s home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

To be included within this category, there must be compelling reasons why Phoenix Academy is the only school which is suitable and appropriate for the child to attend because of a medical need of the child or their parent which prevents them from attending any other school. For the avoidance of doubt, social reasons and inconvenience for parents will not be regarded as a compelling reason for the child to be included within this category.

In addition to the Common Application Form, parents must complete a Category 2 (Children with a Medical Need) Form, which is available for download on the Academy’s website or in hard copy form from the Academy’s office. Part A of the Category 2 (Children with a Medical Need) Form must be completed by the parent before being provided to the child or parent’s G.P. or hospital consultant who must then complete Part B, sign, stamp and date the form. Parents must not complete Part B of the Category 2 (Children with a Medical Need) Form.

The G.P. or hospital consultant must expressly confirm not only the nature of the medical condition of the child or parent, but also the reason why in their professional opinion only Phoenix Academy is suitable and appropriate for the child to attend, why no other school is suitable and appropriate, and the medical reasons why this is the case.

The completed, signed and stamped Category 2 (Children with a Medical Need) Form must be received on or before the application deadline. Failure to do so will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

The Trust's Admissions Panel will make the decision as to whether the child meets the criteria for inclusion within this category, and will do so fairly and consistently in all cases. Where the Admissions Panel is not satisfied that the criteria are met, the child will be placed into the next category that applies.

3. Children with a Sibling at Phoenix Academy at the Date of Admission

Children with a sibling at Phoenix Academy at the date of their admission will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

A "sibling" will include a full, half, step, adopted or foster brother or sister, as well as a child of their parent's partner with whom they have been cohabiting for a period of at least one year at the application deadline, provided that in all cases the sibling and the applicant child live at the child's home address (as defined by this policy) and are being brought up as siblings as part of a core family unit. For the avoidance of doubt, a child of a friend or extended family member (for example, a cousin) living at the same address will not be a sibling for the purpose of this policy.

Parents must ensure that they have included full details of the sibling in the Common Application Form to be included in this category. Failure to do so will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

4. Eligible Children who attend Phoenix Academy Nursery

Children who attend Phoenix Academy Nursery ("the Nursery") and are eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium ("EYPP") at the application deadline will be allocated places in this category by reference to the distance the child lives from the Academy, with those living nearest receiving higher priority.

Eligibility criteria for EYPP are published online by the government and are subject to change. At the time of developing this policy, eligibility is based on receipt of specified State benefits which mirror those for Free School Meals from Year 3, however this may change before the application deadline. The reference to "eligible" in this policy means eligible at the application deadline, under government criteria published at that time. Looked after and previously looked after children are also currently eligible for EYPP, however these children will always fall into Category 1 rather than this category.

To be included in this category, the parent must complete a Category 4 (Eligible Children who Attend the Academy's Nursery) Form and submit it before by the application deadline. Failure to do so will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

5. All Other Children

Children not falling into any of the above categories will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

CHILD'S HOME ADDRESS

The child's home address will be the address at which they live and sleep with their parent (as defined above) for more than 50% of their time from Monday to Friday during term time at the application deadline. It will usually be the address at which Child Benefit is claimed or, if ineligible, the address at which the child is registered with their G.P. and dentist.

Where there is an issue over whether the home address stated in the Common Application Form is the child's main home address as defined by this policy, parents may be required to provide documentary evidence to resolve the issue. This may include providing details of the times that the child has spent at the stated home address in the three month period immediately preceding the application deadline.

DISTANCE MEASURING

The distance between the child's home address (as defined by this policy) and the Academy will be measured in a straight line from the geographical reference point at the child's main home address to the Academy's designated entrance using the Local Authority's geographical distance measuring software.

In the case of multi-dwelling buildings (for example, an apartment block), the distance will be measured from same geographical reference point in the building regardless of the actual location within the building of the child's home address, with the tie breaker being applied if more than one application is received for children living in the building (see below).

TIE BREAKER

Where two applications cannot otherwise be separated because the distance between the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy is the same, the order in which places will be allocated will be determined by random lottery in the presence of a person who is independent of the Academy.

STATUTORY MAXIMUM INFANT CLASS SIZE

The maximum number of pupils legally permitted to be in a class in Reception Year, Year 1 or Year 2 class is 30 pupils.

There are specified circumstances in which some categories of children will not be counted towards the class size, allowing for these children to be admitted to a class containing 30 or more pupils without breaching the statutory maximum infant class size. These children are known as "excepted pupils" until the class size falls back to 30 pupils. Parents are referred to Paragraph 2.15 of the Code (which is accessible on the Department for Education's website) for further details in this respect.

TWINS AND CHILDREN OF A MULTIPLE BIRTH

Where a child who is a twin or a child of a multiple birth achieves a place but their twin or siblings of a multiple birth fail to do so, the twin or siblings of a multiple birth will be admitted to the Academy above the PAN. These children be "excepted pupils" until the class size falls back to 30 pupils (see above).

CHILDREN OF UK SERVICE PERSONNEL AND CROWN SERVANTS

The Academy will accept applications for the admission of the children of UK Armed Forces Personnel with a confirmed posting in the area of the Academy, or the children of Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in the area of the Academy, in advance of them arriving. These children do not have to be living at the stated home address at the application deadline, as all other children do.

The application for admission must be supported by an official letter declaring the relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address, which will be used as the child's home address for the purpose of applying this Admission Policy.

APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION

Applications for admission to Reception Year in September (known as admission “in the normal admission round”) must be made to the Local Authority by completing and submitting their Common Application Form (“CAF”) which is accessible via the Local Authority’s admissions page on its website.

The Academy participates in the Local Authority’s coordinated scheme for in-year admission and admission to year groups other than Reception Year. These applications must also be made to the Local Authority, rather than the Academy, via the Local Authority’s admissions page on its website.

Parents must ensure that they complete all necessary information (for example, details of siblings) in the CAF before it is submitted. Where relevant, a completed Category 2 (Children with a Medical Need) Form must also be submitted. Failure to do so by the application deadline will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

ADMISSION TIMETABLE

The deadline for applications for admission to Reception Year in the normal admission round is **15th January 2019**. Late applications will be accepted but will not be considered until all applications received on or before the application deadline have been processed, which will reduce the chance of achieving a place for the child.

National Offer Day for places in Reception Year in the normal admission round is **April 2019**. On that date, parents will be notified whether their application for admission has been successful or not. Where an application is unsuccessful, the reason for this will be confirmed in the notification letter.

ADMISSION APPEALS

Parents have a statutory right of appeal against the refusal of a place which will be heard before an independent panel. Full details about the statutory right of appeal, including how and when the request for an appeal must be lodged, will be confirmed in the notification letter sent to parents on National Offer Day.

A request for an admission appeal must be accompanied by the grounds for making the appeal (for example, why the parents believe that this Admission Policy is not compliant admission law, in what way the Admission Policy was incorrectly or impartially applied to the application for admission, or why it was unreasonable to refuse the application for admission). Before setting out the grounds of appeal, parents are advised to consider the reason for the refusal stated within the notification letter.

The Academy is required to publish an admission appeal timetable on its website on or before 28 February before National Offer Day.

WAITING LISTS

The names of all children who are unsuccessful in achieving a place in Reception Year will be automatically added to the waiting list for Reception Year for the duration of the first term until 31 December. After that date, all names will be removed unless the child’s parents notify the academy that they would like their child’s name to be kept on the waiting list going forwards.

Where an application for in-year admission or admission to a year group other than Reception Year is unsuccessful, parents will be asked if they would like their child’s name to be added to a waiting list for that year group and, if so, for how long. Waiting lists are not routinely kept for other year groups unless parents specifically ask for their child’s name to be included on one.

The child's position on a waiting list will be ranked solely in accordance with the order of priority set out in this policy, and not in accordance with the date that the child's name was added to the waiting list. This means that the child's name may go up or down the waiting list, as the names of other children are added or removed.

PRE-APPLICATION VISITS

The Academy is happy for parents and children to visit the Academy before an application for admission is made, and will try to be as flexible as possible in arranging a mutually convenient appointment to facilitate this. Parents who want to visit should telephone the Academy's office and speak to a member of the Academy's Admissions Team. If possible, a member of the Academy's Senior Leadership Team will be available to answer any questions that parents may have during the visit.

ADMISSION PROSPECTUS

In addition to this Admission Policy, the Academy has an Admission Prospectus which is available for viewing or downloading on the Academy's website or available in hard copy from the Academy's office.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about admission to Phoenix Academy, please contact the Academy's Admission Officer:

Name:

Email address:

office@phoenixstepacademy.org

admissions@stepacademytrust.org

Contact telephone number: 01323 841420

This policy was formally determined by the Governing Body on: 18 December 2017