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St Marys CE Infant School Admission Arrangements 2026-2027

Determined by:	**ODST Ethos & Governance Committee**
Date:	**04 February 2025**
Revised:	**30 January 2026** **OSA Determination REF4552-REF4594 17 December 2025**

St Mary's C.E. Infant School
19 Church Green, Witney, Oxfordshire
OX28 4AZ
www.st-marys-witney.oxon.sch.uk

Admission Arrangements 2026-2027

Our vision & values: Values

Together we love to learn and learn to love

St Mary's CE Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish.
We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

'Do everything in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14

St Marys CE Infant School is an academy within Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST).

ODST is responsible for admissions decisions and has delegated this responsibility to St Marys Local Governing Body (LGB).

ODST and the LGB will work closely with the Local Authority and will use them as their agent for the processing of applications for places.

To apply for a school place click here: Apply for a school place | Oxfordshire County Council

School Name ('the School'):	St Marys CE Infant School
Local Authority ('the LA'):	Oxfordshire
LA Applications Link:	Apply for a school place | Oxfordshire County Council
Published admission number (PAN)	60
Last consultation date:	November 2023
Admission to:	Reception
Contact details:	Tel. 01993 702387 Email. office@stmarysinfants.co.uk

Over subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming St Marys CE Primary School will always be offered places.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

2. Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends St Mary's CE Infant School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family.

3. Children with a normal home address in the catchment area (See Map) and with a sibling on the roll of St Mary's infants or The Batt CE Primary at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at either school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.

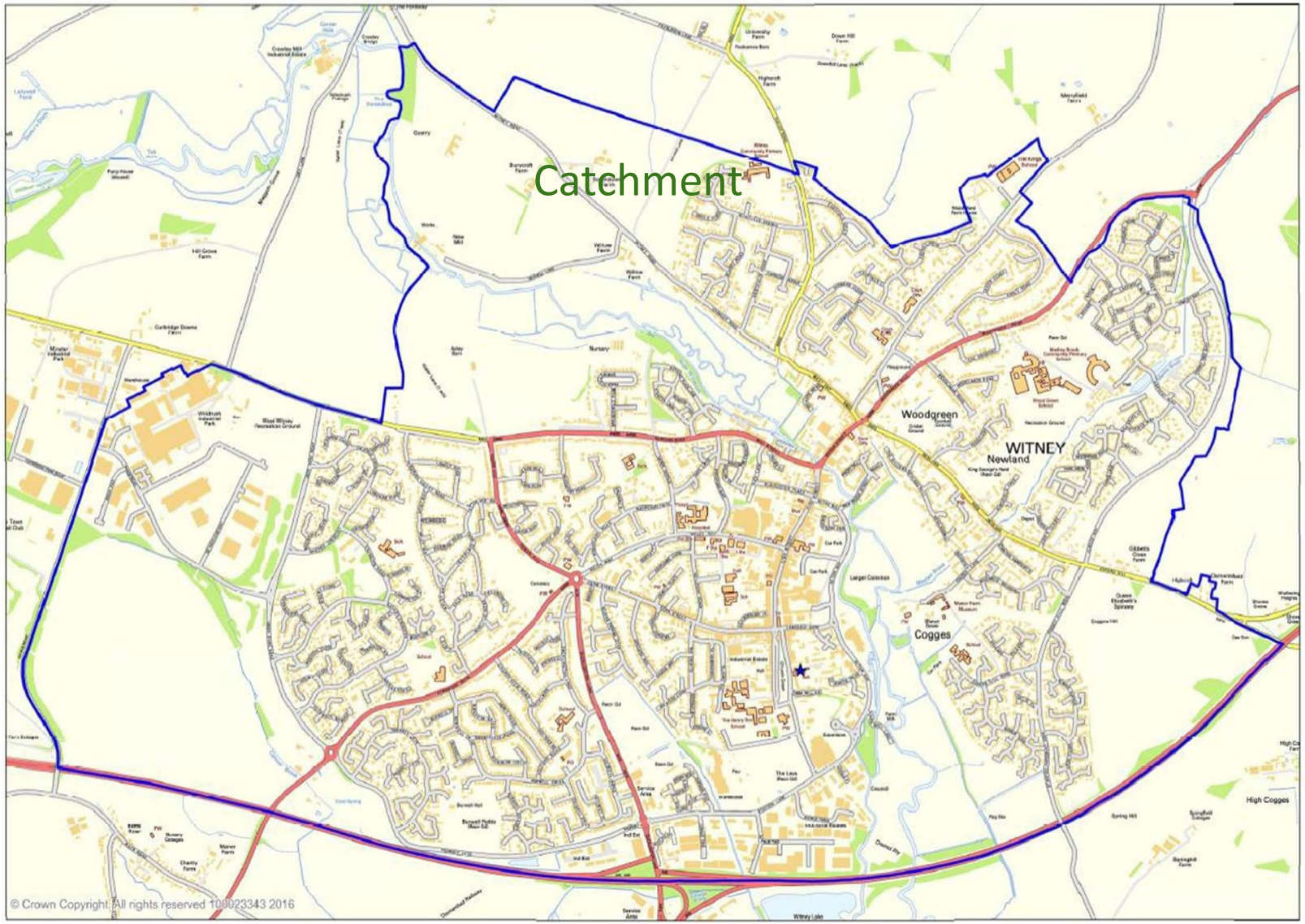
4. Children with a normal home address in in the catchment area (See Map)

5. Children with a normal home address outside the catchment area (See Map) and with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.

6. Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 6 should the need arise.

Designated Area Map



ODST Determined Admissions Scheme 2026-2027

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Introduction

ODST and the LGB have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all lawful requirements, including those set out in the Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law listed in the Appendix.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the School will always be offered places.

If a place is available in the appropriate year group and there are fewer applications for places than places available, all applicants will be offered a place regardless of home address and distance to school.

If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria will be applied in the order set out above.

If there are no places available in the appropriate year group, no applicants will be offered a place.

The scheme covers all ODST schools for the normal admissions round for the 2026-2027 academic year. It specifically covers the year of entry for this School as noted in Table 1.

- entry to the Reception year group (children born 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022) and deferred entry

Even if a child already attends the nursery class at a primary or infant school, a new application must be made to start Reception year group in a primary or infant school for the first time [Paragraph 15.d] of the 2021 School Admissions Code].

- transfer from Year 2 in an infant school to Year 3 (children born 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019)

A separate application must be made for any transfer from infant to junior school [Paragraph 15.d] of the 2021 School Admissions Code].

- transfer from Year 4 in a first school to Year 5 in a middle school (children born 01 September 2016 to 31 August 2017)

The relevant LA will coordinate admissions for all applications for the normal phases of transfer listed above. Please refer to the LA website listed in Table 1 for further information and key dates.

Parents will receive the official offer from the LA.

Admission Arrangements to Reception Year in September 2026

Even if a child already attends the nursery class at the School, a new application must be made to start Reception year group for the first time.

The majority of children start school for the first time at the beginning of the school year in which they reach their 5th birthday. Children must start school no later than the beginning of the term that follows their 5th birthday.

Applications for a child to start school in the academic year 2026-2027 must be made by 15 January 2026. Applications made after this date will be considered to have been made late.

Start Date in School

Normal phased transfer for starting primary or infant school for the first time (entry to the Reception year group)

Children are entitled to start school the September after their 4th birthday [Paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code 2021]

Children are entitled to a full-time place from the September after their 4th birthday if this is desired [Paragraph 2.17a of the School Admissions Code 2021]

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the School until later in the academic year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age (see Table 2) and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the academic year for which it was made. [Paragraph 2.17b of the School Admissions Code 2021]

Parents who wish it, may have their child attend part-time until later in the academic year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age (see Table 2) [Paragraph 2.17c of the School Admissions Code 2021].

Table 2: When can children start school

Children born…	**Can start school…**	**Must start school by…**
01 September 2021 to 31 December 2021	September 2026 (part-time or full-time)	January 2027 (full-time)
01 January to 31 March 2022	September 2026 (part-time or full-time) January 2027 (part-time or full-time)	April 2027 (full-time)
01 April 2022 to 31 August 2022	September 2026 (part-time or full-time) January 2027 (part-time or full-time) April 2027 (part-time or full-time)	September 2027 (full-time) Unless otherwise agreed, if a child of this age starts school in September 2027 it will be in Year 1 and not the Reception year The offer of a place for the 2026-2027 year will lapse if the child does not start school by April 2027. Parents should follow the LA process to reapply

Admission Arrangements to Year 3 in September 2026

Parents wishing to apply for a Year 3 place, if applicable (see Year of Entry in Table 1), in September 2026 must complete 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 2026. 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 given to parents on 16 April 2026.

Admission Arrangements to Year 5 in September 2026

Parents wishing to apply for a Year 5 place, if applicable (see Year of Entry in Table 1), in September 2026 must complete 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 31 October 2025 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 given to parents on 02 March 2026.

Admission Outside Normal Age Group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. [Paragraph 2.18 of the School Admissions Code 2021] Guidance is available here: Making a request for admission out of the normal age group - GOV.UK

In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Summer-born children starting school: advice for parents - GOV.UK

Parents should use the LA process and deadlines to complete any application for a place outside of normal age group, including the provision of supplementary information. Where it is agreed that a child should start in reception in the September following their 5th birthday, the parents will need to make a new application for a school place for the September after the child's 5th birthday and withdraw the application for a school place for the September after the child's 4th birthday.

Admission outside normal age group will be decided by an LGB panel who will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. [Paragraph 2.19 of the School Admissions Code 2021] This will include:

- Taking account of the parent's 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
- They will also take into account the views of the headteacher of the School

When informing a parent of the decision about the year group to which their child should be admitted, the LGB will give clear reasons for the decision. Where a parent's request for a child to admitted outside of their normal age group has been agreed and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the School) the application will be;

- Processed as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible; and
- Considered against the determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable. The LGB will not give a lower priority on the basis that the child is not of the correct age.

If a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no statutory right of appeal.

In-year Admission

Admission to the School during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. Applications may be made at any time, contact the School for details of how to make an application.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than the Year of Entry (see Table 1) may be made at any time. The LGB will only consider applications up to half a term (using the three-term year) in advance of the desired date for entry.

Fair Access

The School participates in the LA's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

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.

Children of Service Personnel

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, a school place will be allocated in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date.

The home address when applying the oversubscription criteria will be the address at which the child will live, as long as the parent provides some evidence of their intended address, or a Unit or quartering address, where a parent requests this.

Waiting Lists

The LA maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place. For those applying through the normal admissions round for entry, the Waiting List will be maintained from shortly following initial allocation in the year preceding the start of the academic year in September until 31 December following the start of the academic year in their Year of Entry.

The list will be re-ranked in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria each time that a name is added to or removed from the list.

Random Allocation

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight-line distance between the home and the School with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in the oversubscription criteria should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the LA with the admission authority will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. This process will take place in the presence of an independent adjudicator.

Appeals

Any parent not offered a place for their child at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Details of appeals arrangements are available from the School, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the School, the School will not consider any further application for a child in the same school year (1 September–31 August) unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment/designated area to inside it.

Appeals will be heard by the LGB appeals panel, consisting of 3 members, independent of the application.

Fraudulent Applications

If a place has been obtained on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application (for example, a false claim to residence in a catchment area) and this results in the denial of a place to a child with a stronger claim, the admission authority may withdraw the offer of the place. This follows the guidance in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.143 of the School Admissions Code 2021) published by the Department for Education.

2.13 An admission authority must not withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority must give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application must be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused. 24

2.14 A school must not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child has been at the school must be taken into account. For example, it might be considered appropriate to withdraw the place if the child has been at the school for less than one term.

Determined

Paragraph 1.49 of the 2021 School Admissions Code requires Admission Authorities (and/or the Local Authority) to determine Admission Arrangements by 28 February each year regardless of whether a consultation has taken place.

Paragraph 1.53 of the 2021 School Admissions Code sets out how objections can be made to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year:
How to object to admission arrangements and how admission authorities can apply for an in-year variation or appeal against a direction to admit a child | GOV.UK

Key Terms

Academies

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The day-to-day running of the School is with the head teacher, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called Multi-Academy Trusts.

These schools are not controlled by Local Government. However, they **must** participate in the coordinated admissions process, and they are subject to the School Admissions Code under the terms of their Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education.

Within ODST, the academies are always referred to and known as 'schools'.

Admission Arrangements

The arrangements and rules for a particular school determine the procedures and decision-making for admitting pupils to the School.

Admission Authority

The body responsible for setting and applying admission rules for a school or schools. As a multi-academy trust the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) is the admissions authority for all its schools. ODST is legally responsible for determining admission arrangements, in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code 2021 and other relevant legislation (see Appendix). Implementation of the admission arrangements is delegated to the School's leaders and the Local Governing Body (LGB). ODST and schools work closely with the relevant LA for processing applications.

Funding Agreement

A legal document between the Secretary of State for Education (via the DfE) and a provider.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

This is the number of places the School will offer to start in the relevant year group at the Year of Entry (See Table 1) in the allocation year subject to receiving enough applications for places. A school cannot refuse to admit a child if the PAN has not been reached. A school can choose to (or be required to) admit children above the PAN.

Infant Schools

A school for children aged 5 to 7 (Years Reception to Year 2) or 3 to 7 (if the school has attached nursery provision).

Primary Schools

A school for children aged 5 to 11 (Years Reception to Year 6) or 3 to 11 (if the school has attached nursery provision).

Junior Schools

A school for children aged 7 to 11 (Years 3 to 6).

Middle Schools

A school for pupils aged 9 to 13 (Years 5 to 8).

The LA

The LA is referenced in Table 1.

Designated (Catchment) Area

Living within the School's designated area gives a high priority for admission but there is no guarantee that a place will always be made available. Designated (Catchment) areas can be viewed on the LA websites, this includes data on allocations to all schools for the previous years.

Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire | Schools and Catchment Areas | Locrating

Reading
Reading | Schools and Catchment Areas | Locrating

Windsor and Maidenhead
AfCinfo website - Windsor and Maidenhead :: Community Information / Information and advice / Schools and education / School admissions / School designated areas

Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- all 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).

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

- being granted a residence order;
- being appointed a guardian;
- being named in an emergency protection order (although parental responsibility in such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare);
- adopting a child (in the case of stepparents) in agreement with the child's mother (and other parent if that person also has parental responsibility for the child) or as the result of a court order.

Where a child's parents are not married to each other, the child's father can gain parental responsibility by:

- registering the child's birth jointly with the mother;
- through a 'parental responsibility agreement' between him and the child's mother;
- as the result of a court order.

In addition, a LA can acquire parental responsibility if it is named in the care order for a child.

Siblings

For admissions purposes, a brother or sister is defined as one of the following:

- A brother or sister (both parents the same) living at the same home address; or
- A half-brother or half-sister (one parent the same) living at the same home address; or
- A stepbrother or stepsister (sharing a parent who is married or in a civil partnership) living at the same home address; or
- An adopted child who, by reason of the adoption, now shares one or more parents with a child living at the same home address.

Sibling priority will only apply to those with a brother or sister attending the School at the applicant's 'time of entry'. This means there will be no sibling connection for applicants to the entry year group if they have a brother or sister who will have left by the time the younger child is due to start.

Exceptional Medical or Social Needs

Applications under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs for their child's admission) must provide written evidence. This should come from an independent professional aware of the case relating to the child, parent or other children living at the same address (eg doctor, hospital consultant or psychologist for medical grounds or registered social or care worker, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs).

This evidence must:

- be specific to the School in question
- show why the School is the most suitable
- demonstrate what facilities will benefit the child
- explain why no other school can offer the same support

To decide on admissions in this category ODST will convene a 3-member panel consisting of at least one LGB member with independent oversight.

Looked After Children

A 'looked after child' is a child who is either:

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 at the time of making an application to a school.

In Oxfordshire these children are also known as 'Children We Care For" (CWCF).

Previously "Looked After" Children

The School Admissions Code 2012 introduced a requirement for all admission authorities to broaden the existing priority for 'looked after' children or children in care (defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) to also include 'previously looked after' children. Children who were 'previously looked after' were defined for admissions purposes as those who, immediately after being in care, became subject to an adoption[1], residence, or special guardianship order[2].

A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014, and this stated that 'previously looked after' children include those who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976

[1] An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or an order under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).
[2] Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s.
(see Section 12 - Adoption Orders) and not simply those children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 - Adoption Orders). In addition, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders. Those who previously received a residence order are now deemed to have a child arrangement order

If applying on behalf of a "previously looked after" child, who was previously in state care in England, the parent will need to provide the following evidence:

- an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; or
- an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976; or
- a Child Arrangements Order; or
- a Residence Order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989; or
- a Special Guardianship Order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s), under section 14A of the Children Act 1989.

Children who appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care after being adopted ("internationally adopted previously looked after children") (IAPLAC)

A further revised School Admissions Code was agreed in July 2021, and this came into force on 1 September 2021. The new Code further broadens the existing priority for 'looked after' children and 'previously looked after' children to include those children who appear to an Admission Authority to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. In the School Admissions Code 2021 they are referred to as "internationally adopted previously looked after children" (IAPLAC).

The Code regards a child as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of, or were accommodated by, a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Responsibility for determining whether a child is eligible to be considered as an IAPLAC rests with the Admission Authority. If there is doubt about the acceptability of evidence provided by the parent, advice will be sought from the relevant Virtual School. This Admission Authority will take a pragmatic approach to the decision-making process where evidence is lacking.

Summer-born Children

Children born between 01 April and 31 August (based on the school year running from September to July).

Home Address

The home address is where the child lives at the time of application. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights.

If parents are moving house, evidence of the move will be requested when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required.

An address of a second home with the main home being elsewhere will not be accepted. If there are two or more homes, or where a family is returning from elsewhere, evidence will be required of the main home. An allocation of a place based on an address which might be considered only temporary or where the address given is a second home will not be made.

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 will not be accepted.

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.

Multiple Addresses

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 the child spends the majority of the school week as determined by the LA.

Measuring Distances from Home to School

Information about how measurements will be made to calculate home to school distances using a straight-line distance using the LA's Geographic Information System is available online. Please refer to LA websites listed in Table 1.

Appendix

Legal Framework

These arrangements and over-subscription criteria meet all lawful requirements including those set out in the following Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law:

Adoption Act 1976
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/36/contents

Children Act 1989
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents

Education Act 1996
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents

School Standards & Framework Act 1998
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents

Adoption and Children Act 2002
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/contents

Education Act 2002
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents

Equality Act 2010
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

School Admissions Appeals Code 2012
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code

Children and Families Act 2014
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents

School Admissions Code 2021
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2