

# Admissions Policy

## Academic Year 2025/26

For **Bracken Leas Primary School**, a member of The Hawksmoor Learning Trust



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## Introductory Statement

Bracken Leas Primary School is part of The Hawksmoor Learning Trust. It is a two-form entry primary academy set in the heart of Brackley accommodating children aged 4 – 11.

We aim to create a happy and vibrant school with an outstanding curriculum, where children in our care are at the heart of everything we do. We are an inclusive school and welcome all applications.

Admission to our school is not dependent on any ability test or voluntary financial contribution.

## Published Admission Number (PAN)

Bracken Leas Primary School has an admission number of 60 for entry into Reception.

The academy will accordingly admit pupils up to the admission number indicated above if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applicants than the published admission number for year group is received, the Academy Trust will offer places at the academy to all those who have applied.

## Application Process for Places in Reception

For entry into Reception the academy participates in the West Northamptonshire Co-ordinated Admission Scheme and all dates within that scheme must be adhered to. The deadline for primary applications into Reception is 15<sup>th</sup> January. You should use the opportunity to express a preference for more than one school. Details of how to apply for a place in Reception can be found on the West Northamptonshire County Council School Admissions webpage:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions>

## Oversubscription Criteria

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

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted<sup>1</sup>
2. Children who will have a brother or sister continuing at the school at the time of admission.<sup>2</sup>
3. Children of Staff.<sup>3</sup>
4. Children who live closer to Bracken Leas Primary School than any other school.<sup>4</sup>
5. Children who are eligible for Pupil Premium and/or Service Premium.<sup>5</sup>
6. Other children.

## Tie-break

Where it is necessary to choose between two or more applicants within criterion 2-6 for a final place, the tiebreaker will be distance, with the child who resides the nearest to Bracken Leas Primary School being given the place. See below for further details of the distance criterion. Where there is more than one applicant at the relevant distance, then the tiebreaker will be random allocation. The random allocation process will be independently supervised. See below for information on Random Allocation.

## Challenging Behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Fair Access protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked after children, previously looked after children and children with EHC plans listing the school.

## Fair Access Protocol

Local Authorities are required to have Fair Access Protocols in order to make sure unplaced children who live in the home Local Authority, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children above published admissions number to schools that are already full. Children allocated under Fair Access Protocols will take precedence over those on a reserve list or awaiting appeal. All THLT schools will participate in the Fair Access Protocol of West Northants Council.

## Late Applications

All applications for Reception places received by The Hawksmoor Learning Trust after the deadline set will be considered to be late applications. Late applications will be considered after those received on time. If, following consideration of all applicants, the school is oversubscribed, parents may request that their child is placed on the school's waiting list.

## In-Year Application Process

Applications for a place at the academy will normally be for the start of Reception. If you are moving into the area or wish to change schools during the school year after September, you will need to make an application for an in-year place. This type of application should be made as soon as possible directly to the school, and you will be notified of the outcome of your application within 10 school days.

All in-year applications will be considered, depending on the availability of places, and prioritised according to the oversubscription criteria. If places are oversubscribed, applications can be placed on a waiting list, if requested.

Please contact the school directly for an admission form for an in-year application.

## Deferred Entry for Infants

Children are admitted in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their 5th birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

## Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. When such a request is made, the academy trust 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 Headteacher and any supporting evidence provided by the parent.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows:

All requests must be submitted in writing to the school admissions officer (details above), including in full your grounds for the request. A decision will be based on the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This includes taking into account 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 been previously educated outside of their normal age group and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

## Waiting Lists

The academy will operate a waiting list for each year group, including the Reception year group after entry in September until 30<sup>th</sup> June in the academic year. Where in any year the academy receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will be in operation. This will be maintained by the Academy Trust, and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

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 re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

## 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. The Academy uses the services of the Local Authority Appeals Team to coordinate its appeal process.

Appellants should go to West Northamptonshire County Council's website for information about the appeals process and submit an online appeal form. For applications made in the normal admissions round appeals will be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals. For applications for in year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions/appeal-school-place>

## Notes

### **Random Allocation**

If in criteria 2-6 above a tie-break is necessary to determine which child is admitted, random allocation undertaken by an independent body will be used as a tiebreaker to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between a child's home and the academy is equidistant in any two or more cases.

Random allocation will not be applied to multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family tied for the final place. We will admit them all, as permitted by the infant class size rules and exceed our PAN.

### **Distance Criterion**

If in criteria 2-6 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. The distance used in a 'tiebreaker' for any oversubscribed criterion will be a straight-line distance from the address point of the school to the address point of the applicant's address using a geographical information system.

## Definitions

1. 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 the exercise of its social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

**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)).

This includes 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. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of 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.

2. The definition of a brother or sister (sometimes referred to as a ‘sibling’): **‘Sibling’** means a natural brother or sister, a half brother or sister, a legally adopted brother or sister or half-brother or sister, a stepbrother or sister or other child living in the same household as part of the same family who, in any of these cases, will be living at the same address at the date of their application for a place. A brother or sister **must** be living at the same address when the application is made.
3. **Children of staff** who are employed at Bracken Leas Primary School. The school may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
4. The **‘home address’** / **‘the child’s place of residence’** is the address of the parent or legal guardian with whom the child spends the majority of the time during the school week. Where a child lives with one of their 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 (e.g., Sunday night – Thursday night). If the child spends equal amounts of time at two addresses, the parents must agree which address they wish to be the child’s main address before we can process the application. Parents/legal guardians may be asked to produce evidence of residency/home address at any time during the admissions process.
5. **Pupil Premium** and/or **Service Premium** - children given priority under this criterion fall into the following categories:

### Pupil Premium Admission Priority

Those eligible for Pupil Premium admission priority are children who:

- Are currently registered as eligible for free school meals.
- Who have been registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

Children for whom their parents cannot provide evidence that their child is currently registered for free school meals, but where the child or its parents receive any of the following:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- An income related employment and support allowance.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income limit that, from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2-11, does not exceed £16,190 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs).
- Where a parent is entitled to the Working Tax Credit run-on (the payment someone received for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.

### Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)

In order to meet the Government's military covenant aimed at helping UK service personnel and Crown Servants returning from abroad, we have adopted the following arrangements.

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area or Crown Servants returning to live in the area from overseas, the Governors will:

- Process an application in advance of the family arriving in the area, provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address, intended address or quartering area address. This address will be used when considering the application against the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Accept a Unit postal address or quartering area address for admissions purposes for a service child where the parent requests this.
- The Governors will not refuse a service child a place solely because the family does not have an intended address or does not yet live in the area.

For late co-ordinated applications and mid-year applications supported by the appropriate military documentation, we will aim to remove any disadvantage to UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces).

- The school's Governors will consider whether:
- An application from that address would normally succeed in an oversubscribed year.
- There is any child on the Waiting List with higher priority under the oversubscription criteria. This is because we must only allocate places based on criteria and must not admit a service child ahead of another child with higher priority under the criteria.
- The prejudice from admitting an extra child would be excessive.

The Governors have discretion to admit above the admission number in these circumstances if they wish but are not obliged to do so. If a place is refused, you will be informed of your right to appeal.

We will need the notice of posting or official Government letter and posting address before we can consider an application under these arrangements. We allocate a school place as soon as possible by applying the policies and practices that we normally follow.

### Service Premium Admission Priority

Children are eligible if:

- One of their parents is serving in the regular UK armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full-time reserve service) or a Crown Servant returning from abroad.
- They have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016.
- One of their parents died whilst serving in the UK armed forces and the child is in receipt of a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) and the War Pensions Scheme (WPS).

Parents will be required to provide evidence of eligibility with their application.