

Birches Head Academy

Admissions Policy 2023-24

Policy Information:

Date prepared	26 November 2021
Implementation Date	March 2022
Frequency of Review	Annually
Review Date	November 2022

Approved by Principal:



Katie Dixon

Approved by Chair of Governors:



Roisin Maguire



Frank Field
Education Trust

Principles

Birches Head Academy is part of the Frank Field Educational Trust and is committed to ensuring that school places are allocated and offered in an open and fair way and in compliance with the relevant legislation and the Schools Admissions Code.

Prospective applicants will be able to look at the admissions arrangements for the Academy and understand easily how places will be allocated.

The Academy will ensure that their admission arrangements are and will not disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special education needs from applying for a place at the Academy.

Admission Arrangements

1) Birches Head Academy take part in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority.

2) Birches Head Academy has agreed an admissions number of 210 for students into year 7, for the school year which begins September 2022.

3) Where the number of applicants to the Academy exceed the number of places available (PAN – Published Admissions Number), places will be allocated based upon the oversubscription criteria (see point number 12). The oversubscription criteria for the Academy are reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.

4) A consultation has been undertaken by the Academy for the admissions arrangements for 2022/2023.

Publication and Implementation of the Admission Arrangements

5) The Academy will publish the Admissions Arrangements for the Academy on its website.

Proposed Changes to the Admission Arrangements after the arrangements have been published.

6) Once the Admissions Arrangement has been determined the Academy will not make any changes to these arrangements unless there is a major change in circumstances and the following procedures have been followed:

a) The Academy Trust has consulted those with those who are required to be on the proposed above variation.

b) Following such consultation, the Academy Trust should apply to the Schools Adjudicator to approve the change, including the proposed change; the reasons wishing to make the change; and any comments or objections are noted and fed to all appropriate bodies.

7) The Academy Trust must comply with any written agreement or the direction of the Secretary of State, vary the admissions agreement to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the admission law and/or codes as they apply to maintained schools.

8) Any changes to the Academy's Admission Arrangements brought through the variation process must be published within the Academy's prospectus and on its website and to be communicated within 7 days to those persons who must be consulted.

9) Record of applications and admissions to the Academy shall be kept for a minimum of 10 years and shall be open for inspection by the Secretary of State.

Published Admissions Number(s) – PAN

10) The Trust has an agreed admission number of 210 students at the main point of entry (year 7)

11) In any specific year the Academy Trust will not admit higher than the agreed admission number unless exceptional circumstances apply such as admission appeal outcomes, the decision of the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol, where the Academy is named on an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and admitting looked after children where appropriate. All relevant stakeholders will have been consulted.

Oversubscription Criteria and Admissions Procedure

12) Students with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the Academy is the named school on the plan, will automatically be admitted to the school. This will reduce the number of places available for other applicants. Should the academy receive more applications than there are places available applications will be prioritised using the following oversubscription criteria for both year 7 and in-year transfer.

a) A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order, including those 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 looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions.

b) Students who, at the time of application, have a **sibling*** on the register of the Academy and will continue to attend at the time of the admission. The Academy does not deem cousins to be siblings.

c) Children who live nearest to the Academy which is measured by a straight line 'as the crow flies' from the child's home address point to the main entrance of the Academy.

A child's home address refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer and will be the address provided in the Local Authority's Common Application Form.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address provided in the Local Authority's Common Application Form, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week. Parents may be requested to supply documentary evidence to satisfy the Governors that the child lives at the address put forward by the parents.

d) The Academy will also consider any reasons put forward by parents in support of their preference. These reasons should be supported with evidence wherever possible. If the reasons concern the child's health or social wellbeing, evidence should be provided by a medical

practitioner or social care professional. The application and evidence will be considered by the Admissions Governing Body and if sufficiently strong the child will be positioned above those based upon distance criterion (point c)

*** Sibling definition** – Brothers or sisters who live at the same address and have

- one or both natural parents in common or
- are related by a parent's marriage or related by parents living at this address or
- are adopted or fostered by a common parent or
- are brought together as a family by a civil partnership and are living at the same address

Please note that places will be allocated for children of UK personnel, if accompanied by an official Government letter which declares a relocation date and Unit Postal Address or quartering area address.

The Operation of Waiting Lists

13. Once all places have been filled the Academy will operate a waiting list for each year group. In any year group where applications exceed the number of places available, applications will be placed on a waiting list until the end of the first term (31st December). This list will be maintained by the Academy, after that date the children's names will be removed unless parents notify the academy that they would like their child's name to be kept on the waiting list until the end of the academic year.

14. A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in point 12.

15. A child's position on the waiting list will be ranked solely in accordance with the order of priority set out in point 12. This means that the child's name may go up or down in ranking on the waiting list, as other children are added or removed.

16. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and parents will be notified.

17. In the event of a tie- breaker position priority will be given in accordance to the proximity of the child's main home address to the academy. Where distance from the academy is equal for two or more applications, such as in the case of children living in the same block of flats, places will be allocated by independently verified random allocation.

18. Any allocated place within the Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Arrangements for In-Year Transfer Applications

19. The Academy will carefully consider all applications. Where an application falls within the Fair Access Criteria this can be rejected. Where a rejection has been made the parent will be notified in writing of this decision and their legal right of appeal outlined.

20. If there are more applications than places in the relevant year group application the oversubscription criteria applies (point 12). Parent will be informed in writing and informed of the legal right of appeal.

21. Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to the Academy outside of their normal age group, for example if the child has experienced problems such as ill health.

22. Parents who wish to apply outside the normal age group will need to explain, in writing, why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted this way, this may include information such as professional evidence to support this application. A decision as to whether this is the appropriate course of action will be made by the Admissions Governing Body who will take into account the circumstances and views of the Principal of the Academy. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child be admitted to a particular year group.

Fair Access Criteria

23. The Fair Access criteria are set out by the Local Authority within Government advice and guidance.

24. The Academy actively participates in the Fair Access Protocol, any application that falls into this criteria will be given careful consideration, taking into account any implication the admission of the child may have on the Academy and if the school has already taken a disproportionate number of pupils under this criteria.

25. The Academy has a right to refuse an application under this criteria.

26. Where an application has been rejected under the Fair Access Criteria parents will be notified, by letter, as of the reason and informed of their right to appeal

Appeals

27. Where a child is unsuccessful in achieving an offer of a place, the child's parents will be told the reason why admission was refused and that they are entitled to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel within a specified amount of time under the provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The academy will provide information to parents about the appeals process and provide the parents with a named contact who can answer any enquiries they may have about the appeals process. Parents lodging an appeal must set out the grounds of the appeal in writing.

28. The admission appeal panel will be independent of the academy. The academy will appoint an independent appeals service to deal with the administrative side of arranging admission appeal hearings for the academy.

29. The determination of the admission appeal panel will be made in accordance with the Schools Admission Appeals Code 2012 and will be binding on all parties.