

Birches Head Academy



Admissions Policy 2025-26

Policy Information:

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Review Date	November 2024

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 published admissions numbers for each relevant age group. This is the age group at which students are or normally be admitted to the school (year 7)

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 16). The oversubscription criteria for the Academy is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and complies with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.

4) A consultation has been undertaken for the admissions arrangements for 2025/2026 in relation to the Schools Admissions Code.

Publication and Implementation of the Admission Arrangements

5) The Academy will publish the Admissions Arrangements for the Academy its website as required within the Schools Admissions Code by 15th March.

6) The Academy will convene an appeals panel in accordance with the requirements of the Schools Admission Appeals Code in the event that it receives an appeal form from a parent who has been unsuccessful in securing a place for their child. Appeals will be heard before 6th July or the first working day afterwards if the 6th is a weekend for normal round applications.

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

7) Once the Admissions Arrangement has been determined it 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.

8) 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.

9) 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.

10) 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

11) The Trust has agreed an admissions number of 200 for year group 7 and 210 from year group 8 to 11 inclusive, this is subject to changes approved by the Secretary of State.

12) 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 school 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

13) 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 in 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) Children of UK Service Personnel

Places will be allocated in advance 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.

c) 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 do not deem cousins as a sibling.

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. If the application and evidence is sufficiently strong the child will be positioned above those based upon distance criteria (point 16d)

e) Children who live nearest to the Academy by a determined straight-line measurement from the child's address point to the main entrance of the Academy. Applications where parents have shared responsibility for a child following the breakdown of their relationship and the child lives for part of the week with each parent will fall into this category.

*** Sibling definition** – Brothers or sister 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 parent's living at this address or
- are adopted or fostered by a common parent or
- are brought together as a family by a same sex civil partnership and are living at the same address

The Operation of Waiting Lists

14. Subject to the Local Authority's co-ordinated admission scheme, the Authority 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 (ie end of December). This list will be maintained by the Academy and will be open for parents to request that their child is place on the waiting list following an unsuccessful application.

15. A children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out in point 16.

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 for a vacancy in the main point of entry and oversubscription criteria, priority will be determined by the proximity of child's home to the Academy using a straight-line distance measurement. Apartments in the same block will be treated equally with the measurement taken to the entrance of the building. If after applying the distance tiebreaker there are more applications than places a further random tie-breaker allocation will be used with applications from the block.

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 agreed 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 16). 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 Academy 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 is 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 places under this criteria.

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

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