

**Over Hall Community School**

**Determined Admission Arrangements 2025/26**

**Part one**

Applications for school places for the normal admission round into reception at four+ and received ‘in year’ (i.e. into any year group outside the normal admission round) shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out below.

**Compulsory school age**

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. Under the academy’s policy, children may start school in the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Applications for admission are normally considered in relation to the availability of places in the child’s chronological age group, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Parents can request that the date their child starts school in the reception class is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year. Applications for deferred admissions must be made by the published closing date. For parents/carers with children born between 1 April and 31 August they should contact the academy for advice if they wish to consider delaying their child’s entry for a full year. It is advisable that if parents/carers are considering this option that they apply in the child’s chronological year group to ensure that they are part of the process should they decide not to delay their child’s entry. The vast majority of children at Over Hall are taught in their chronological year group.

To help younger children adjust to school, we utilise a phased approach to full-time admission over the first four weeks of term, admitting these children on a part-time basis. However it should be noted that parents have the right to request that their child receives full time education from the start of September and that they also can request that their child attends school on a part-time basis until the child reaches compulsory school age.

**Application process**

Applications from Cheshire West and Chester residents for places in local authority maintained schools and academies, including applications for schools maintained by other local authorities, must be made on the Cheshire West and Chester Council common application form (adopted by the academy).

The academy adopts the following policy and procedures:

As required by law, Cheshire West and Chester Council makes arrangements for parents and carers resident within the authority’s administrative area to express up to three preferences, ranked in order of priority, using the council’s common application form and to give reasons in support of each preference, including any supporting documentation, before any places are offered.

Applicants not resident in an English authority or resident abroad should apply directly to the council. Applications received for the admission of pupils who are not resident in Cheshire West and Chester Authority are always considered on an equal basis in relation to oversubscription criteria and deadlines as Cheshire West and Chester residents.

**Acknowledgements**

An acknowledgement confirming receipt of application can be provided on request from parents and carers. A stamped addressed envelope must be provided. Online applicants will receive an e-mail acknowledgement.

**Children with a statement of special educational needs**

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with a statement of special education needs that names their school.

**Published admission numbers**

The academy has a set published admission number, which is the number of children that will normally be admitted into the relevant age group (for example, into the reception year in a primary school). If the Council receive an increase in applications in certain areas of the Borough, the Council where necessary, in liaison with the Academy Governors, will use its power as the strategic commissioner of school places to temporarily increase the number of places available above the Published Admission Number (PAN). These increases will not constitute an increase to the PAN as stated in paragraph 1.4 of the School Admissions Code (December 2014).

For applications received ‘in year’, (i.e. those received after the first day of the school year into the relevant age group or into any other year group) the published admission number will normally continue to be applied as the relevant age group progresses through school. There may be occasions when the academy’s organisation permits the admission of additional children into an over-subscribed cohort at the expense of places in an under-subscribed cohort. Should there be subsequent application to the under-subscribed cohort it may not be possible to admit to the published admission number.

All preferences made in accordance with the academy’s arrangements will be met except where this would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources i.e. where the year group in question is full. In some circumstances the local authority may agree with the school that admitting further pupils will not adversely affect the school in the longer term. In such circumstances, a preference will be met, even where the year group is full.

Unless the child is a ‘permitted exception’ as defined by The Schools Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 the academy will not normally be able to agree admission over the published admission number where to do so would result in a breach of infant class size legislation. The Law requires that infant classes (where the majority of children will reach the age of five, six, or seven) contain no more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher.

**Oversubscription criteria**

Where more applications are received than there are places available and after the admission of pupils with statements of special educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan where the academy is named in the statement together with any supporting information, will be considered in accordance with the academy’s published oversubscription criteria, in line with Cheshire West and Chester Council criteria as follows:

1) A ‘Looked after child’ or a child who was previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence or special guardianship order). A looked after child is a child who is (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).

2) Siblings – pupils with brothers or sisters, step-brothers or step-sisters, half-brothers or half-sisters, adopted brothers or adopted sisters living together as part of one household, already attending the preferred school (in years Reception through to Year 5 and expected to continue at the school in the following school year. (i.e. at the time of admission)

3) Children resident within the designated catchment zone of the school. Children will be classed within this category if they and their parents/carers are resident within the area served by the school on the closing date for applications.

4) Pupils living nearest to the school distances are measured in a straight line from the centrally plotted Basic Land and Property Unit point of the child’s home address to the centrally plotted Basic Land and Property Unit point of the academy as defined by Local Land and Property Gazetteer. ’Where the academy cannot accommodate all pupils qualifying under one of the criteria stated above, the next criteria will also be applied to determine priority for admission. For example, if the academy cannot accommodate all siblings for whom an application has been received, all sibling applicants will be prioritised in the order of:

• Siblings (criterion one) who live within the school’s designated catchment area (criterion two)

• Siblings (criterion one) who do not live within the school’s designated catchment area (criterion five)

All applicants within each criterion will be put into a distance order with priority being given to those that live nearest to the school, as stated in criterion five above.

Where it is identified that there are a limited number of places available and the academy cannot differentiate between the applications using the nearest school criterion (criterion six) a random allocation tie-breaker will be applied. This may be required for example, where applicants reside in the same block of flats or are children of a multiple birth living at the same address.

**Equal preferences**

All preferences will be considered on the basis of the equal preference model for allocating places, in accordance with legal requirements. This means that in the first instance, all preferences will be considered against the academy’s published oversubscription criteria only, i.e. without reference to the preference ranking. Where a pupil can potentially be allocated more than one school place stated on the application form, the single offer, determined by the home authority, will be for the school ranked highest on the application form by the parents or carers.

If the pupil is a Cheshire West and Chester resident and Cheshire West and Chester Council as the home authority is not able to offer any of the preferences stated on the form a place will be allocated at the nearest Cheshire West and Chester school with vacancies using the authority’s ordnance survey address point data system for measuring straight line distances from the address point of the home to the address point of the school in miles.

Where an application has been received from a parent resident in another authority and a place cannot be offered, Cheshire West and Chester Authority will not allocate a place.

**Children of multiple births**

In relation to children of multiple births, exceptionally it may be necessary to offer places over the published admission number. This is to ensure that, as far as possible, siblings (i.e. twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) can attend the same school. In normal circumstances the academy will not be able to agree admission over the published admission number where to do so would result in a breach of infant class size legislation, which requires that infant classes (where the majority of children will reach the age of five, six, or seven) contain no more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. However, the School Admissions Code (December 2014) allows the admittance of a sibling in the same school year (i.e. twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) as a permitted exception where one sibling can be offered and not the other. This is a discretionary permitted exception and may not be agreed if the admittance of more children into a particular year group would cause prejudice to the efficient education and efficient use of resources to other children in that year group.

**Children of UK service personnel**

Places will be allocated in advance of the family arriving in the area for children of UK service personnel, if accompanied by an official government letter which declares a relocation date and a unit postal address or quartering area address for considering the application against local authority oversubscription criteria. In addition the School Admissions Code (December 2014) allows the admittance of a forces child as a permitted exception in relation to infant class size legislation. This is a discretionary permitted exception and may not be agreed if the admittance of more children into a particular year group would cause prejudice to the efficient education and efficient use of resources to other children in that year group.

**Parents and Carers with shared responsibility for a child**

Where parents or carers have shared responsibility for a child the place of residency will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the week (for example, where the child wakes up between Monday to Friday). Full details must be submitted in writing to enable the academy to determine which address will be used for the purpose of admission.

A panel of governors will consider the information provided. If the panel agree that sufficient evidence has been provided then this address will be used for the purpose of assigning a criterion to the application.

Where the local authority is unable to reach a decision based on the information received, for example, where the child lives equally with both parents, the address provided for claiming child benefit and where appropriate, child tax credits will be applied to the admission application. In such circumstances, documentary evidence must be provided. Any delay in receiving any required information will result in the local authority determining residence for the purpose of admission based on the information available to it.

**Moving house**

Parents and carers must inform the academy immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form as this may change a child’s priority for a particular school. The academy will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed, for example completion of sale, tenancy agreements, council tax and utility bills and any other information considered relevant to the application, including disposal of previous property. In addition proof that the child now resides at the new property will be required i.e. child benefit or child tax credit. For normal admission round into reception at four+ and secondary transfer at 11+ supporting evidence must be received by the date as stated in part two.

In respect of applications made as part of the normal admission round, information and supporting evidence must be received by the dates stated in part two of these arrangements. Proof of residency received after the published dates will not be used to process the application, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

**Waiting lists**

Waiting lists for the normal admission rounds will be held in criteria order and not on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. Any vacant places will be reallocated to children held on the academy’s waiting list. Placing a child’s name on a waiting list does not affect the statutory right of appeal.

Children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit, are part of a managed transfer from a closing school or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the council’s Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a school’s waiting list.

**Normal Admission Round:**

The normal admission round refers to applications made for admission into the relevant age group i.e. into a reception

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Waiting lists for oversubscribed schools will be prepared in line with the dates specified in part two and will be held until the end of the Autumn term unless the academy receives a written request (including email) that the child should be removed from the waiting list. They will consist of those children whose parents or carers have specifically requested in writing (including email) that they remain on the waiting list, along with those for whom an appeal application has been received by the appeals application deadline and any new applicants.

**In Year Applications:**

In year applications are those received after the first day of the school year into the relevant age group or at any time into any other year group. Waiting lists will not be held for in year applications except for reception which must be held until the 31 December of each year. From 1 January of each year reception waiting lists will cease to be held.

**Changing preferences**

In respect of applications made for the normal point of entry (for example, into reception classes in a primary school) the local authority will not accept a change of preference made after the published closing date without a genuine reason, such as a recent house move. Full details must be provided to the academy for consideration, along with supporting documentation. To demonstrate a recent house move evidence of a change of address will be required, which will include for example, a copy of the completion of sale or a tenancy agreement, council tax and utility bills and confirmation of disposal of previous property.

If the academy’s decision is that the reason, based on the evidence provided is not valid, then the application will be treated as a late application and as such notification of the outcome of that application will be after the accept/decline date as stated in Part Two. It is important therefore that parents/carers give full consideration to the preferences they make on their on-time form.

**Other relevant changes of circumstances, e.g. Medical/Social criteria, Sibling Admission**

Further information received after the supporting documentation deadlines, as stated in Part Two will not be considered as part of the on time allocation process. The information will be assessed after the accept/decline date and any changes that would assign a different criteria to an application e.g. sibling, ‘in catchment’, will be applied to the application and used to determine where the child falls on a waiting list.

If a parent/carer still wishes the information to be considered they will be required to complete another application form which will then be classed as a late application.

**Late applications – Normal admission round only**

Late applications for places at the academy, i.e. applications not submitted to the authority by the relevant statutory closing date will be considered after all on time applications unless the academy considers that there are good reasons for the application being late, which must be stated at the time of application, i.e. exceptional medical reasons preventing an earlier application, late removal into the area. Supporting documentation must be provided.

Where supporting documentation has been received by the date specified in part two of these arrangements and the academy has accepted reasons stated for the late application, the application will be considered as if it had been received on time.

Late applications and supporting documentation received after the dates specified will be considered after all on time applications even where the authority accepts that there a good reasons for the late application and as such these applications may be disadvantaged in the consideration of their preferences.

Parent and carers making new applications after the published offer date will be advised of the outcome of their application after the date specified in part two of these arrangements.

**Accepting and declining places - Normal round**

All parents and carers will be required to accept or decline the school place offered by the published date as stated in part two of these arrangements. The academy reserves the right to withdraw places not accepted by this date.

**Right of appeal**

Parents and carers who are not offered a place for their child at a school stated as a preference have a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. Parents can submit an appeal in respect for which admission has been refused. Application forms to appeal against a decision by the academy to refuse admission can be obtained from the office. All appeal application forms must be returned to the academy.

**Repeat applications**

Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parent’s/carer’s or the school’s circumstances have changed significantly since the original application was made. Full details of the change of circumstances must be provided for consideration by the academy.

Vacancies occurring in a year group which was fully subscribed at the time of the initial application will be deemed to constitute a significant change in the academy’s circumstances and a repeat application will be permitted.

**Part two**

**Timetable for applying for places 2024/2025**

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| **Process** | **Primary Admissions** |
| Application process starts online and paper application form and composite prospectus available. | 1 September 2024 |
| **Closing date for applications** | **15 January 2025** |
| **Deadline for receipt of supporting documentation** | 20 February 2025 |
| **Allocations to be finalised** | 28 March 2025 |
| **Offers released** | **16 April 2025** |
| Waiting lists prepared and vacancies re-allocated | After 16 April 2025 |
| Deadline for Appeals against Local Authority or governing body decisions (20 school days from refusal) | 21 May 2025 |
| Appeal hearings (on time applications) | By 23 July 2025 |
| Appeal hearings (late and in year applications) | Within 30 school days of appeal being lodged |
| Late applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application after this date and within 10 days of this date or receipt of application (whichever is the later), as far as possible | After 16 April 2025 |

\* National closing date

\*\*In accordance with regulations which state that offers must be posted out on these dates except where these dates fall on a Saturday or Sunday and offers must be posted on the next working day.