



Admissions Policy (mainstream schools) 2026 - 2027

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
CEO:	Martin Hughes		
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Monitoring and Evaluation	
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Review delegated to:	Quality of Education Committee

Document Version control

Version	Changes made	Date
1.0	Initial set up of Trust-wide policy	December 2021
2.0	Reviewed for 2024-2025 admissions	November 2022
3.0	Reviewed for 2025-2026 admissions	November 2023
3.1	Updated to include Calton Primary School	July 2024
3.2	Reviewed for 2026-2027 admissions	September 2024
3.3	Key dates inserted	December 2024
3.4	11.2 – in year processing deadline extended to 15 days.	February 2025

School Admissions Arrangements – SAND Academies Trust – Academic year 2026/2027

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Admission Policy and Admission Numbers for the academic year 2026/2027 in respect of all mainstream schools within SAND Academies Trust.
- 1.2. A copy of these admission arrangements can be found on the SAND Academies Trust website.
- 1.3. SAND Academies Trust has 5 special schools and 2 mainstream schools. This Admissions Policy relates only to mainstream schools and Gloucestershire County Council remains the admissions authority for special schools.

2. Admission number

- 2.1. Each school has a set Published Admission Number (PAN). This is the number it is obliged to admit into each year group.
- 2.2. The number is based upon a capacity assessment, which takes into account the area of teaching and non-teaching space available, ensuring that health and safety is not compromised, nor the quality of teaching and learning in the school adversely affected.
- 2.3. A list of the Published Admission Numbers for all SAND mainstream schools can be found in appendix B.

3. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

- 3.1. Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan are placed in schools through the arrangements set out in the SEN Code of Practice and not through any admission criteria.
- 3.2. Trust Boards are required by Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 to admit a child with an EHCP that names the school, even if the school is full.
- 3.3. Parents of children with an EHCP should contact their child's casework officer for any further information.

4. Looked After Children / Previously Looked After Children

- 4.1. A 'looked after child' (1) or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption (2), child arrangements order (residency order) (3), or special guardianship order (4), including those 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 (5).
 - 4.1.1. *(1) 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) at the time of making an application to a school. Such children are referred to as Children in Care.*
 - 4.1.2. *(2) This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).*
 - 4.1.3. *(3) Under the provisions of s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014.*

- 4.1.4. *(4) 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).*
- 4.1.5. *(5) 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.*

5. Sibling Definition

- 5.1. The admission criteria for SAND Academies Trust mainstream schools offers a higher priority for children with siblings who will be attending the school (including sixth form where available) when the applicant child is admitted.
- 5.2. For this purpose, sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner as well as children who are brought together as a family by a same sex civil partnership. In every case, the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address, at the time of application.
- 5.3. Where a child lives with both parents on a 50/50 (equal) basis, both parents must agree and confirm the pupil's address, which must be the same address as the preference school has registered for the sibling connection to apply. The parents' agreement and application must be made before the closing dates in order for the sibling connection to apply.

6. Twins and Children from Multiple Births

- 6.1. Applications for twins and children from multiple births will be considered as individual applications. However, SAND Academies Trust acknowledges the difficulties for families if children cannot attend the same school, for example if one child can be offered a place but not the other and therefore will aim to accommodate both/all children at one school where there is capacity to do so.
- 6.2. This includes overriding the Infant class size restrictions which limit Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes to a maximum of 30 children per teacher, if one child from twins/multiple births can be offered a place when the other(s) cannot (School Admissions Code 2021, 2.16).

7. Children of UK Service Personnel or other Crown Servants

- 7.1. All SAND Academies Trust schools act in accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol which has been devised to ensure that all admission authorities in Gloucestershire comply with the requirements of the School Admission Code to ensure that their procedures or criteria do not disadvantage children who arrive in the area outside the normal admissions round and that the particular challenges for children of UK service personnel and other Crown Servants are minimised.

8. Normal Admission Round

- 8.1. The term 'normal admissions round' refers to all applications for admission to the main year of entry of the school i.e. Reception for Infant and Primary Schools, Year 3 for Junior Schools and Year 7 for Secondary Schools.
- 8.2. Applications made during the normal admissions round will be made in advance of the academic year in which the child is due to start at the new school.

8.3. Children are entitled to a full-time place, however, may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

9. Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age

9.1. Children are entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday and this will be the offer made by the Local Authority.

9.2. However, where parents wish, children may attend part-time, or defer the date that they are admitted into the school to later in the school year, until they reach compulsory school age.

10. Admission of Summer Born Children for Reception Entry

10.1. SAND Academies Trust acknowledges the updated advice from the Department of Education that, parents/carers of “summer born” children (born between 1 April and 31 August) may request their child starts the Reception Class of a school a whole academic year later.

10.2. Parents can only apply for a Reception place at a school once and must apply for a place during the standard application process timeline for their chronological year group, stating their reasons for requesting deferred entry to the following year. Please note that applications must be made to the admissions authority of the preferred school(s) by the deadline of 31st March 2026 (to ensure that the child is not allocated a place in April for September 2026) with supporting evidence if appropriate. This can be done by contacting the SAND Academies school directly.

11. In-Year Admissions

11.1. The Local Authority is not responsible for offering places to children on behalf of all schools, but the Local Authority does maintain the statutory duty of being responsible and aware of all pupils and vacancies within schools/academies within Gloucestershire.

11.2. To apply for a place at a SAND Academies Trust school, parents should therefore contact the school in the first instance. The school will consider the application within 15 school days and will send the parent an offer or refusal letter, detailing the parent’s right of appeal. The school will also advise the Local Authority of all pupils who have been refused a place at their school to ensure waiting lists are maintained centrally.

11.3. Application forms for SAND Academies Trust schools can be found at on the individual school websites.

11.4. The In Year team at the Local Authority can offer advice and guidance and can be contacted by email at inyear.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk

12. Oversubscription Criteria

12.1. Where a SAND Academies Trust school is oversubscribed (i.e. there are more applications than places available) initial offers will be made in accordance with their admission criteria.

12.2. The admission criteria for Infant, Primary, Junior and Secondary schools are defined on the following pages.

13. Late Applications (normal admissions round only)

SAND Academies Trust

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- 13.1. Where an application for a school place has been received 'late' i.e. after the relevant closing date for that round of allocations, the application will only be considered once children from all on-time applications have been allocated a school place, unless there are exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Senior Manager (Commissioning for Learning).

14. Children's Home Address

- 14.1. Only one home address can be used for admission purposes.
- 14.2. This is where the pupil resides, and we may ask for additional proof of this address.
- 14.3. Where a child lives with both parents on a 50/50 (equal) basis, both parents must agree which of their addresses to use and confirm this before any closing dates. This must be either parental home.
- 14.4. Additional proof of address may be requested before we can confirm that we are able to use an address for allocation purposes.
- 14.5. The method in which the distance is measured from home to school can be found in the admission criteria.

15. Fair Access Protocol

- 15.1. Gloucestershire County Council has protocols in place to ensure that access to education is secured quickly for children who do not have a school place and that schools have an equitable spread of vulnerable children or those who are hard to place.
- 15.2. All schools in Gloucestershire, including the SAND Academies Trust schools encompassed by these admission arrangements, have signed up to the Fair Access Protocols and should a vulnerable child within these Protocols require a place at the school, they will take precedence over any child on the waiting list.
- 15.3. All Fair Access Protocols are highlighted within the Gloucestershire Coordinated Schemes for Reception/Junior/Secondary and In Year Admissions. Full details of all of these protocols can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions-scheme-criteria-and-protocol/school-admission-protocols/>

16. Exceeding PAN Protocol

- 16.1. The County Council will act within the Schools Admissions Code 2021 to ensure that it follows a fair, consistent and transparent method of offering places to children, but it does support the county-wide principle of allowing children to access a local school place.
- 16.2. The Schools Standards & Framework Act 1998, Section 86, requires admission authorities to only refuse admission of pupils where it may compromise education to do so and therefore the School Admissions Code 2021 does make provision for admission authorities to admit above their admission number during the admissions process to meet parental demand. SAND Academies Trust will consider all applications for a school place in line with the school's admission policy, taking individual cases into account in line with its Exceeding PAN Protocol – which sets out how the school will implement such flexibility in a transparent manner whilst ensuring sustainability of the whole school system. Full details of the Exceeding PAN Protocol can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions-scheme-criteria-and-protocol/school-admission-protocols/>

17. Waiting Lists

- 17.1. Where any school is oversubscribed during the normal admission round for entry to the school (i.e. where all children requesting a place at a particular school have not been allocated one) the waiting list will be held until the end of the academic year.
- 17.2. All waiting lists will be prioritised according to the school's oversubscription criteria, regardless of the date the application was made, and should any places become available at the school they will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list.

18. Appeals

- 18.1. Where an application for a place in a SAND Academies Trust school is unsuccessful, parents will have the legal right to appeal. Notification of the appeal process will be included within the parent's refusal letter.
- 18.2. Where an application for a place in a SAND Academies Trust school is unsuccessful, parents have the legal right to appeal directly to the Trustees of SAND Academies Trust. Notification of the appeal process will be included with the parent's refusal letter.
- 18.3. The School Admissions Appeals Code requires normal admission round appeals to be heard within the following timescales:
 - 18.3.1. For applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals
 - 18.3.2. For late applications, appeals should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
 - 18.3.3. For in year applications, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 18.4. Requests for appeals relating to the main entry year of the school for September 2026 (i.e. Reception for Infant and Primary, and Year 3 for Junior) should be made to the Trustees directly by emailing caroline.sexton@sandmat.uk
- 18.5. The appeals timetable can be found in appendix C.
- 18.6. The results of all appeals must be forwarded to the Council by parents and the schools, as this may affect the availability of places for other applicants.

19. Transport

- 19.1. Some children will be entitled to transport to their school provided by the Local Authority and parents should refer to "School and College Transport" which can be found at <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/school-and-college-transport/>

Appendix A

Admissions criteria for SAND Academies Trust Primary schools in September 2026

Gloucestershire County Council coordinates admissions for pupils starting Reception class at a Primary School in the normal admissions round on behalf of SAND Academies Trust schools.

For admission to Reception, parents must submit their Common Application Form stating their preferred schools to the Access to Education Team no later than 15 January 2026.

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available (both in the normal round of admissions and for in-year admissions), the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit:

1. 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 order or special guardianship order. ⁽¹⁾
2. Children who will have siblings attending the school at the time the applicant child is admitted.
3. Children with the strongest geographical claim, measured in a straight line from the Ordnance Survey address point of the child's home address (including flats) to the Ordnance Survey address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Where any particular category at points 1-2 above is oversubscribed, criterion 3 (strongest geographical claim based on straight line distance) will be used to determine which child is offered a place.

In the event of a tie between two or more children when applying criterion 3 (strongest geographical claim based on straight line distance) where there are not enough places available to offer all children a place at the school, a process of random allocation will be followed by SAND Academies Trust. This will be in the form of a manual process which is overseen by an independent person from the Trust Board. Where twins or children from multiple births are part of a random allocation process they will be considered as one applicant.

(1) A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in England, or is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions. A full definition can be found in section 3 of the School Admission Arrangement document shown above.

Appendix B

Proposed Admission numbers for SAND Academies Trust schools

School name	September 2026
Willow Primary Academy	30
Calton Primary School	60

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Appendix C

Primary Admission Scheme Timetable

Applications received by Gloucestershire Local Authority	By 15 th January 2026
County Council sends notifications to applicants	On 16 th April 2026
Closing date for applicants to request a second round of allocations of place offered or to accept place offered	23 rd April 2026
County Council sends notifications to applicants with the outcome of their second round of allocations	By 19 th May 2026
Closing date for applicants to accept the place offered during second round allocations	26 th May 2026
Appeals	June – July 2025

Appeals

The School Admissions Appeals Code requires normal admission round appeals to be heard within the following timescales:

- For applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.
- For late applications, appeals should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- For in year applications, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged. Requests for appeals relating to the main entry year of the school for September 2026 (i.e. Reception for Infant and Primary, and Year 3 for Junior) should be made to the school directly at its postal or email address.