# Admissions Policy and Arrangements for 2028-2029 for

Ash Grove Academy
Broad Oak Primary School
Hollinhey Primary School
Holmes Chapel Primary School
Hurdsfield Primary School
Ivy Bank Primary School
Parkroyal Community School
Peover Superior Endowed Primary School
Puss Bank School & Nursery
Sandbach Primary Academy
The Wilmslow Academy
Underwood West Academy
Victoria Road Primary School
Wilbraham Primary School

| Prepared by: | Reviewed by Board of Trustees |
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| R Swann | Spring 2027 |

## Introduction

Academies are required by their funding agreements to comply with the regulations that are set out Section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the Statutory School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code.

At the Aspire Educational Trust we welcome all pupils, and places at the school are offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner. Our Board of Trustees and Local Academy Committees apply the regulations on admissions to ensure that all school places are allocated and offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner to all those who wish to attend any Academy of the Aspire Educational Trust. We work to the principle that any parent accessing our admissions arrangements will be able to understand easily how places for that school will be allocated and will not be alienated or discouraged from applying based on admissions criteria. We welcome all pupils, irrespective of faiths, cultures, races, disabilities or family backgrounds.

This policy document applies to all Academies of the Aspire Educational Trust

The table below sets out the admission authority and other responsible bodies applicable to our Trust.

| Type of schools | Who is the admission authority? | Who deals with complaints about arrangements? | Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at a school? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academies | Aspire Educational Trust | Schools adjudicator | Aspire Educational Trust |

## Aims and objectives

- We seek to be an inclusive Multi Academy Trust, welcoming children from all backgrounds and of all needs and abilities.

- All applications will be treated on merit, and in a sensitive manner.

- It is our wish for parents and carers to find a place for their child at the school or academy of their choice. The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. The number of places available at each academy is determined by the capacity of the school and the published admissions number. All preferences made in accordance with the admission arrangements will be met except where this would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, when the year group in question is full. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we adopt the Trusts published admission arrangements criteria to determine the order in which applicants can be offered places.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- DfE 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE 'School Admission Appeals Code'

## The standard number & Published Admission Number (PAN)

The 'standard number' (capacity) is the number of children the LA considers an academy can accommodate. The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of children normally admitted in each annual admissions round. We keep these numbers under review, and the Board of Trustees may decide to increase the PAN without consultation if circumstances change.

The pupil admission numbers and capacity for our academies are:

| | PAN | Academy Capacity |
|---|---|---|
| Ash Grove Academy | 30 | 204 |
| Broad Oak Primary School | 30 | 310 |
| Hollinhey Primary School | 30 | 210 |
| Holmes Chapel Primary School | 60 | 420 |
| Hurdsfield Primary School | 30 | 174 |
| Ivy Bank Primary School | 60 | 420 |
| Parkroyal Community School | 60 | 420 |
| Peover Superior Endowed Primary School | 15 | 105 |
| Puss Bank School & Nursery | 30 | 420 |
| Sandbach Primary Academy | 30 | 210 |
| The Wilmslow Academy | 60 | 420 |
| Underwood West Academy | 60 | 442 |
| Victoria Road Primary School | 30 | 203 |
| Wilbraham Primary School | 60 | 720 |

## Infant Class Sizes Regulations

Infant classes are those in which the majority of children turn 5, 6 or 7 during the course of the school year ie; Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

We teach infant children in classes that have a maximum number of 30 children in line with The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 which limits the size of an infant class during an ordinary teaching session to 30 pupils per school teacher.

Infant class size legislation makes allowance for the entry of an additional child in very limited circumstances where it would be prejudicial to his or her interests not to admit them ('excepted pupils')

**Children below compulsory school age**
Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. Under the Trust'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 and carers with children born between 1 April and 31 August they should contact the Academy Principal for advice if they wish to consider delaying their child's entry for a full year. Parents and carers considering this option must 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 in Aspire Educational Trust schools are taught in their chronological year group.

To help younger children adjust to school, academies may propose to phase 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 insist that their child receives full time 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.

The Trust must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. Until the child reaches compulsory school age, parents may request the child attends part-time. These arrangements should be discussed with the Principal of the relevant academy.

**Children outside their normal age group**
The Trust will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

**The admissions process**
Local Authorities (LA) must collate and publish all the admission arrangements in their area in a single prospectus.

Admission authorities must determine admission arrangements annually by 28th February for admissions in September 2 years hence, e.g. Determination by 28th February 2027 for Admission in September 2028. If changes to the admission arrangements are proposed, the authority must consult with interested parties for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1st October and 31st January in the determination

academic year. Consultation must also take place once every seven years even if no changes are proposed.

Determined arrangements can be objected to and referred to the schools adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year. Any decision made by the schools adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and arrangements amended accordingly.

All applications for places at an Aspire Educational Trust Academy must be made via the Local Authority Admissions Teams in the first instance. Contact details for our local authorities can be found in Appendix 1.

Parents of children in an attached nursery unit or a unit run by an Aspire academy will still have to apply for a place in Reception via the Local Authority.

Local Authorities websites provide relevant information for parents and carers on how to apply for a place at a school/academy of their choice for the normal annual admissions rounds in September and for admissions outside the normal rounds (in-year admissions/transfers).

Parents and carers have a right to express their preference, but this does not guarantee a place at a particular school or academy.

The Aspire Educational Trust is the Admissions Authority for all its academies and determines the admission arrangements and criteria. The admission arrangements are published on the Trust and the academies websites and notified to the Local Authorities.

**Normal Annual Admissions Rounds (Admission to Reception)**

- Children enter school at the start of the academic year in which they become five. There is one admission date per year, early in September (i.e. when the autumn term begins). Parents and carers who would like their child to be admitted to an Aspire Educational Trust Academy during the year their child is five should ensure that they complete a Local Authority application by the date stipulated on the LA website.

  Applications can be made usually between 1st September of the previous year and a date in January of the year of entry (for example, applications to start school in September 2028 had to be made between 1st September 2027 and 15th January 2028).

- All applications must be made on a form that can be obtained from the local authority's website (either online or paper version) and should be submitted/returned to the Local Authority by the date stipulated on the website. Late applications are considered after 'on-time' applications. Applications cannot be made direct to the academies.

- The Local Authority will notify the Academy of applications shortly after the closing date. A panel of the academy's Local Academy Committee will be responsible for ranking the applications in accordance with the admissions criteria below.

**Admissions criteria**

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of schools to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs or education health and care plan that names their school. Once children with statements of special educational needs or Educational Health and Care Plans have been admitted then available places are allocated in accordance with the order of the following criteria:

1. **'Looked after children and all previously looked after children, 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.** Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangement order or special guardianship order. All references to previously looked after children in this policy mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and 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.

2. **Siblings –** pupils with brothers or sisters, step-brothers or step-sisters, foster brother or sisters, half –brother 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 at the time of admission. Under exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to offer places over the published admission number to ensure that, as far as possible, twins, triplets or children from other multiple births can attend the same school. Siblings in year six will not be considered under this criterion for the normal admission rounds.

3. **Children attending** a nursery/pre-school run by the school they are applying to commencing the Autumn Term of the admission period preceding their year of entry to reception.

4. **Children of staff** - with more than two years' service or those new members of staff recruited to meet a particular skills shortage.

5. **Pupils living nearest to the school –** measured by the relevant Local Authority using their definition of measuring distances. Please see your Local Authority website for the definition. Examples below:

   Cheshire East "Pupils living nearest to the school measured using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) which measures straight line distances in miles from the school's coordinate point to the point of residence's coordinate point"

   Cheshire West and Chester "Pupils living nearest to the school 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 school as defined by Local Land and Property Gazetteer."

   Manchester City Council "Pupils living nearest to the school measured in a straight line (not along roads or paths) from the child's home address to the centre of the school."

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, the home address or place of residency will be determined according to the definition of the LA.

- If an academy is undersubscribed all applicants will be offered a place.

- Where an academy is oversubscribed and 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 an academy cannot accommodate all children with siblings the priority will be in the order of children with siblings living nearest to the academy.

- Where places are oversubscribed and the authority cannot differentiate between two or more applicants using the 'nearest' oversubscription criterion, a random allocation (such as application references drawn from a hat) will be used as a tie-break to decide who has highest priority for admission. This process will be independently verified and recorded. This may be required for example, where applicants reside in the same block of flats or separate addresses measuring the same distance from the academy.

- Exceptionally it may be necessary to offer places over the published admission number to ensure that, as far as possible, siblings (i.e. twins, triplets or children from other multiple births) can attend the same academy.

- The Academy is responsible for notifying the Local Authority Admissions Teams of the ranked applications.

- The Local Authority is responsible for notifying parents and carers of places offered after all the applications have been ranked, and for notifying the Academies of places offered.

## In Year Admissions/Transfers

- Applications for school places received after the 1st September into the relevant age group or at any time into any other year group are referred to as 'in year' admissions/transfers.

- All in year applications must be made on a form that can be obtained from the local authority's website (either online or paper version) and should be submitted/returned to the Local Authority.

- The Local Authority will notify the Academy of applications and the Academy will consider the application and notify the parents/carers and the Local Authority of the decision as soon as the application has been processed and within the timeframe stipulated by the Local Authority.

- Academies of the Aspire Educational Trust will be part of the Fair Access Protocol agreed with their Local Authority to ensure that the needs of all pupils, both existing and potential, continue to be met in suitable provision.

  The Fair Access Protocol is designed to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The agreed protocol ensures that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour. The protocol includes how the local authority will use provision to ensure that the needs of pupils who are not ready for mainstream schooling are met.

## Admissions appeals

If we are unable to offer a child a place at one of our Academies, this will be where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

In circumstances where a school place is refused, parents, and in some circumstances, children will have the right to appeal against a trust's decision to refuse admission. They can do so by sending an appeals form to the Academy by the appeals deadline. Appeals forms can be obtained from the Academy offices. Where this is the case, the trust board will establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The appeal panel will perform its judicial function in a transparent, accessible, independent and impartial manner, and operate according to principles of natural justice.

The trust board and the appeal panel will ensure that it acts in accordance with this Code, the School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the School Admissions Code, other law relating to admissions, and relevant human rights and equalities legislation, for example, the Equality Act 2010.

The procedures outlined within this section will apply to all appeals lodged on or after 1 October 2022. Appeals lodged on or before 30 September 2022 will be heard in accordance with the 'School Admissions Appeals Code' 2012 and the School Admissions (Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended.

The trust board will set a timetable for organising and hearing appeals that:

- Includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least **20 school days** from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal.
- Ensures that appellants receive at least **10 school days'** notice of their appeal hearing.
- Includes reasonable deadlines for appellants to submit additional evidence, for admission authorities to submit their evidence, and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and parties.
- Ensures that decision letters are sent within **5 school days** of the hearing wherever possible.

The trust board will publish an appeals timetable on their website by **28 February** each year.

The trust board will ensure that appeals lodged by the appropriate deadlines are heard within the following timescales:

- For applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals will be heard within **40 school days** of the deadline for lodging appeals
- For late applications, appeals will be heard within **40 school days** from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within **30 school days** of the appeal being lodged.
- for applications for in-year admissions, appeals will be heard within **30 school days** of the appeal being lodged.

**Notifying appellants of the right to appeal and the appeal hearing**
When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, the trust board will send written notification of their decision. This will include:

- The reason why admission was refused.
- Information about the right to appeal.
- The deadline for lodging an appeal.
- Contact details for making an appeal.

Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. The trust board will not limit the grounds on which an appeal can be made.

The trust board will provide appellants with written notification of the date and all final arrangements of the appeal hearing no later than **10 school days** before the hearing. This notification will include the deadline for the submission of any further evidence that was not sent in the original appeal.
The trust board will comply with any reasonable request for information from parents to help them prepare their case for the appeals hearing.
The trust board will ask appellants whether they intend to call any witnesses or be represented at the hearing and inform them that they may waive their right to **10 school days'** notice of the hearing if they so wish.

**Constitution of appeals panels**
The trust board will appoint a clerk to the appeal panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the trust. The clerk will have sufficient knowledge of the 'School Admission Appeals Code', the 'School Admissions Code', other law relating to admissions and other relevant law, as well as being able to offer advice to enable the panel to undertake its judicial function.
The appeals panel will comprise of a chair and at least **two** other panel members.
The panel will also include at least one lay person **and** one or more people with experience in education.
In accordance with 'The School Admissions (Appeal Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the clerk to the panel will ensure that no disqualified person is allowed membership of the panel. A person will be disqualified if they are:

- A member of the LA in whose area the school is located.
- A member or former member of the trust board of the school.
- An employee at the LA, or the trust board of the school, other than a teacher or TA.
- Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the trust board, school or LA who may not act impartially.
- Any person who has not attended training required by the trust board arranging the appeals panel.

The trust board will ensure that panel members and clerks will not take part in hearings until they have received appropriate training as outlined within the 'School Admissions Appeals Code'.
The trust board will ensure that panel members are independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service.
The chair of the appeals panel is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including introducing parties, explaining the roles of the clerk and the panel and how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case and ask questions.
The trust board will indemnify the members of the appeals panel against any legal costs and expenses they incur in connection with any decision taken in good faith whist acting as a member of the appeals panel.
Members of the appeals panel will be eligible to receive travel and subsistence allowances where applicable, and will, where appropriate, be compensated for any loss of earnings or expenses.

**Evidence**
All evidence relating to the appeal hearing will be passed on to the clerk. This evidence will include details of:

- How the admission arrangements and the co-ordinated admissions scheme apply to the appellant's application.
- Reasons for the decision to refuse admission.
- How the admission would cause prejudice to the education provision of the school.

The clerk will send all the papers required for the hearing to both parties and the members of the panel seven days before the hearing.

**Attendance and representation**
It is the trust board's responsibility to make arrangements for appeal hearings. Appeal hearings can be held in person, remotely by video conference or a mixture of the two (a hybrid hearing).
Appeal hearings held entirely by telephone will only be permitted where video conferencing cannot be used relating to connectivity or accessibility and if the appellant and presenting officer both agree.
Regardless of the forum chosen, appeal panels will allow appellants the opportunity to make oral representations.
The trust board will provide a presenting officer to attend the hearing and present the trust's case to the panel, ensuring that this person is a member of staff who is well acquainted with the school.
The presenting officer will be responsible for relaying to the attendees the decision not to admit the child, and answer questions where necessary, either in person or remotely
Appellants may attend in person or be represented by another individual. Where appellants cannot attend, a decision will be made based on the written evidence.

**Appeals hearings**
Where appeal hearings are held in person, the trust board will take all reasonable steps to ensure the venue is appropriate, accessible to appellants, and has a suitable area for appellants and presenting officers to wait separately from the panel before and between appeals.
Appeal hearings that are held remotely will be held in such a way that means the appeal is capable of being heard fairly and transparently. Attending parties will be able to present their cases fully and the trust board will be satisfied that each participant has access to facilities that allow them to engage in the hearing at all times.
Where a hybrid hearing is to take place, the arrangements above will be complied with as appropriate.
Hearings, whether conducted in-person or remotely, will be held in private.
The order of appeal hearings will be as below:

- Case for the trust board.

- Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
- Case for the appellant(s).
- Questioning by the trust board and panel.
- Summing up by the trust board.
- Summing up by the appellant(s).

**Reaching a decision**

When reaching a decision, the trust board will follow the specific two stage process outlined in section three of the 'School Admission Appeals Code'.

**[Admission appeals regarding infant class sizes only]** In cases where the trust board has refused to admit a child on the grounds that admitting an additional child would breach the infant class size limit and there are no measures that can be taken to avoid this without prejudicing the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources, the two-stage process outlined in Section four of the 'School Admission Appeals Code' will be followed.

Decisions will be decided by a simple majority of votes cast. If votes are split equally, the chair will make the casting vote. The panel will either uphold or dismiss an appeal and will not uphold an appeal subject to any specified conditions.

To communicate the decision made, the panel will send a letter to the appellant, signed by the clerk or chair of the appeals panel, no later than **five school days** after the decision has been made.

The decision letter will contain clear reasons for the panel's decision and a summary of the relevant factors raised by the parties and considered during the hearing. In the case of applications outside the normal admissions round, the trust board will ensure that the pupil is admitted to the school without unnecessary delay.

Appeals by the parent of a child with an EHC plan against the choice of school named in the EHC plan will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) and not the appeals panel.

In cases where there are multiple appeals, the trust board will ensure that, where possible, all appeals are heard by the same appeals panel with the same members, and that no decisions are made until all the appeals have been heard.

In all hearings the clerk to the panel will ensure that an accurate record is taken of the points raised at the hearing, including the proceedings, attendance, voting and reasons for decisions. These notes will be kept securely by the trust for a minimum of two years and are, in most cases, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Further appeals and complaints**

Appellants will not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the LA has accepted a second application from the appellant due to a material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.

The trust board will inform parents about their right to complain about maladministration on the part of an appeal panel and the arrangements to follow.

If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Secretary of State.

## Repeat Applications

Repeat applications will not be considered within the same school year, unless the parent, carer or 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 local authority.
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 school's circumstances and a repeat application will be permitted.

## Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be held by the relevant Local Authority for the normal admission round (September admissions into the Reception class) and only until the 31 December that year. Places becoming vacant during this time will be reallocated in oversubscription criteria order and not on a first come, first served basis i.e. a vacant place will be reallocated to the child with the highest oversubscription criteria on the school's waiting list on the day the place became available. Placing a child's name on a waiting list does not affect the statutory right of appeal.

Children with an Educational Health and Care Plan, Looked After Children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a
place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

The academies will not hold a waiting list beyond 31st December nor for in year admissions and parents are asked to keep in touch to find out if a place has become available.

## *Complaints about admissions arrangements*

Any person or body who considers our arrangements unlawful, or not in compliance with the Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the schools adjudicator. The schools adjudicator will consider whether the referred arrangements comply with the Code and with the law relating to admissions.

Objections to admission arrangements for entry in September 2028 must be referred to the schools adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year (2028).

Any decision made by the schools adjudicator will be acted on by the Trust and arrangements amended accordingly.

## *Monitoring and review*

This policy will be monitored by the Board of Trustees, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by the local Admissions Forum.

The policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our Trust, in the local areas or in admissions regulations.

Any proposed changes (other than those require by a change in law) will be consulted on and where no changes are made, consultation will be undertaken at least every seven years.

## Appendix 1 Contact details for Local Authorities Admissions Departments

**Cheshire West & Chester Council**
Website: https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/school-admissions/school-admissions.aspx

Email: admissions@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
By post: School Admissions, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH
Telephone: 0300 123 7039

CWAC Primary Admissions Booklets School admissions | Cheshire West and Chester Councilf

**Cheshire East Council**
Website: http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/admissions/admissions.aspx

Email: admissions@cheshireeast.gov.uk
By post: School Admissions, Cheshire East Council, Floor 7, c/o Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2BJ
Telephone: 0300 123 5012

CE Primary Admissions Booklets
School admissions information booklets

**Manchester City Council**
Website: http://www.manchester.gov.uk/admissions

Email: school.admissions@manchester.gov.uk
By post: Integrated Admissions
PO Box 532, Town Hall Extension
Manchester, M60 2LA
Telephone: 0161 245 7166

Or drop it off at:

Customer contact centre
Ground floor, Town Hall Extension
Albert Square, Manchester
M60 2LA (for sat nav use M2 5DB)