

MERRYLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND NURSERY

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ADMISSIONS POLICY 2021 - 2022

Aims

This Policy aims to:

- explain **how to apply** for a place at the school
- set out the school's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply
- explain **how to appeal** against a decision not to offer your child a place

Legislation and statutory requirements

This Policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, the school is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Criteria Explained

Looked after Children

A 'Looked after Child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order will be given first priority in the oversubscription criteria, ahead of all other applicants, in accordance with the School Admission Code 2014. A Looked after Child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (as defined in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989).

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan

All children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that name the school on the statement/plan are required to be admitted to the school regardless of their place in the priority order.

Age of Admission

The school's policy is that children born on and between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2016 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2021.

As required by law, The Berlesduna Trust provides for the fulltime admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth

birthday. Therefore, if a parent wants a full time place for their child from September (at the school in which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full time place.

Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age within the school year. The law does not require a child to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Compulsory school age is reached at that point.

Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for that child and will not offer it to another child. The parent would not, however, be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted. Parents can also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. Any parent interested in taking up a part-time place initially should contact the school for further details as to what this would entail.

Where the parent of a 'summer born child' (1st April – 31st August) wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, they will need to apply for a place at the correct time for the normal admission round for the following academic year. Supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort must be submitted. The admissions authority will decide whether the application for a Reception place will be accepted or whether it will be treated as an application for a Year 1 place, the child's normal age appropriate cohort. If the application for a Reception place is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of the place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

Home address

Applications will normally be processed based on the home address for the child at the time of application and determination, unless, where there is a new home address, proof of an exchange of contracts or a copy of a signed tenancy agreement can be provided by 1st February 2021. The home address is the address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is 'ordinarily resident'. This is generally the address of the parent/carer. In some cases, children may be 'ordinarily resident' for much of the school week, including overnight, with another relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where a child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application may be processed based on that address (where the child resides for much of the school week) and proof of address and residence arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer 24 hours per day, for much of the school week. Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer daily will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be

'ordinarily resident' with that person. In all cases it is expected that the adult with whom the child is 'ordinarily resident' receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

Distance tie breaker

For admissions purposes, the Local Authority uses data provided by Ordnance Survey (OS) to measure straight line distances. The OS data plots the co-ordinates of each individual property (the home address) which are referred to as address points. The definition of the home address is as described above. Straight line distance is measured from the address point of the home address to address point of the school. Distances are reported in miles to three decimal places. If a child's time is split equally between two residences, the address of the residence at which the child resides for much of the school week would be used to measure the distance between the child's school and home. In the unlikely event of two applicants with an identical distance competing for a single place at a school the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of the Trust not involved in admissions, with the exception of twins, triplets etc.

Address Checking

The school will ask applicants to provide proof of their home address. This may include a copy of the following:

- UK driving licence
- council tax notification
- two utility bills dated within the last 6 months (gas, electricity, water or landline phone)

The school reserves the right to take additional checking measures including further documentation and in some cases unannounced home visits.

If a school place is secured through false information regarding a home address, the school will withdraw the place offered.

Admission of children from overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in the UK have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in the UK for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports), have a passport endorsed to show a right of abode in the UK or are European Economic Area nationals normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. An application for a school place will be accepted for such children even though they may not be resident in the UK at the time of application. The application may however be processed on the basis of the overseas address.

If an applicant meeting the above criteria owns a property in Essex but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, but they intend to take

up residency at the Essex home before the start of the autumn term, the application will be processed using the Essex address. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of taking up residency at that property in Essex.

Other children from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are resident in the UK. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application.

Siblings

For applications made in the normal admission round a relevant sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address who attends the preferred school or partner school in any year group excluding the final year. Biological and adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year will also be treated as siblings irrespective of place of residence. Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings.

For mid-year applications a sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school at the time of application and determination and with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission. Biological siblings who attend the preferred school will be treated as siblings irrespective of their place of residence.

Priority Admission Areas

There is no guarantee of a place to children living in the priority admission area of a school. Parents can check in which school's priority admission area their address is located (if any) using the online 'Catchment Area Finder' tool on the Local Authority website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Twins, Triplets etc.

For applications made in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the Local Authority will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the Local Authority will offer places to the remaining children. For example, if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place. For mid-year applications, where a family moves into an area necessitating a change of school for their twins (or triplets etc) and the majority can be offered a place then a place will be offered for the remaining child(ren). However, where the family does not move but wishes to transfer the children to another local school where there are insufficient places for all of them then a place would not normally be offered for all.

How to Apply

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery is a single site primary school; children stay in the same school throughout the infant and junior stages. We currently have an annual intake of 90 children.

To apply for a school place for your child, you need to follow the procedures set out below:

For all year group applications including Reception – you must apply for your child’s school place via Essex County Council’s website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Once your application has been processed, you will receive a letter from Essex County Council informing you if a place is available or not (this can take up to 3 weeks). If a place is not available, you will be added to our waiting list.

There is no guarantee of a place for children living in the priority admission area. In the event of oversubscription places will be allocated using the following criteria in the order given:

1. Looked After Children and previously looked after children (as defined above)
2. Children with a sibling attending the school
3. Children living in the priority admission area
4. Children of staff at the school:
 - a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
5. Remaining applications

In the event of oversubscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be determined by straight line distance from home to school, those living closest being given the highest priority.

The application process is in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme for primary admissions and involves completion of the Common Application Form – either online or by paper. Offers of places will be sent by Essex County Council on 16th April 2021. Where applications are made mid-year the criteria in this document shall apply.

The closing date for applications will be on 15th January 2021.

Applications will normally be processed on the basis of the home address (as previously defined) for the child at the time of application and determination, unless where there is a new home address, proof of an exchange of contracts or a copy of a tenancy agreement can be provided by 4th February 2021.

Withdrawal of an offer

If a school place has been secured through false information or has been offered in error, the offer of the place may be withdrawn.

Waiting lists

After 19th April 2021, all unsuccessful applications that are ranked higher than the school offered will be held on a waiting list, according to the admissions criteria for the school. This applies to both on time and late applications.

Essex County Council School Admissions will hold waiting lists for all oversubscribed schools until the end of August 2021 after which they will be handed over to the school who will hold until 31st December 2021 and continue to allocate places from these lists if spaces become available. Applicants will be ranked on these waiting lists in priority order, according to the school's admission criteria. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. After 31st December 2021 parents should contact the school directly regarding being on a Continued Interest List for a place at the school.

Late Applications

Applications received after the closing date of 15th January 2021 will normally be treated as late. This means your application will be dealt with after all on time applications have been processed, unless there is evidence, or you provide evidence, to show that the application could not reasonably have been made on time. A new on time preference will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. All late applications will be considered by Local Authority officers to determine whether there are exceptional circumstances. Where that is deemed to be the case, the application will be treated as 'on time'.

Even if there are reasons why you could not apply on time, it will be not possible to treat any application received after 1st February 2021 as on time. In addition, any applications, preferences or change requests received after 1st February 2021 will be held and not considered until after the first round of offers on 16th April 2021.

Changing primary schools

The opportunity to transfer depends on places being available at the preferred school. If a place can be offered, it is usually made available at the start of the following term. If no places are available, the application will be refused, and the right of appeal will be given. Applications for transfer will not ordinarily be determined until the half term prior to the requested admission date.

In cases where a child moves into a district area (proof of address required) and, as a result of the move the child would be without a school place, the application will be dealt with immediately. A child should not be withdrawn from the current school until a place has been secured elsewhere.

Mid-year a school may admit a child over the admission number and outside the admission criteria where they have been excluded from another school or are being placed as a move supported by all agencies.

Admission Outside of the 'Normal Age Group'

Parents may seek a place at a school outside of a child's normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Any such request must be made in writing with an application setting out clearly the reasons with any supporting evidence from relevant professionals such as teachers or doctors. Each such case will be considered by the school on an individual basis considering the best interests of the child concerned, the parent's views and any professional supporting evidence. The views of the Headteacher of the school(s) at which the place is requested will be sought. There is no guarantee that a request for a place outside of a child's normal age group will be agreed. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. However, this right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

Applications made after the start of the autumn term

On receipt of an application after the start of the autumn term the Local Authority will contact the school in writing for the up-to-date numbers of children on roll in the relevant year group. If there are spaces available an offer will be made. If not, a refusal will be sent, and the right of appeal given if it was a first application for the year group. Unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances a second application received in the same academic year does not have to be determined by the Local Authority and no second right of appeal will be given. When there are more applications, received on the same day, than the number of places available the school's admission criteria will be used to determine any offers that can be made.

Nursery Provision

Attendance at a nursery attached to a school or a co-located children's centre, does not guarantee admission to the school. Parents of children who are attending such nursery provision must apply for a place at the school if they want their child to attend the reception class. The application will be considered against the published admission criteria for the school. There is no guarantee that a place will be offered.

Appeals against admission decisions

Parents have the right to appeal against admission decisions to an Independent Appeal Panel. Information about how to appeal against a refusal of a school place will be sent with the offer letter. Notice of appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel, PO Box 11, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. More information with regard to appeals can be found on www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Trust every year. Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the Trust will publicly consult on these changes.