

DUDLEY ACADEMIESTRUST

Admissions Policy

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St James Academy is a member of Dudley Academies Trust which operates several academies in the West Midlands region. The admissions policy aims to make clear the admissions process, maximise the opportunity to meet parental preferences and to meet the individual needs of learners wherever possible.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at the academy (school).
- Set out the academy's **arrangements for allocating places to the learners** 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 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, we are required by our 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.

Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents/carers can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions.

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England and 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.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the [Adoption Act 1976](#) or the [Adoption and Children Act 2002](#), or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

How to Apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order. Further details and timescales are set out in the local authority's co-ordinated scheme which is available from [The School Admissions Service](#).

There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a school.

Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the local authority or the academy.

Applications for places will be made in accordance with Dudley local authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form (CAF) provided and administered by the local authority. The CAF can be found by visiting <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/admissions>.

Alternatively, parents/carers can contact the academy who will provide them with a copy of the form.

Requests for Admission Outside the Normal Age Group

Parents/carers are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the [School Admissions Code](#), this will include taking account of:

- Parents/carers views
- Information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The principal's views

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child's normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered based on the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria listed below. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents/carers have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents/carers will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents/carers do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the academy, but it is not in their preferred age group.

Allocation of Places

The academy has an agreed admission number of **180** learners for entry in Year 7.

Oversubscription Criteria

All children whose education health and care (EHC) plan names the school, will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below to decide which children to admit:

- Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children but immediately after being Looked After became subject to an adoption, child arrangement, or special guardianship order.
- Priority will next be given to learners with a “serious and ongoing medical condition” where St James Academy is the most appropriate setting to meet the condition. Parents/carers must provide supportive information from the child’s Hospital Consultant at the time of application. Applicants should also indicate why St James Academy is the most appropriate setting to meet their medical need. The academy will not seek to obtain medical evidence on behalf of parents/carers.
- Priority will next be given to children with siblings at the academy. Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former learners of the academy.
- In each category, priority will be given to those living nearest the academy, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority. The distance measured will be by straight line measurement in metres from the home address to the main entrance to the academy.

Late applications will not be considered until offers have been made to on time applicants and in accordance with the dates set out in the [Admission Scheme](#).

There will, however, be exceptional circumstances in which a late application will be considered alongside those applications that were made within the deadline.

In each circumstance supportive documentary evidence must be provided by the parent/carer at the time of application.

Tie Break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the academy will use the distance between the academy and a child’s home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the academy. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child’s home address to the main entrance to the academy. A child’s home address will be where they are resident for most nights in a normal school week.

Where the distance between 2 children’s homes and the academy is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be independently verified.

Challenging Behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the [School Admissions Code \(paragraph 3.8\)](#) apply, i.e. where [section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that is not the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these learners to the [Fair Access Protocol](#). We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked after children, previously looked after children and children with EHC plans listing the academy.

Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's (DMBC) [Fair Access Protocol](#). This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

In-Year Admissions

Parents/carers can apply for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school, will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will always be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, you can request that your child's name be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available it will be filled by one of the learners on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed above. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for school places from parents/carers must be made on the In-Year application form available from Dudley Local Authority School Admissions Service 0300 555 2345. The academy will consider each application. If more than one application has been received and only one place is available, the criteria given in this admissions policy will be used to decide.

Parents/carers will be notified of the outcome of their in-year application in writing within 15 school days.

Parents/carers whose application is turned down are entitled to appeal.

Waiting List

Where the academy has been oversubscribed in the normal admissions round and places have been refused to some applicants, unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to ask for their child's name to be added to a waiting list which will be compiled in accordance

with the over subscription criteria. Any places which become available will be filled from the waiting list.

The waiting list will be prioritised according to the admission criteria and not by reference to the date of joining the waiting list. It should be noted that a child's position on the list can move up or down at any time, for example by learners moving into the area who qualify for a higher criterion or by parents/carers deciding to remove their child's name from the waiting list.

Any waiting list will be maintained for the academic year. Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available there. A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e., they can go up or down the list.

Repeat Applications

It is not the Trust's policy to consider repeat applications in the same academic year unless there have been significant and material changes in the circumstances of the applicant.

Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the academy is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing and send it to the following address:

School Admissions Team
Council House
Priory Road
Dudley
DY1 1HF

Telephone: 0300 555 2345

Email: admissions.cs@dudley.gov.uk

Website: www.dudley.gov.uk/admissions

The academy will establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal, the academy is required to admit the child.

The arrangements for appeals will be in line with the [Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals](#).

Parents/carers who want to appeal will normally have **20 school days**, after receiving notification of a place not being offered, to lodge an appeal.

Parents/carers wishing to appeal against an admission decision should send a completed appeal form to the address detailed on the offer letter. Other documents may be submitted in support of an appeal and should be lodged no less than **5 school days** before the appeal hearing.

Parents/carers will be given at least **10 school days'** notice of the appeal hearing unless they agree to a shorter period of notice. Appeals must be heard within **40 school days** of the deadline for making an appeal.

The decision of the Appeal Panel will be communicated in writing as soon as possible after the hearing has been concluded and within **5 school days**. In the case of unsuccessful appeals, the Appeal Panel will give the parents/carers their reasons for not upholding the appeal.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the Trust Board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the Trust's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's other policies:

- SEN Policy
- Curriculum Policy