



# **SEVERN ACADEMIES**

## EDUCATIONAL TRUST

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

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## Statement of intent

At Severn Academies Educational Trust all pupils and families are welcome. We work hard to ensure that school places are allocated in a fair and open way, and in accordance with the most recent statutory guidance

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of each school, and is called the 'agreed admissions number'. Our published admissions number (PAN) is:

| School                                      | PAN (Published admissions number) |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Baxter College                              | 180                               |
| Stourport High School                       | 254                               |
| Hartlebury CofE Primary School              | 30                                |
| Wilden CofE Primary School                  | 30                                |
| St Bartholomew's CofE Primary School        | 50                                |
| Stourport Primary Academy                   | 45                                |
| Wolverley Sebright VA Primary School        | 30                                |
| Far Forest Lea Memorial CofE Primary School | 15                                |

All applications received will be ranked in order of priority with reference to the admission criteria. This list of students for whom places could be offered will then be provided to the Local Authority who, according to the Co-ordinated Scheme, will make offers. You will be advised of the outcome of your application, by the local authority on behalf of the school. Please see the relevant dates below

### **Relevant Dates for 2024/2025 Academic Year**

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Closing Date (High Schools)                            | 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023   |
| Late Application Date (High Schools)                   | 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024*  |
| Notification Date (High Schools)                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024      |
| Closing Date (First/Primary & Middle Schools)          | 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2024   |
| Late Application Date (First/Primary & Middle Schools) | 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2024* |
| Notification Date (First/Primary & Middle Schools)     | 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2024     |

\*Late application dates are determined by the admission authority.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. 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 (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- SAET Equality Policy
- SAET Data Protection Policy

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

### Determining a PAN

2.1. The number of places available is determined by the capacity of each school.

### Oversubscription criteria

2.2. In the event of there being an oversubscription of applicants to our schools, the following oversubscription criteria for each relevant age group will be applied:

- a) Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order. This also includes children who were in state care outside of England when they were adopted. Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- b) Students who would still have a **sibling connection** attending the school at the time of application and still attending at the time of admission
- c) Children of all staff employed by the Trust
- d) Students living within the **catchment area** of the school. A copy can be obtained from the Local Authority. Please note that many children living outside the designated catchment area may still gain places.
- e) Students who have a **significant reason** for admission, such reasons, the validity of which will be determined by the Admissions Panel of the Local Governing Body, will include medical, social or compassionate grounds. Parents will be expected to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information from an independent source. In cases where parents have shared responsibilities for childcare following the breakdown of a relationship and the child resides with both parents, a

full explanation of why this school has been chosen will be required and decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

- f) Students who live **nearest** the school by the shortest straight line distance. The measurement will be taken using the GeoCode Points for each property and the GeoCode point for the school. The Admissions Panel will utilise the Local Authority software package called Arcview GIS to determine distance. In the event of equi-distance applicants, any place will be allocated by random selection.

As part of the new 'Worcestershire Fair Access Protocol, incorporating the 'Hard to Place Protocol', all schools with Key Stage 2,3, & 4 classes can be required to exceed the published PAN to admit students covered by the protocol.

2.3. When formulating their admission arrangements, the admission authority will not carry out the following:

- Place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements
- Consider any previous schools attended.
- Give priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in their application
- Give priority to children based on any practical or financial support their parents give to the school or associated parties (including any affiliated religious organisation)
- Take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other children in the family
- Discriminate against any protected characteristic
- Give priority based on a child's or their parents' past or present hobbies or activities
- Interview children or parents
- Request financial contributions as part of the admissions process
- Request photographs of children – apart from for proof of identity when sitting selection tests.

2.3a In cases of multiple births, all children will be admitted.

2.4. The catchment area for each school is available from the Local Authority or from the Trust. <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch>

2.5. The school will accept pupils from outside the catchment area – oversubscription criteria will apply where applicable.

2.6. For the purpose of this policy, "sibling" is defined as any brother or sister related by blood or marriage and any fostered or adopted siblings

- 2.7. Where oversubscribed, the trust will give priority to children whose siblings are attending school at the time of application and still attending at the time of admission. Children who are brought up together as a family by a civil partnership and who are living at the same address, are also considered to be siblings.
- 2.8. For the purpose of this policy, "children of staff" refers to any children of staff who have been employed by the individual institution for two or more years at the time at which the application was made, and where the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

#### Admissions procedures

- 2.9. The school will offer open events and school visits to all potential applicants, irrespective of any protected characteristics. Where necessary, the school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants or disabled parents.

### **3. Admissions**

#### Consultation and determination

- 3.1. The admission authority will consult on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.
- 3.2. Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.
- 3.3. The admission authority will consult on admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if no changes have been made in that time. The last consultation took place in October 2021.
- 3.4. The admission authority will consult with the following:
- Parents of all pupils
  - Stakeholders
  - Other admission authorities within the relevant area
  - The governing board and the LA who are not the admission authority
  - The individual representing the religion or religious denomination of the school.
- 3.5. The admission authority will publish a copy of the full proposed admission arrangements and the contact details of the individual responsible for admissions liaison on each school website.
- 3.6. A copy of the proposed admission arrangements will be made available upon request.

- 3.7. Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year on an annual basis, even when no changes to the arrangements have been made.
- 3.8. Finalised admission arrangements will be published on the school website.
- 3.9. A copy of the finalised admission arrangements will be sent to the LA for entry by 15 March in the determination year.
- 3.10. A copy of the admission arrangements will be sent to the individual or body representing the school's religious character.
- 3.11. Any objections to the admission arrangements will be directed to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

### **Applications and offers**

- 3.12. Parents will be provided with a common application form (CAF) where they will note their three preferred schools, along with a brief explanation, in rank order – the schools do not have to be located in the LA area where the parents live. CAF forms can be found here:  
<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions>
- 3.13. Parents will provide LAs with the following information within the CAF:
- Their name and their child's name and date of birth
  - Theirs and their child's address and proof of residence
- 3.14. The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA.
- 3.15. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met.
- 3.16. The admission authority will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary
- 3.17. The admission authority will not request any of the following:
- Any personal details, including information on criminal convictions or financial status
  - The first language of the parent or child
  - Details about the parents' or child's disability, medical or SEND requirements
  - Any parental agreement to follow the ethos of the school in a practical way
  - For the child to complete any part of the form or for both parents to provide signatures
- 3.18. Once a place has been offered, the admission authority may ask for the child's short birth certificate as proof of birth date.

- 3.19. For PLAC and LAC, the admission authority will request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, and a letter from the LA confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the order being made.
- 3.20. A clear, fair and objective waiting list will be provided until 31 December of each year. Priority will not be given to pupils based on the date they were placed on the list. LAC and PLAC will take priority over the waiting list. The list will be ordered in line with the over-subscription criteria as detailed above and positions on the list are therefore subject to change as names are added. Any places that become available will then be offered to the child who is at the top of the list at the time.
- 3.21. Sixth Form only** Applications to sixth forms can be made using the CAF; however, pupils already on roll who are transferring into Year 12 are not obliged to use it.
- 3.22. Sixth Form only** Each sixth form provider has their own entry criteria relating to KS4 results.
- 3.23. Sixth Form only** The entry requirements for the sixth form are the same for all pupils, irrelevant of their previous school, and where oversubscribed, priority will be given to LAC and PLAC who meet the academic criteria – all other oversubscription criteria will apply as normal.
- 3.24. An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 20 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application.
- 3.25. If any application is found to be fraudulent after a child has started at the school in the first term of the new academic year, the school may withdraw the place. If the fraudulent application is found after this time, the pupil will not be removed.
- 3.26. Primary schools only** All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day.
- 3.27. Primary schools only** Attendance at a SAET nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered in the same main school and parents must ensure that they apply separately for a place in Reception.
- 3.28. Secondary schools only** All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 1 March or the next working day.
- 3.29. The admission authority will maintain a waiting list for oversubscribed schools.



- 3.30. The admission authority will make clear in the admissions arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group for the admissions round.
- 3.31. The headteacher will assist the admission authority with deciding on which year group a child will enter. Once a decision has been reached, the child's parents will be informed in writing along with an explanation of how the decision was reached and any reasons why.
- 3.32. Pupils not of usual school age will not be given less of a priority where the school is over subscribed. In the case of a request for deferred entry, parents must include a statement and a decision will be made based on professional judgment. Admission authorities must provide for the admission of children in the September following their fourth birthday. Where a place has been offered for a child at a school, that child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. The child's parents can defer the date their child is admitted, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made. Where parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age. Parents may seek 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, effectively in the year group below or above their chronological age group. In addition, the parents of a summer board child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1. The Local Authority must make the decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interest of the child concerned. The Local Authority will request the heads teacher of the school to take account of the parent's 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; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower group if it were not for being born prematurely in order to reach a decision as to whether or not is appropriate for the individual child to delay or accelerate their entry into school and be taught outside of their chronological age group.
- 3.33. Applications for children coming from overseas will be treated in accordance with EU law or Home Office rules.
- 3.34. For children of UK service professionals, the following procedure will be adhered to:
- A place will be allocated to the child in advance of the family arriving in the area named in the application form.

- The application must be accompanied with an official letter confirming the relocation date and the service unit's postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria.
- The application will not be refused on the grounds of the child not currently living in the area, nor will places be uniquely reserved.

3.35. The arrangements for service children will be in line with the government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.

### **In-year Admissions**

3.36. The procedure for in-year admissions for Worcestershire residents is as follows;

3.37. The Authority provides a common application form (CA1) for parents to apply for a place at any mainstream school in Worcestershire. Once completed this must be returned to the School Admissions Team.

3.38. Parents will be invited to state up to three preferences on the CA1 for schools in priority order and give reasons for those preferred schools. Preference order is not considered when applying admission criteria as the law requires all preferences to be treated equally.

3.39. Where a parent approaches a school directly the parent should be advised to complete a CA1 and return it to School Admissions. Parents or carers seeking to transfer to a school need to be aware that they are responsible for ensuring their child continues to receive appropriate education in the interim.

3.40. SAET is a member of the Worcestershire Schools Fair Access Panel and takes part in the co-ordinated scheme for in-year applications. More information can be found at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/inyearapplications>

## **4. Admissions appeals**

4.1. When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent which includes the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal.

4.2. Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing.

4.3. Grounds for appeal are not limited.

### **Constitution of appeals panels**

- 4.4. The admission authority and the appeals panel will act in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance.
- 4.5. The judicial function of the appeals panel will be transparent, accessible, independent and impartial, and will operate in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- 4.6. A clerk will be appointed to the appeals panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the LA.
- 4.7. The appeals panel will comprise a chair and at least two other panel members. The panel will also include at least one lay person and a person who has experience in education.
- 4.8. The chair of the appeals panel is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including introducing parties, explaining individual roles and how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case and ask questions.
- 4.9. Panel members will be independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service.
- 4.10. The clerk is responsible for assigning members of the appeals panel; however, they will not assign the following disqualified persons:
  - A member of the LA which is the admission authority or in whose area the school is located
  - A member or former member of the governing board of the school
  - An employee at the LA or governing board of the school, other than a teacher or TA
  - Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the admission authority, school or LA who may not act impartially
  - Any person who has not attended training required by the admission authority arranging the appeals panel
- 4.11. There will be three members of the panel available at all times during the appeals process. If any member has to temporarily withdraw, the hearing will be postponed until the panel member returns. If the panel member is unable to return, they will be replaced, and the appeals will be reheard.
- 4.12. Appropriate training will be given, funded by the admission authority, to all panel members and clerks before they take part in a panel hearing. As a minimum, this training will include:
  - The law relating to admissions.

- The panel's duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Procedural fairness and natural justice.
- The roles of specific panel members, e.g. the chair.

4.13. Members of the appeals panel will receive travel and subsistence allowances where applicable, and will be compensated for any loss of earnings or expenses.

4.14. The rate of payment is set by the LA and has due regard to the recommendations of the remuneration panel.

4.15. The appeals panel must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the hearing.

4.16. The admission authority 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 whilst acting as a member of the appeals panel.

### **Appeals hearings**

4.17. The admission authority will publish an appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year. The timetable will comply with section three of the 'School admission appeals code'.

4.18. Appeals will be lodged and heard for the **normal admissions round** within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

4.19. For **late applications**, appeals will be heard between 30-40 school days of the appeal being lodged. Late applications will be dealt with once all on time applications have been considered.

4.20. For **in year** admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 days of the appeal being lodged.

4.21. **Sixth forms only** Appeals will be heard within 30 school days of confirmation of exam results where an offer was conditional, or 40 days where a place is not conditional upon exam results.

4.22. Admission authorities will provide appellants with written notification of the date and all final arrangements of the appeal hearing, including a deadline for the submission of any further evidence that was not sent in the original appeal.

4.23. The admission authority will comply with any request for information to help parents prepare their case for the appeals hearing.

4.24. All evidence relating to the appeal hearing will be passed on to the clerk, including the admission process, reasons for the decision and how the admission would cause prejudice to the education provision of the school.

- 4.25. 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.
- 4.26. The presenting officer will be responsible for relaying to the attendees the decision not to admit the child, and answer questions where necessary.
- 4.27. 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.
- 4.28. Appeal hearings must be private and held in an accessible location. The order of the appeals will be:
- Case for the admission authority.
  - Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
  - Case for the appellant(s).
  - Questioning by the admission authority and panel.
  - Summing up by the admission authority.
  - Summing up by the appellant(s).
- 4.29. Multiple appeals will be heard, either individually or in groups, by the same appeals panel where appropriate.
- 4.30. Notes of the hearing will be made and kept securely by the admission authority for a minimum of two years. These notes are, in most cases, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **Reaching a decision**

- 4.31. When reaching a decision, the admission authority will have due regard to section three of the 'School admission appeals code'.
- 4.32. Appeals decisions will either be upheld or dismissed – there will be no conditional decisions made, in line with section 94(6) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 4.33. The final decision will be decided by a simple majority. If votes are split equally, the chair will make the casting vote.
- 4.34. The final decision and accompanying reasons will be communicated in writing to the appellant, admission authority and the LA.
- 4.35. The decision letter will be signed by the clerk or chair of the appeals panel and sent no later than five school days after the decision has been made.

- 4.36. The admission authority will have due regard for the two-stage process outlined in the 'School admission appeals code' when negotiating appeals regarding infant class sizes.

### **Complaints**

- 4.37. Appellants do not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority 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.
- 4.38. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.
- 4.39. If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Secretary of State.

## **5. Monitoring and review**

- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board on an annual basis.
- 5.2. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2023**