

ADMISSIONS POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Compliance with the Code of Practice for Admissions

Atherton Community School (ACS) will comply with the Admissions Code to ensure the admissions arrangements are clear, lacking complexity and fair. ACS will work within the locally coordinated admissions process and will ensure that it contributes to local admissions arrangements. ACS will particularly encourage admissions from the most deprived areas in Atherton. We will make sure that all communication is targeted and accessible to all our community, including the hard to reach. Furthermore, while ACS is a Christian ethos school, we will not seek to admit on the basis of faith and will operate an inclusive admissions policy (open to all faiths and to none).

Year 7 Admissions

The school will not seek to select its pupils by ability, interview applicants, or seek payment from parents and carers for admission. ACS will work with locally coordinated processes and procedures for admissions arrangements on an annual basis. Working with the locally coordinated processes, ACS will work alongside the Local Authority ensuring that parents and carers can benefit from a prospectus and suitable marketing materials. ACS will of course ensure that website information is available to all prospective parents and carers.

ACS will admit **115** pupils into year 7 in 2020/2021

General admissions arrangements

ACS will ensure that it provides places for children of all abilities, all of whom will come from the local area. We intend to attract local pupils and students from the immediate area surrounding the school and all our publicity and promotional material is designed to appeal to parents and carers in the surrounding neighbourhoods of the school. We are determined that no-one will be marginalised because of challenging or difficult circumstances and will put support in place where this is needed to access information and communication with ACS.

In accordance with admission requirements, a prospectus will be available at the start of each academic year.

Process of Application

Arrangements for applications for places at ACS will be made in accordance with the Local Authority's coordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form provided and administered by the relevant Local Authority.

ACS will use the Wigan Borough Council's timetable for applications to the school each year (exact dates within the months may vary from year to year). This will fit in with the timetable for the coordination of admission arrangements within the Local Authority (LA) as agreed by locally coordinated processes, LA and local schools.

- a) By September – ACS will publish information about the arrangements for admission, including oversubscription criteria for the following September (e.g. in September 2018 for admission in

- September 2019). This will include details of open evenings and other opportunities for prospective pupils and their parents and carers to visit the school. The school will also provide information in relation to the school to the LA for inclusion in the composite prospectus, as required
- b) In September and October – ACS will provide opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school
 - c) October – Common Application Form to be completed and returned by parents (LA to administer). Deadline for applications is 31 October
 - d) LA sends ACS applications to the Trust if there is oversubscription
 - e) ACS sends a list of pupils to be offered places at the school to the LA. Applications are prioritised in accordance with published oversubscription criteria
 - f) February – the LA applies the agreed scheme for their own schools, informing other LAs of offers to be made to their residents
 - g) 1 March offers made to parents and carers
 - h) ACS will ensure its application processes enable parents and carers to apply before these deadlines

Admissions and oversubscription criteria

ACS wishes to work in harmony with the locally coordinated procedures throughout the process. Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below

It is important that all information presented on the application form is correct and verifiable, Education Partnership Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if it has been made on the basis of misleading or false information presented on the application form.

Procedures where the Atherton Community School is oversubscribed

If there are more applicants than places available, **after** students with a statement of special need naming the Atherton Community School, places will be offered in the following order:

1. Children with an EHCP naming Atherton Community School
2. 'Looked after Children' and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but, ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order). Applications for previously looked after children must be supported with appropriate evidence i.e. a copy of the adoption order, residence order or special guardianship order).

3. Children with a sibling (the term “sibling” means a full, half, adopted or fostered brother or sister, or other child living permanently within the same household) on roll at Atherton Community School in Years 7 to 11 at the time of the proposed admission.

4. Children living closest to the School, measured in a straight line from the home address to the front gates of the School.

Please note, children with a **Statement of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plan** naming Atherton Community School in particular will be admitted before all other applicant. Admission numbers will be adjusted to take this into account before the remaining places are offered to other applicants

Where there are more applicants for the available places within categories (1) – (4), then the straight-line distance will be used as the final determining factor, nearer addresses having priority over more distant ones. If oversubscription occurs in distance, and home to school distance is equal, rank order will be determined by ACS using a random number generator. This process will be independently verified. Where this applies to twins or other multiple births, the school will consider if it can accommodate the additional child(ren) on a case by case basis

Waiting lists

Where there are more applicants than places available, waiting lists will operate for each year group according to the oversubscription criteria shown above and without regard to the date the application was received or when a child’s name was added to the waiting list. Children with statements of special educational need/EHC Plan will take priority over children on a waiting list.

Waiting lists for entry to Year 7 in September 2020 will be maintained until the last day of the Autumn term. Parents wishing to remain on the waiting list after this date must write to Atherton Community School by 31 December 2020, stating their wish and providing their child’s name, date of birth and the name of their current school. After 31 December 2020, parents whose children are not already on the waiting list but who wish them to be so must make an application through our in-year admission process. Waiting lists for other year groups will be reviewed termly.

Appeals

There will be a right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel for applicants refused admission. ACS will participate in the LA’s Fair Access policy.

The Education Partnership Trust and ACS will act in accordance with, and will ensure that an Independent Appeals Panel is appointed to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education (“the Codes”) as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to maintained schools. For this purpose, reference in the Codes or legislation to “admission authorities” shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the Education Partnership Trust.

The Education Partnership Trust and ACS shall ensure that parents and ‘relevant children will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the Education Partnership Trust. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of the Education Partnership Trust. The arrangements for appeals will comply with the School Admission

Appeals Code published by the Department for Education as it applies to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

Mid-Term Admissions

ACS will work in partnership with the LA and secondary schools in the borough when dealing with mid-term admissions. It will participate in the arrangements published by the LA, including the 'Fair Access Protocol, which provide for the allocation of places in line with the ACS admissions policy and the maintenance of a waiting list of pupils applying to ACS, should no vacancies be available at the time of application.

Pupils will be prioritised in the following order:

- i. Students with a statement of Special Educational Needs.
- ii. 'Looked after Children' and previously looked after children in public care.
- iii. Children with a sibling (the term "sibling" means a full, half, adopted or fostered brother or sister, or other child living permanently within the same household) on roll at Atherton Community School in Years 7 to 11 at the time of the proposed admission;
- iv. Children living closest to ACS measured in a straight line from the home address to the front gates of the School.

Arrangements for admitting pupils to other year groups, including replacing pupils who have left the School, and for Mid-Term Admissions

ACS will admit pupils in each year group up to the agreed admissions number, subject to there being vacancies, and subject to the provisions in respect of the operation of a waiting list. The waiting list will be operated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

Applicants applying outside the normal admissions period will be considered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria described above.

Late applications for admission

Where there are extenuating circumstances for an application being received after the last date for applications, and it is before the governors have established their list of pupils to be admitted, then it will be considered alongside all the others.

Otherwise, applications which are received after the last date will be considered after all the others and placed on the waiting list in order according to the criteria.

Notes:

- i. 'Previously looked after' refers to children who are looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order. It is incumbent upon applicants to provide the necessary supporting evidence.

- ii. Siblings include stepchildren, half brothers and sisters and adopted and foster children who are living with the same family at the same address. (Consideration will be given to applying the sibling rule to full brothers and sisters only who reside at different addresses. This will be entirely at the discretion of the Education Partnership

Trust and will take information and evidence provided by each applicant into account and will also examine other relevant issues i.e. location of each sibling's address and the distances to all relevant schools plus the effects of using discretion on other applicants for a school).

- iii. Distances will be measured by the Local Authority, not the school

Fair Access Protocol – Wigan LA

Appendix 1

Fair Access Protocol

Background

It is mandatory that all local authorities have a Fair Access Protocol. The Fair Access Protocol ensures that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.

All admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol.

Aims of the protocol

- to be fair and transparent and have the confidence of all schools
- reduce the time that vulnerable children spend out of school
- ensure that vulnerable children are admitted to Wigan schools on an equitable basis

When will the Fair Access Protocol be used?

The protocol will be used where a school place has not been secured through for a child through the normal in year transfer process.

The following children are included in the protocol:

- children who have moved into the area and there are no available places within a reasonable distance of their home;
- children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education;
- children known to the police or other agencies, where it can be shown that their circumstances place them at risk;

- children with challenging behaviour who would meet the criteria for a supported transfer (secondary only);
- children who have been out of education for two months or more;
- children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- children who are homeless;
- children with unsupportive family back grounds for whom a place has not been sought;
- children who are carers;
- children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without a statement);
- children of UK service personnel relocating to the area;

In making a decision to allocate a place, the Director for Children and Families will consider amongst other factors:

- parental preference;
- alternative places available;
- distance between alternative places available for siblings living at the same address as part of the same family unit (primary only);
- existing over-crowding in schools in the relevant age group;
- the number of children already allocated a place at the school using the protocol;
- existing over-crowding in the whole school;
- ease of access to the school from the pupil's home.

Notes:

1. A reasonable distance is 3 miles for secondary age children and 2 miles for primary age children. The distance is measured as shortest suitable walking route using a geographical information system 'GIS' which is based on ordnance survey.
2. In some cases the LA may deem some children not ready for mainstream schooling where appropriate professional advice / evidence supports this. In such cases the LA may secure alternative provision at an alternative provision centre while the appropriate assessments are undertaken to determine where the pupil should be

placed that can most suitably meet that child's needs. Any pupils that integrate back into mainstream school following a period in an alternative provision centre (unless this was a PSP place) will be credited to the school's fair access numbers.

3. Arrangements for secondary supported transfers between schools (as detailed in the Supported Transfer Protocol) will remain in place and will be monitored closely by the local authority to ensure that schools do not export or import disproportionate numbers of challenging/difficult pupils and that the children are not being moved rather than having their needs assessed and met.
4. Under 3.12 of School Admissions Code, where a governing body does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though there are places available, it must refer the case to the local authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be appropriate where a school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children. Evidence is required. This will not apply to a looked after child, a previously looked after child or a child with a statement of special educational needs naming the school in question, as these children must be admitted.
5. Where a child cannot be offered a place at a preferred school, parents will be made aware of their right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.