



Admissions Arrangements for Unity Schools Partnership Primary Schools 2026-27

Version: v2 Final

Type: Trust Policy

Author: Darren Woodward

Date approved: 3 February 2025

Approval level: Trust Board

Admission Arrangements for 2026-2027

1. INTRODUCTION

Unity Schools Partnership (USP) schools follow the Admissions Code and the law relating to admissions. This accords with the Trust's funding agreement with the Department for Education. USP is the admission authority for all its schools.

All Primary schools are required to follow the relevant Trust Primary Admissions Policy which should be clearly displayed on individual school websites. This replaces individual school admissions policies. For nursery admissions, schools follow separate Nursery Admissions Policies at each school, which again should be displayed on the schools' websites with application arrangements.

Attendance at a USP primary school's nursery provision does not guarantee a place into that school's Reception class.

Ditton Lodge, as a Cambridgeshire Primary, Steeple Bumpstead, as an Essex Primary and Robert Kett, Colman Infants, Colman Juniors, Heartsease, Henderson Green, Lingwood and Valley as Norfolk Primaries follow their own separate policies available on their website. **This document applies to USP's Suffolk primary schools.**

As part of the admission arrangements for each Suffolk Primary School, an admission number for each normal year of entry to the school (Reception). This is known as the Published Admission Number (PAN). Each USP school and their published PAN is listed in **Appendix 1**.

2. ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Suffolk Local Authority (LA) currently co-ordinates the admission of Reception age students for our Suffolk schools. We have one primary school in Cambridgeshire (Ditton Lodge), one primary school in Essex (Steeple Bumpstead), five primary schools in Norfolk (Robert Kett, Heartsease, Henderson Green, Lingwood and Valley) and one infant and one junior school in Norfolk (Colman Infants, Colman Juniors)– for information on those schools, please see their school websites.

Parents/Carers apply for a place at one of our Suffolk primary schools through the LA's admission process. The LA allocates places on behalf of the academy trust following consultation with academies, for students at the beginning of their education.

3. ADMISSION CRITERIA

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names an individual school within the trust will be admitted to that school.

In the event of a year group being oversubscribed, and after the admission of pupils with an EHCP where the school is named, priority for admission to individual schools within the trust will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:-

A. Looked after children (children in care – see definition in Section 4) and previously looked after children (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after, including those 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).

B. Siblings (see definition in section 4) of pupils who are already at the school or who have already been offered a place, and who will still be there at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. If you have more than one child at the Academy, please name the youngest one.

C. Children who are **ordinarily resident** in the catchment area. Places will be allocated in the following priority order:

- Children who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by the local authority (LA) using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

D. Children who live outside the school's catchment area in the same priority order as outlined in Part C. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies') as shown in criterion C.

The exceptions to this are Kedington Primary Academy (Appendix 3) and West Row Primary Academy (Appendix 4).

TIE BREAKER

It is possible that the PAN of a school will be reached in any one of the categories set out above. For this reason, all applications will be prioritised according to the criteria described. Decisions will be made about the offer of places in accordance with those priorities. If it is necessary to use a tie-breaker to distinguish between two or more applications, a distance criterion will be used. Places will be allocated in order according to the distance between the school and the child's ordinarily resident address, with those living nearest being admitted first. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by the local authority (LA) using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school live the same distance from the school, random allocation will be used. The random allocation process will be independently supervised.

4. DEFINITIONS FOR ADMISSION CRITERIA

Looked after children (children in care)

A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Previously looked after children (children previously in care)

Previously looked after children (children previously in care) includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act

1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Children adopted from state care outside of England

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organization, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Siblings

Where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision or nursery, priority will be given where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap.

The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

Ordinarily resident

By ordinarily resident we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents/carers will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

Catchment area

This is the area each school serves. USP cannot guarantee your child a place at their catchment area school. This admissions policy is separate to the SCC School Travel Policy.

- Catchment area maps are available online at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/catchmentmaps
- If you live near to a boundary line on the map please check your address against the catchment area parish/village and street lists for towns at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions
- If you would like a copy of the map or list sent to you, or you are unsure of your catchment area please call the Admissions Team on 0345 600 0981.

A catchment area map is also available from each school office.

Twins, triplets and other multiple births

If the final place available at one of our Suffolk primary schools is offered to a twin, triplet or other multiple birth and the remaining sibling/s would ordinarily be refused, we will offer places to the remaining sibling/s at that school. The law permits this even where this would mean that more than 30 pupils would be admitted to an infant class. Where a sibling of a twin, triplet or other multiple birth has a school named on their EHC plan, USP will from the date of issue of the EHC plan treat their twin, triplets or other multiple births under the sibling oversubscription criterion for the named school. This does not apply to siblings of children in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision or a nursery, because they do not meet the sibling definition in the oversubscription criteria.

Late applications

All applications received by the Local Authority after the deadline will be considered to be late applications. Sometimes there are good reasons why an application is made after the closing date such as a family having just moved into the area. Applications such as this will be considered after those received on time, up until the date agreed in the Suffolk Admission Co-ordinated Scheme as long as the Local Authority are provided with written evidence at the same time and agree that exceptional reasons apply. If, following consideration of all applicants a USP primary school in Suffolk is oversubscribed, those children not gaining a place are automatically placed on a waiting list until the 31st December.

Otherwise, if we get your application after the closing date, it will be considered after we have offered school places for the applications we received on time. This will be after the primary National Offer Day, 16 April or the next working day for a primary application. Please be aware it may be several weeks before you receive an offer of a place at a Suffolk USP primary school. If all of the places have been offered already, the local authority will try to meet your second or third preference, or they will offer you a place at the nearest suitable school which has a place available. The Local Authority will use the admissions oversubscription criteria which can be found in the Directories of Schools in Suffolk.

Waiting lists

If you apply for a school place at a USP Suffolk primary school in the normal year of entry and you are refused, your child's name will automatically be placed on a waiting list for that school. Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in the admissions oversubscription criteria (above).

The order of children does not remain static - as circumstances change a child's place on the waiting list can go up or down, for example due to withdrawals or additional applications. If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list you must let us the USP Primary school know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list for that school. Written evidence of this will be required.

Having your child's name on a USP Suffolk primary school's waiting list will not affect your right to appeal for any of the schools you have been refused a place at.

Late applicants will be added to a USP Suffolk primary school's waiting list in oversubscription priority order if your parental preferences cannot be met. If a place becomes available, it will be offered to a child on the waiting list in priority order. We do not offer places on the basis of the date on which names were placed on the list.

The Reception waiting lists will cease to operate on 31st December of the year of admission.

USP does not hold in-year applications on a waiting list.

5. IN-YEAR ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

USP, as the Admission Authority, is responsible for in-year admission arrangements. This responsibility is devolved to the Trust's Primary Admissions Committee. Parents who wish to transfer their child to a USP Suffolk primary school during the course of a school year are advised to contact the relevant school secretary to obtain an in-year admissions form.

The School will, upon allocation of a school place to a pupil transferring in-year, notify the LA of the proposed admission to enable the LA to keep up-to-date figures on the availability of places.

Applications for a place outside the normal age group

It is expected that children will normally be educated within their chronological year group. However, when requested to do so by the parent, admission authorities will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code. This may apply when a parent wishes to delay their summer born (April to August) child entry to full-time education in the reception year group until the following school year when they become of statutory school age.

To do this you should make a request to the Academy Trust, via your chosen school's office, in writing. This will need to include, where relevant, any supporting evidence. The Academy Trust will make a decision on the request, taking into account the views of the Headteacher and the Academy Trust. We will then write to you with the outcome including the reasons for the decision. If the request is refused, details of how to complain to the school will be given. You will then need to send your CAF1 application form to the LA along with the decision letter(s) and other relevant evidence by the national closing dates. Even if the request is agreed there is no guarantee there will be a place available.

Appeals

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

Appellants should contact the Education Appeals Office on 01473 264218 or 264219. There is further information at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions then select the Appeals panel on the left which will contain contact numbers, address and email contacts as well as appeal forms and the timescales by which you would need to make your appeal.

Education Appeals
Customer Rights
PO Box 579
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

Email: statutory.appealsoffice@suffolk.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Pupil Admission Numbers for Unity Schools Partnership's Suffolk primary schools (PAN):

School	PAN	Notes
Abbots Green Academy**	75	
Burton End Primary Academy*	60	
Clements Primary Academy**	30	
Coupals Primary Academy*	60	
Glemsford Primary Academy**	30	
Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy	60	
Kedington Primary Academy	30	
Langer Primary Academy	30	
Laureate Community Academy**	30	
Place Farm Primary Academy***	60	
Tollgate Primary School*	60	
Wells Hall Primary School**	60	
Westfield Primary Academy*	60	
West Row Primary School	45	
Wickhambrook Primary Academy	30	
Woodhall Primary School*	60	

February 2025

*Schools with Nursery provision - attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee a place in that school's Reception class(es).

**Schools with Nursery provision from 2 years old – attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee a place in that school's Reception class(es)

***Place Farm Primary Academy has applied to operate a nursery from September 2025. If successful, attendance at this nursery would not guarantee a place in that school's Reception class(es).

Appendix 2: Our Admissions Guidance for Summer born children – deferred entry

Applicable to children born between April 1st and August 31st

All our schools provide for the admission for all children in the September following their fourth birthday and the vast majority of our children complete a full year in Reception, starting full-time from the September after they turn four. However, as a summer born child does not reach compulsory school age until 31st August, parents/carers are not obligated to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday. In a very small number of cases, in exceptional circumstances, we are able to consider parental requests to defer their child's admission into Reception until the September when they turn five (deferred entry). We will consider this and in-year requests in other year groups on a case by case basis and always and only if it is in the child's best interest; we outline the process below. Additionally, there are various implications that should be taken into account and these are listed for careful consideration.

The process:

1. If parents/carers would like a school to consider deferred entry for their child, we recommend that parents/carers contact the school to arrange a meeting by the end of the autumn term after the child turns three.
2. Parents will be asked to write, providing specific reasons with supporting evidence as to why deferral is in the child's best interests, socially, emotionally and academically.
3. If the school is prepared to consider a deferral and it is agreed by the Trust's Primary Admissions Committee, parents/carers will receive confirmation of this in writing, stating that, if the parents/carers apply one year later via the normal admissions process, the school will admit the child into Reception **subject to the first bullet point below**.

Furthermore, if one USP Suffolk primary school is able to agree to the request, this will mean that the request will be honoured in our other Suffolk primary schools across the trust.

Considerations and Implications

- There is no guarantee of a place into Reception the following year as the application will be subject to the normal admissions process and allocations. Deferral due to a summer birth date is not given priority over other applications. Please see our admissions arrangements which outline criteria for allocations.
- We recommend that parents/carers similarly approach other schools that they will be putting as preferences in an application to admissions, as if a child is not offered a place due to the usual admissions criteria, the second and third choice schools will also need to have agreed to the request for a deferral into Reception.
- If parents/carers reconsider during the child's fourth year and wish their child to start in-year in Reception or go straight into Year 1 in the autumn term after they turn 5, it is important to understand that applications will go through the 'in-year admissions' process and no guarantee of a place can be made.
- We strongly recommend that an application is always made in the usual way regardless of agreements with schools as this allows time for reconsideration by the parents/carers, for example if the child's development in the second half of their third year significantly accelerates or the family's circumstances change.
- Furthermore, if a child's deferral is agreed, and they begin at the school, transfer to other schools in the future cannot be guaranteed into the cohort they are being taught in. It is the decision of the receiving school's admissions authority as to whether they will be accepted into the year group they are taught in.

Appendix 3

ADMISSION CRITERIA – Kedington Primary Academy

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names an individual school within the trust will be admitted to that school.

In the event of a year group being oversubscribed, and after the admission of pupils with an EHCP where the school is named, priority for admission to individual schools within the trust will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:-

A. Looked after children (children in care – see definition in Section 4) and previously looked after children (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after, including those 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).

B. Children who are **ordinarily resident** in the catchment area. Places will be allocated in the following priority order:

- i) Siblings (see definition in section 4) of pupils who are already at the school or who have already been offered a place, and who will still be there at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. If you have more than one child at the Academy, please name the youngest one.
- ii) Children who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by the local authority (LA) using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

C. Children who live outside the school's catchment area in the same priority order as outlined in Part B i) and ii).

Appendix 4

ADMISSION CRITERIA – West Row Primary Academy

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names an individual school within the trust will be admitted to that school.

In the event of a year group being oversubscribed, and after the admission of pupils with an EHCP where the school is named, priority for admission to individual schools within the trust will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:-

- A. Looked after children (children in care – see definition in Section 4) and previously looked after children (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after, including those 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).
- B. Priority will next be given to children of staff at the school, in either of the following circumstances:
 - i) The member of staff has been employed at the school for 2 or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or
 - ii) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
- C. Siblings (see definition in section 4) of pupils who are already at the school or who have already been offered a place, and who will still be there at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. If you have more than one child at the Academy, please name the youngest one.
- D. Children who are **ordinarily resident** in the catchment area. Places will be allocated in the priority of children who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight-line distances are calculated electronically by the local authority (LA) using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address-point between which straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.
- E. Children who live outside the school's catchment area in the same priority order as outlined in Part D i) and ii).