



The Gateway Trust

Primary Admissions Policy 2027/28	
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NB: In this policy the term "school" includes every nursery setting, primary or secondary school and any other establishment that forms part of The Gateway Trust.

Change Log

07.01.2026 – Amendments to oversubscription criteria following period of consultation

Version 1 – 13.11.2025

New policy for all primary schools within The Gateway Trust

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1. Statement of intent

- 1.1. At Oakfield Academy, we welcome all pupils and offer places in an open, fair, clear and objective way.
- 1.2. We work to the principle that any parent reading our admissions arrangements should be able to understand easily how places will be allocated and should not feel discouraged or disadvantaged from applying.
- 1.3. The table below sets out who the admission authority is and other responsible bodies for this school.

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for the co-ordination of applications and offers?	Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at the school?
Academy	Academy Trust	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority	Academy Trust

2. Legal framework

- 2.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to:
 - 2.1.1. Equality Act 2010
 - 2.1.2. Human Rights Act 1998
 - 2.1.3. School Standards and Framework Act 1998
 - 2.1.4. DfE School Admissions Code
 - 2.1.5. DfE School Admission Appeals Code
- 2.2. This policy operates alongside the following school and trust policies:
 - 2.2.1. Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - 2.2.2. Data Protection Policy
 - 2.2.3. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
 - 2.2.4. SEN Information Report

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1. The Board of Trustees of The Gateway Trust is the admission authority for Oakfield Academy.
- 3.2. The trust board is responsible for:
 - 3.2.1. Acting in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the school.

- 3.2.2. Determining the admission arrangements, including the oversubscription criteria, on at least an annual basis.
- 3.2.3. Ensuring the oversubscription criteria are reasonable, clear, objective and do not unlawfully discriminate against any child.
- 3.2.4. Ensuring the practices and criteria used to allocate places are fair, clear and objective.
- 3.2.5. Publishing the admission arrangements, including oversubscription criteria, on the school and trust websites.
- 3.2.6. Consulting publicly on any proposed changes to admissions arrangements where required.
- 3.2.7. Clearly communicating reasons for refusing admission and the right of appeal.
- 3.2.8. Implementing any advice or directions issued by the Schools Adjudicator without due delay.
- 3.3. The LGB, acting under delegation from the trust board, is responsible for:
 - 3.3.1. Applying the determined admission arrangements to individual applications, including oversubscription criteria where necessary, or overseeing an admissions committee that does so.
 - 3.3.2. Ensuring accurate records are kept of decisions made on applications, including in-year applications.
 - 3.3.3. Ensuring the school participates in the local authority (LA) co-ordinated scheme.
 - 3.3.4. Ensuring that information required by the LA is supplied correctly and on time.
- 3.4. The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:
 - 3.4.1. Acting in line with relevant admissions legislation and guidance.
 - 3.4.2. Receiving and considering objections to the admission arrangements.
 - 3.4.3. Making binding decisions and approving variations where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.
- 3.5. The appeals clerk is responsible for:
 - 3.5.1. Having up-to-date knowledge of the School Admission Appeals Code, School Admissions Code and other relevant law.
 - 3.5.2. Providing an independent and impartial clerking service for admission appeals.
 - 3.5.3. Making the necessary administrative arrangements for appeal hearings.
 - 3.5.4. Notifying all parties of the order of proceedings before an appeal hearing.
 - 3.5.5. Responding to queries from appellants or signposting them to the right person.
 - 3.5.6. Advising the panel on procedure and admissions law as needed.

3.5.7. Keeping accurate records of proceedings and issuing written notification of appeal panel decisions.

3.6. The headteacher is responsible for:

3.6.1. Liaising with the trust board and LGB regarding pupil admissions and school capacity.

3.6.2. Providing the trust board with information needed to set admissions arrangements and participate in LA co-ordination schemes.

3.6.3. Implementing arrangements for pupils admitted through in-year admissions to start as soon as possible.

4. Determining the PAN

4.1. The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of pupils the school will admit to the Reception year group each September.

4.2. The PAN for Oakfield Academy is 30 for Reception.

4.3. The trust board will determine the PAN for each relevant age group and publish it annually.

4.4. The trust board will notify the LA of any increase to the PAN and will reflect such changes on the school website.

4.5. The trust board will consult on any proposal to decrease the PAN, in line with the School Admissions Code.

4.6. If the trust board decides that the school can admit more pupils than the PAN in a particular year, it will notify the LA in good time so that the LA can fulfil its co-ordination duties.

4.7. The trust board will not refuse admission to any age group outside the normal year of entry on the grounds that numbers have reached the PAN, but may refuse admission where admitting an additional child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

5. Oversubscription criteria

5.1. Before oversubscription criteria are applied, all children whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names Oakfield Academy will be admitted.

5.2. If, after admitting children with an EHC plan that names the school, there are more applications than available places in the year group, the trust board will apply the following oversubscription criteria, in order of priority:

5.2.1 **Looked after and previously looked after children (LAC and PLAC)** - Children who are, or have been, in the care of a local authority, including those previously in state care outside England who have since been adopted.

5.2.2 **Children of trust employed staff - Children of a member of staff employed by The Gateway Trust where:** the staff member has been employed for at least two years at the time of application, or the staff member was recruited to fill a post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

- **Children with a sibling on roll**- Children whose main residence is within reasonable travel distance to the school and who have a sibling attending Oakfield Academy at the time of admission.
- 5.2.3 **Service Premium** – Children eligible for Service premium and living within reasonable travel distance to the school.
- 5.2.4 **Children attending a trust-operated nursery or preschool provision on the Oakfield Academy site.** Children who are registered and attending part-time/full-time the trust operated pre-school provision at the Oakfield Academy site at the time of application and rest of the academic year. (Attendance does not guarantee a place but gives priority at this point)"
- **Other children living within reasonable travel distance from the school** - Children whose main residence is within reasonable travel distance from the school.
- **Children with a sibling on roll who live outside a reasonable travel distance from the school** - Children whose main residence is outside a reasonable travel distance but who have a sibling attending the school at the time of admission.
- 5.2.5 **All other children** - Any remaining applicants, ranked by distance.

6. Definitions

6.1. Catchment area

- 6.1.1. The catchment area is the defined geographical area served by Oakfield Academy as published by the LA and the school.
- 6.1.2. The measurement point used by the LA (for example, the school reception doorway or site co-ordinate) will be used when measuring distances.
- 6.1.3. The catchment map and further details are available from the LA and on the school website.

6.2. Distance

- 6.2.1. Distance will be measured as a straight line ("as the crow flies") from the child's home address to the designated point at the school, using the LA's geographical information system (GIS).
- 6.2.2. Where two or more children live at exactly the same distance, the place will be allocated by a random lottery (drawing of lots) supervised by an independent person.

6.3. Home address

- 6.3.1. The child's home address is the address where the child normally lives and sleeps and from which they attend school.
- 6.3.2. Where parents share parental responsibility and the child lives at more than one address, the home address will be the address at which the child spends the majority of school nights. If this is equal, the address registered for child benefit (or, where not claimed, another mutually agreed address supported by evidence) will be used.

- **Sibling**

- 6.4.1 A brother or sister (including full, half, step, adoptive or foster siblings) living at the same home address as the child and who will be on roll at the school at the time the child is due to start.

6.4. Tie-breaker

- 6.4.1. If, within any oversubscription category, there are more applicants than places available, the trust board will rank applicants according to distance, as defined above. Where two or more children live at exactly the same distance from the school and it is not possible to distinguish between them, allocation will be decided by random lottery, conducted by an independent person.

6.5. Children eligible for Service Premium

- 6.5.1. Note - service premium is paid to schools for eligible children of armed services personnel under S14 of the Education Act 2002.

Pupils are eligible for service pupil premium if they meet one of the following criteria

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full-time reserve service)
- they have been registered as a 'service child' on a school census in the past 6 years (see below the 'DfE's ever 6 service child measure')
- one of their parents died while serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme
- one of their parents is in the armed forces of another nation and is stationed in England.

7. Equal opportunities

- 7.1. The trust board will not set admissions criteria that directly or indirectly exclude children with a particular protected characteristic, unless this can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 7.2. The admissions criteria will not discriminate against disabled applicants. Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary so that disabled children and parents are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in the admissions process.

8. Admissions procedures

- 8.1. The school will offer open events and school visits to all potential applicants, regardless of any protected characteristic. Where needed, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure disabled children and parents can take part.
- 8.2. To help the school understand whether it can meet an applicant's needs, the school may:
- 8.2.1. Invite the child to attend for part of a school day.
 - 8.2.2. Visit the child's current setting.
 - 8.2.3. Arrange a home visit.
- 8.3. These steps are used to plan support and are not used to select or refuse pupils, except where lawful criteria such as prejudice to efficient education or efficient use of resources apply.

9. Consultation, determination and publication

9.1. Consultation

- 9.1.1. The trust board will consult on proposed changes to the admissions arrangements where required by the School Admissions Code. Consultation will:
- 9.1.2. Last for a minimum of six weeks.
- 9.1.3. Take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.
- 9.1.4. Occur at least once every seven years, even if no changes are proposed.
- 9.1.5. The trust board will consult with:
 - Parents of children between the ages of two and 18.
 - Stakeholders and other admission authorities in the relevant area.
 - The local authority.
 - Any other local authority from which pupils are usually drawn.

9.2. Determination and publication

- 9.2.1. Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year each year.
- 9.2.2. The trust board will publish the determined admission arrangements, and contact details for admissions enquiries, on the school website by 15 March.
- 9.2.3. A copy of the determined arrangements will be sent to the LA by 15 March.
- 9.2.4. Admission arrangements will remain on the website for the full offer year.

- 9.3. Any objections to the determined admission arrangements must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

9.4. Variations

- 9.4.1. Once determined, admission arrangements will not normally be revised for that school year. Variations may only be made where necessary to:
 - 9.4.2. Comply with a mandatory requirement.
 - 9.4.3. Give effect to a determination of the Schools Adjudicator.
 - 9.4.4. Correct a misprint or obvious error.
 - 9.4.5. Respond to major changes in circumstances, in which case any required approvals will be sought from the Secretary of State.

10. Applications and offers

- 10.1. Applications (normal year of entry)

- 10.2. Parents must apply for a place using the LA's common application form (CAF), naming Oakfield Academy and other preferences in rank order. Parents may name schools both inside and outside the LA area in which they live.
- 10.3. Parents must provide:
- 10.3.1. The child's full name and date of birth.
 - 10.3.2. The child's home address and proof of residence where requested.
 - 10.3.3. The parent's name and contact details.
- 10.4. Parents are not guaranteed that a preference will be met.
- 10.5. The trust board may request supplementary information where necessary to apply oversubscription criteria, but will not ask for:
- 10.5.1. Details of parents' or children's criminal convictions or financial status.
 - 10.5.2. The first language of the parent or child.
 - 10.5.3. Details about parents' or children's disabilities, medical conditions or SEND needs (beyond those strictly required to apply a relevant criterion).
 - 10.5.4. Any agreement to support the ethos of the school in a practical way.
 - 10.5.5. The child to complete any part of the form or for both parents to sign.
- 10.6. Where a place is offered, the school may ask to see the child's short birth certificate to confirm date of birth.
- 10.7. For previously looked after children, the trust board will request evidence such as the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, and confirmation that the child was looked after immediately prior to that order. The school may ask for evidence that a child was in state care outside England prior to adoption.

11. Allocating places

- 11.1. Places will only be allocated according to the determined admission arrangements. Decisions to offer or refuse places will be made by the trust board or an admissions committee acting on its behalf.
- 11.2. The trust board will not refuse admission to a child because:
- 11.2.1. The application was made later than others (within the normal timetable).
 - 11.2.2. The child is not of a particular faith.
 - 11.2.3. The child followed a different curriculum at their previous school.
 - 11.2.4. Information has not yet been received from a previous school.

- 11.3. Parents may request admission outside the child's normal age group. The headteacher will provide information to the trust board, which will decide whether to agree the request. Parents will receive a written response explaining the reasons.
- 11.4. For children of UK service personnel and crown servants:
- 11.4.1. A place may be allocated in advance of the family arriving in the area, where one is available.
 - 11.4.2. The application should be supported by an official letter confirming the relocation date.
 - 11.4.3. A Unit or quartering address will be used as the child's home address where this is requested by the parent.
 - 11.4.4. Applications will not be refused because the child does not yet live in the area or does not yet have a confirmed address, and places will not be reserved only for such children.
- 11.5. Children with SEND
- 11.5.1. The school must admit all children whose EHC plan names Oakfield Academy.
 - 11.5.2. Children with SEND who do not have an EHC plan are treated in the same way as all other applicants, including in relation to oversubscription criteria. Reasonable adjustments and support will be planned as needed.

12. Offers

- 12.1. For Reception entry:
- 12.1.1. Offers will be made by the LA on national primary offer day (16 April or the next working day).
 - 12.1.2. Where the school is oversubscribed, the LA will allocate places according to the school's determined admission arrangements, ensuring only one offer per child.
- 12.2. Withdrawing an offer
- 12.2.1. An offer of a place may be withdrawn only if:
 - 12.2.2. It was made in error.
 - 12.2.3. A parent has not responded within the timescale set out in the offer letter and, after a reminder, still does not respond.
 - 12.2.4. It was based on a fraudulent or misleading application.
- 12.3. Where an offer is withdrawn because of non-response, the trust board will give parents a further opportunity to respond and will explain that the offer will then be withdrawn.
- 12.4. If fraud is discovered after the child has started at the school in the first term of the academic year, the place may be withdrawn. If fraud is discovered later than this, the child will not normally be removed from the roll.

13. Co-ordination scheme

- 13.1. The LA will publish a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for the normal admissions round and late applications. The LA will consult the trust board if it plans to make significant changes to this scheme.
- 13.2. The trust board must take part in the co-ordinated scheme and will provide the LA with the information it needs to co-ordinate admissions effectively.

14. In-year admissions

- 14.1. In-year admissions are applications for places outside the normal admissions round.
- 14.2. The trust board will publish in-year admissions arrangements on the school website by 31 August each year, setting out how applications made between 1 September and 31 August will be managed.
- 14.3. The arrangements will make clear whether in-year applications are to be made to the school or to the LA on the trust's behalf.
- 14.4. Where the school has a place available in the requested year group, a place will be offered, unless admitting the child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.
- 14.5. Parents whose applications are refused have the right to appeal.
- 14.6. The trust board will:
 - 14.6.1. Notify parents of the outcome of an in-year application in writing within 15 school days of receipt.
 - 14.6.2. Notify the LA of every application and its outcome within two school days, or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 14.7. Where an offer is accepted, the school will arrange for the child to start as soon as possible.

15. LA in-year co-ordination scheme

- 15.1. The school will inform the LA by 1 August each year whether it wishes to participate in the LA's in-year co-ordination scheme and will provide any necessary information for publication.
- 15.2. Where the school participates in the LA's in-year co-ordination:
 - 15.2.1. The school will provide the LA with details of available places within two school days of a request.
 - 15.2.2. The school will direct parents to the LA website for information on how to apply.

16. Waiting list

- 16.1. For admissions at the start of the academic year:
 - 16.1.1. The school will keep a waiting list for the year group of entry until at least 31 December of the admission year.

- 16.1.2. The waiting list will rank children according to the oversubscription criteria set out in this policy. It will not operate on a "first come, first served" basis.
- 16.1.3. When new children join the waiting list, it will be re-ordered in line with the oversubscription criteria.
- 16.2. For in-year admissions:
 - 16.2.1. Where a year group is full, parents may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list.
 - 16.2.2. The waiting list will again be ordered strictly according to the oversubscription criteria.
- 16.3. A place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list when a vacancy arises. If a child on the waiting list is offered a place, parents will be notified and given a clear deadline to accept or decline the offer.

17. Admissions appeals

- 17.1. Where a place is refused, parents (and, in certain circumstances, children) have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel.
- 17.2. The trust board will:
 - 17.2.1. Establish an independent appeal panel in line with the School Admission Appeals Code.
 - 17.2.2. Ensure the panel acts in a transparent, accessible, independent and impartial way, following principles of natural justice.
 - 17.2.3. Make sure the panel and clerk act in accordance with relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.
- 17.3. Timetable:
 - 17.3.1. The trust board will set and publish a timetable for organising and hearing appeals which:
 - 17.3.2. Gives appellants at least 20 school days from the date of the refusal letter to prepare and lodge a written appeal.
 - 17.3.3. Ensures that appellants receive at least 10 school days' notice of the appeal hearing date.
 - 17.3.4. Sets reasonable deadlines for the submission of additional evidence and for papers to be sent to all parties.
 - 17.3.5. Aims to send decision letters within 5 school days of the hearing where possible.
- 17.4. Appeals lodged on time will be heard within the following timescales:
 - 17.4.1. For applications made in the normal admissions round, within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

- 17.4.2. For late applications, within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 17.4.3. For in-year admissions, within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 17.5. Notifying appellants of the right to appeal
 - 17.5.1. When a place is refused, the trust board's decision letter will include:
 - 17.5.2. The reason for refusing admission.
 - 17.5.3. Information about the right to appeal.
 - 17.5.4. The deadline for lodging an appeal.
 - 17.5.5. Contact details and instructions for making an appeal.
- 17.6. Parents will be told that appeals must be submitted in writing. The trust board will not limit the grounds on which an appeal may be made.
- 17.7. Appellants will be given written notice of the date and arrangements for the hearing at least 10 school days before it takes place. This notice will explain the deadline for submitting any further evidence.
- 17.8. The trust board will meet reasonable requests for information to help parents prepare their case and will ask whether appellants intend to call witnesses or be represented.
- 17.9. Constitution and operation of appeal panels
 - 17.9.1. The trust board will appoint an independent clerk to the panel.
 - 17.9.2. The panel will consist of a chair and at least two other members, including at least one lay member and at least one member with experience in education.
 - 17.9.3. Panel members and clerks will not take part in hearings until they have received appropriate training.
 - 17.9.4. The panel will be independent of the school and trust in line with the School Admission Appeals Code.
- 17.10. Appeals may be heard in person, by video conference or as a hybrid, provided that the panel is satisfied that all parties can participate fully and fairly. Telephone-only hearings will be used only where video is not possible and all parties agree.
- 17.11. The order of the hearing will normally be:
 - 17.11.1. Case for the trust board.
 - 17.11.2. Questions to the trust board from the appellant(s) and panel.
 - 17.11.3. Case for the appellant(s).
 - 17.11.4. Questions to the appellant(s) from the trust board and panel.
 - 17.11.5. Summing up by the trust board.

17.11.6. Summing up by the appellant(s).

17.12. Reaching and communicating a decision

17.12.1. Decisions will be by simple majority vote. Where votes are tied, the chair has the casting vote.

17.12.2. The panel will either uphold or dismiss the appeal and will not attach conditions to a place.

17.13. Decisions will follow the two-stage process set out in the School Admission Appeals Code.

17.14. For infant class size appeals, the panel will apply the special tests in the Code.

17.15. A decision letter will be sent to the appellant, signed by the clerk or chair, no later than 5 school days after the decision where possible. The letter will set out:

17.15.1. The panel's decision.

17.15.2. Clear reasons for the decision.

17.15.3. A summary of the key points raised and considered.

17.16. Appeals from parents of children with an EHC plan about the school named in the plan are heard by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), not by the admissions appeal panel.

17.17. Where there are multiple appeals for the same year group, the trust board will, where possible, arrange for all to be heard by the same panel and will not make decisions until all appeals have been heard.

17.18. The clerk will keep a record of the hearing, including attendance, the decision and the reasons. These records will be kept securely for at least two years.

17.19. Further appeals and complaints

17.19.1. Parents do not have the right to a second appeal for the same child, the same school and the same academic year unless there has been a material change in circumstances and the LA has accepted a fresh application that has again been refused.

17.19.2. Parents may apply again for a different academic year.

17.19.3. If appellants are concerned about the way an appeal has been handled (maladministration), they may complain to the Secretary of State for Education.

18. Monitoring and review

18.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the trust board. Any amendments will be determined in line with the School Admissions Code and communicated to:

18.1.1. The Local Governing Board.

18.1.2. The headteacher and relevant school staff.

18.1.3. The LA and other required bodies.

18.1.4. Parents and carers via the school website.

- 18.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2026 (for determination of arrangements for September 2028 entry).