

Oakwood Infant and Nursery School



School Admissions Policy (OAK023/03/2024)

School Mission Statement

At Oakwood Infant and Nursery School we provide a safe, healthy, happy and creative learning environment for everyone, through high expectations and mutual respect

We are all stars watch us shine.

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Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant, Junior and Primary Schools in Essex for 2021-2022

Individual policies and over-subscription criteria are set out in this document in district order. The following information applies:

Looked After Children

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order will be given first priority in oversubscription criteria ahead of all other applicants in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. 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 (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Children an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that name the school on the plan are required to be admitted to a school regardless of their place in the priority order.

Age of Admission

Essex County Council's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2021.

As required by law, all Essex infant and primary schools provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. Therefore, if a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September (at the school at which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in the school year. The law does not require a child to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Compulsory school age is reached at that point.

Where entry is deferred, the school will hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. The parent would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was accepted.

Parents can also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. Any parents interested in taking up a part-time place initially should contact the individual school(s) for further details as to what this would entail.

Where parents choose to defer entry, a school may reasonably expect that the child would start at the beginning of a new school term/half term.

Where a parent of a 'summer-born' child (1 April – 31 August) wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, they will need to apply for a place at the correct time for the normal admission round for the following academic year. The process to be followed is defined in detail in the 'Primary Education in Essex' booklet. Supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort should be submitted.

The County Council will decide whether the application for a Reception place will be accepted or whether it will be treated as an application for a Year 1 place, the child's normal age appropriate cohort. Further details are provided in the 'Primary Education in Essex' booklet.

If the application for a Reception place is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of the place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

Nursery Provision

Some schools have a nursery unit or deliver pre-school nursery education. The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into any nursery or pre-school provision. The responsibility for admission into nursery provision lies with the governing body of the school where the school offers such provision.

Parents of children who are admitted to a nursery provision at a school must apply in the normal way for a place at the school if they want their child to be admitted to the reception class in the school. Attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school.

Applying for a school place

The application process is in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme for primary admissions and involves completion of the Common Application Form – either online or by paper. Offers of places will be made on 16 April 2021.

Closing date for applications

The closing date for applications is 15 January 2021. This also applies to admissions to junior schools, including transfers from infant schools.

Home address

Applications will normally be processed on the basis of the home address for the child at the time of application and determination, unless, where there is a new home address, proof of an exchange of contracts or copy of a tenancy agreement can be provided by 5 February 2021.

The home address is considered to be the address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is 'ordinarily resident'. This is generally the address of the parent/carer.

In some cases, children may be 'ordinarily resident' for the majority of the school week, including overnight, with another relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where a child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application may be processed on the basis of that address (where the child resides for the majority of the school week) and proof of address and residence arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer 24 hours per day, for the majority of the school week.

Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be 'ordinarily resident' with that person. In all cases we expect that the adult with whom the child is 'ordinarily resident' receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

Distance tie breaker

For admissions purposes the LA uses data provided by Ordnance Survey (OS) to measure straight line distances. The OS data plots the co-ordinates of each individual property (the home address) which are referred to as address points. The definition of the home address is as described above.

Straight line distance is measured from the address point of the home address to address point of the school. Distances are reported in miles to three decimal places. If a child's time is split equally between two residences, the address of the residence at which the child resides for the majority of the school week would be used to measure the distance between the child's school and home.

In the unlikely event of two applicants with an identical distance competing for a single place at a school the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of the County Council not involved in admissions, with the exception of twins, triplets etc.

Address checking

Where residency is relevant to an application for a school place, the LA may ask a random sample of applicants to provide proof of their home address. This must be a copy of one of the following:

- UK driving licence;
- council tax notification;
- two utility bills dated within the last 6 months (gas, electricity, water or landline phone)

Where there is reasonable doubt as to the validity of a home address, the LA reserves the right to take additional checking measures including, in some cases, unannounced home visits. If a school place is secured through false information regarding a home address, the LA may withdraw the place offered.

Admission of children from overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in the UK have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in the UK for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports), have a passport endorsed to show a right of abode in the UK or are European Economic Area nationals normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. An application for a school place will be accepted for such children even though they may not be resident in the UK at the time of application. The application may however be processed on the basis of the overseas address.

If an applicant meeting the above criteria owns a property in Essex but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application but they intend to take up residency at the Essex home before the start of the autumn term, the application will be processed using the Essex address. Any offer of a school place will then be conditional upon receipt of evidence of taking up residency at that property in Essex.

Other children from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are resident in the UK. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application.

Siblings

For applications made in the normal admission round a relevant sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address who attends the preferred school or partner school in any year group excluding year 6.

Biological and adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year will also be treated as siblings irrespective of place of residence. Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings.

For mid-year applications a sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school or partner school at the time of application and determination and with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission.

Priority Admission Areas

There is no guarantee of a place to children living in the priority admission area of a particular school. Details, including maps of priority admission areas are available on request from School Admissions.

Parents are also able to check in which school's priority admission area their address is located (if any) using the online 'Priority admission (catchment) area finder on the Council's website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Twins, Triplets etc.

For applications made in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin and their sibling cannot be offered initially, the LA will ensure both twins are offered a place. In the case of triplets or other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place initially, the LA will offer places to the remaining children. For example, if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

For mid-year applications, where a family moves into an area necessitating a change of school for their twins (or triplets etc) and the majority can be offered a place then a place will be offered for the remaining child(ren). However, where the family does not move but wishes to transfer the children to another local school where there are insufficient places for all of them then a place would not normally be offered for all.

Year 2 to Year 3 Applications

Parents of children in Year 2 of an infant school have to make an application to transfer to the partner/co-located junior school. The closing date is 15 January 2021. Offers of places will be made on 16 April 2021.

Where parents of children in year 2 of an infant school apply, in the normal admission round for Year 3 junior school places, for a place in year 3 of a primary school (which does not have a Published Admission Number for normal admission at that time) that preference will be treated as a casual admission and a decision will not be made until after the summer half term break when there is likely to be a clearer indication of potential places at the school in September.

Withdrawal of an offer

If a school place has been secured through false information or has been offered in error, the offer of the place may be withdrawn.

Waiting lists

School Admissions will hold waiting lists for all oversubscribed schools until 31 December 2021 and continue to allocate places from these lists if spaces become available. Applicants will be ranked on these waiting lists in priority order, according to the school's admission criteria. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria.

The Local Authority will not maintain waiting lists beyond the end of the first term, however parents will have the opportunity to register their continued interest in a place.

Late Applications

Applications received after the published closing date will be treated as late applications unless there is evidence to show that the application or amendment could not reasonably have been made on time. No application/preference received after 5 February 2021 will be treated as on time.

A new on time preference will not be accepted after the closing date unless the circumstances are deemed to be exceptional. No change to the rank order of existing preferences will be accepted after the closing date except for changes of address and no such changes will be permitted after 5 February 2021 until after the first round of offers has been made on 16 April 2021.

Late applications will be given a lower priority and will be dealt with after all on time applications in the first round of offers on 16 April 2021. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications will be refused and ranked according to the admission criteria on any waiting list held for the particular school.

All late applications will be considered by the LA to ascertain whether exceptional circumstances for late submission exist. Where that is deemed to be the case the application will be treated as 'on time'. Where a school is oversubscribed late applications received after the first round of offers on 16 April 2021 will be refused and ranked according to the admission criteria on any waiting list held for the particular school.

Any new applications or change requests received after 5 February 2021 will be held and not considered until after the first round of offers on 16 April 2021.

Changing primary schools

The opportunity to transfer depends on places being available at the preferred school. If approved, a place is usually made available at the start of the following term. If no places are available, the application will be refused and the right of appeal will be given and an application form for return to School Admissions to help secure a school place elsewhere.

Applications for transfer will not be dealt with until the half term prior to the requested admission date. In cases where a child moves into a district area (proof of address required) and, as a result of the move the child would be without a school place, the application will be dealt with immediately.

A child should not be withdrawn from the current school until a place has been secured elsewhere. Mid-year a school may admit a child over the admission number and outside the admission criteria where they have been excluded from another school or are being placed as a move supported by all agencies.

Admission Outside of the 'Normal Age Group'

Parents may seek a place at a school outside of a child's normal age group, for example if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Any such request must be made in writing with an application setting out clearly the reasons, with any supporting evidence from relevant professionals such as teachers or doctors. Each such case will be considered by LA officers on an

individual basis. The views of the Headteacher of the school(s) at which the place is requested will be sought. There is no guarantee that a request for a place outside of a child's normal age group will be agreed.

Applications made after the start of the autumn term

On receipt of an application after the start of the autumn term the LA will contact the school in writing for the up-to-date numbers. If there are spaces in the year group an offer will be made or if not a refusal will be sent and the right of appeal given if it was a first application for the year group. Unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances a second application received in the same academic year does not have to be determined by the LA and no second right of appeal will be given.

When there are more applications, received on the same day, than the number of places available the school's admission criteria will be used to determine any offers that can be made. There is a process in place that considers parents continued interest in a place at an oversubscribed school. Details of the process will be available to parents who have applied and been refused a place after the start of the autumn term.

Appeals against admission decisions

Parents have the right to appeal against admission decisions to an Independent Appeal Panel. Information about how to appeal against a refusal of a school place will be sent with the offer pack. Notice of appeal should be sent to the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel, PO Box 11, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX.