



The Federation of Spixworth Schools

Admissions Policy

Agreed by Governing Body: Autumn 2022

To be reviewed: Autumn 2023

Group Responsible: Full Governors

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Statement of intent

At The Federation of Spixworth Schools, we welcome all pupils, and places at the school are offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner. We work to the principle that any parent accessing our admissions arrangements will be able to understand easily how places for that school will be allocated, and will not be alienated or discouraged from applying based on admissions criteria.

The table below sets out who the LA is and other responsible bodies in our school.

Type of school	Who is the LA?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at the school?
Community School	Norfolk	Schools Adjudicator	LA

1. Legal framework

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'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- SEN Information Report
- Admissions Policy Appendix: Changes to Procedures for Admissions and Admission Appeals until 30 September 2022

2. Roles and responsibilities

The LA is responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the school.
- Clearly communicating any reasons for rejecting the admission of a pupil, as well as the parent's right to appeal and the appeal process.
- Implementing any advice or recommendations given by the Schools Adjudicator without undue delay.
- Determining the admission arrangements on an annual basis and publicly consulting stakeholders on any proposed changes to the admission arrangements.
- Setting clear, fair and effective oversubscription criteria which do not discriminate against any pupil.
- Communicating oversubscription criteria clearly to parents.
- Notifying the LA of any in-year admissions and their outcomes.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Liaising with the LA where relevant regarding admitting pupils to the school.
- Working with the LA when determining the school's capacity.
- Ensuring that the LA has all the information it needs to set admissions arrangements.
- Making arrangements for pupils admitted through in-year admissions to start as soon as possible.
- Publishing a link to the full, determined admissions arrangements on the school's website.

The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:

- Acting in line with the relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to admissions.
- Receiving concerns and objections regarding the admission of pupils and making recommendations to the admission authority as a result of these concerns and objections.
- Approving variations to determined admissions arrangements where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.

The appeals clerk is responsible for:

- Having an in-depth knowledge of the relevant appeals codes and other relevant law.
- Providing an independent and impartial service for admission appeals.
- Making the necessary administrative arrangements for hearings.
- Notifying all parties of the order of proceedings in advance of an appeals hearing.
- Responding to queries from appellants in advance of an appeals hearing or identifying who will be appropriate to respond.
- Being an independent source of advice on procedure and admissions law.
- Keeping accurate records of proceedings and providing written notification of the appeals panel's decisions.

3. Admissions arrangements

The published admissions number (PAN)

Spixworth Infant School has a PAN of 45 which means up to 45 reception children can start every year. By law, children must start statutory education full-time at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

- You will need to make an application for a reception class place, even if your child currently attends a nursery class at the same school.
- Attendance at a nursery attached to a school, does not normally give you any priority for a place at that school.

Woodland View Junior School has a PAN of 45 which means up to 45 Year 3 children can start every year.

The LA will consult with the governing board where it proposes to increase, decrease or keep the same PAN. Where the LA has set a PAN lower than the school's wishes, the school will submit an objection to the Schools Adjudicator, where appropriate.

The governing board will communicate with the LA where the admission of additional children would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Admission Dates for Reception Class

All parents of children born between 1 September and 31 August must be offered a full time place from September following their 4th birthday. Parents are entitled to defer their admission or request that their child attend on a part-time basis, however the child must start school on a full time basis on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

Parents are required to choose their preferred choice of school and send this to the Local Authority by January in the year before their child starts school. Spixworth Infant School does not decide who does or who does not get a place as this is organised by the Local Authority. Parents will be informed of their place on 'Offer day' in April. If you have applied online, decisions will be made available on the website at www.admissionsonline.norfolk.gov.uk If you have sent in a paper application Norfolk County Council will send you a letter by 2nd class post telling you at which school your child has been offered a place.

Admission Dates for Year 3 Class

Parents are required to choose their preferred choice of school and send this to the Local Authority by January in the year before their child transfers schools. Woodland View Junior School does not decide who does or who does not get a place as this is organised by the Local Authority. Parents will be informed of their place on 'Offer day' in April. If you have applied online, decisions will be made available on the website at www.admissionsonline.norfolk.gov.uk If you have sent in a paper application Norfolk County Council will send you a letter by 2nd class post telling you at which school your child has been offered a place.

Applications

Parents can apply online during the three transfer rounds at www.admissionsonline.norfolk.gov.uk or complete a paper application available from the website www.norfolk.gov.uk/admissions or by requesting a copy from Customer Services on 0344 800 8020.

Information about primary, infant and junior schools in Norfolk can be found on the Norfolk admissions website. You can find out the catchment schools for your home address using the website at www.whereilive.norfolk.gov.uk or contact us on 0344 800 8020.

Over subscription rules for Reception Children

If there are more applications for places than there are places available, Norfolk County Council will give preference to children living nearest to the school, according to the following rules in this order of priority:

Children who are due to start school and:

1. have an EHCP or statement of special educational needs naming that school
2. children in public care, have been adopted from public care or adopted from abroad who are due to transfer
3. live in the catchment area and who have a sibling attending the school at the time of their admission
4. live in the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the feeder junior school
5. have a disability and live in the catchment area (Appropriate professional evidence will be required to confirm the disability)

6. live in the catchment area

7. have been allocated a permanent place at a Specialist Resource Base attached to the school. (Places allocated by Norfolk County Council's Placement panel)

8. children eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if: a. a) 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); b. b) they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016; c. c) one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.

9. live outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister with a statement of special educational needs attending the school at the time of their admission

10. live outside the area served by the school who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission

11. live outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the feeder junior school

12. have a disability and live outside the catchment area (Appropriate professional evidence will be required to confirm the disability)

13. children of staff a. where a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or b. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for there is a demonstrable skill shortage

14. live outside the catchment area

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the school within that rule. To determine who lives nearest, distance will be measured on a straight line "crow fly" basis, using Ordnance Survey data. The address will be measured from the post office address point on the property.

In the unlikely event that distance does not separate the final two or more pupils seeking the last remaining place, a random allocation will be used to determine who is offered the final place.

NOTE: Criteria 7 only applies to schools which have a Specialist Resource Base on site.

Feeder school priority will only apply in the first year of entry to the school.

Oversubscription rules for pupils transferring to community and voluntary controlled junior schools (Year 3) for children in their last year at an Infant or First school.

If there are more applications for places than there are places available, the Local Authority will give priority to children living nearest to the school, according to the following rules in this order of priority:

1. children with an EHCP or statement of special educational needs naming that school

2. children in public care, have been adopted from public care or adopted from abroad who are due to transfer
3. children who are due to transfer, living in the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
4. children who are due to transfer, living in the catchment area who have no brother or sister connection with the school
5. children who are due to transfer and have been allocated a permanent place at a Specialist Resource Base attached to the school. (Places allocated by Norfolk County Council's Placement panel).
6. Children eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if: a. 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); b. they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016; c. one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.
7. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
8. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area and attend a feeder school at the opening date of the admission round.
9. children of staff a. where a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or b. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for there is a demonstrable skill shortage
10. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area served by the school who have no brother or sister or feeder school connection with the school.
11. children attending primary schools with a brother or sister at the junior school
12. children attending primary schools with no brother or sister at the junior school.

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the school within that rule. To determine who lives nearest, distance will be measured on a straight line "crow fly" basis, using Ordnance Survey data. The address will be measured from the post office address point on the property. In the unlikely event that distance does not separate the final two or more pupils seeking the last remaining place, a random allocation will be used to determine who is offered the final place.

Important Note

'School' is defined as the main school and not a learning support centre or nursery class attached to the school. This means that no priority would be given to a child from outside the catchment area who had either a brother or sister at the attached nursery class or in temporary or part-time attendance at the attached learning support centre. The address given on the application form will be used to decide the catchment school.

Children in their last year (Year 2) at an Infant will be considered due to transfer. Children attending a primary school are considered as not due to transfer and therefore their applications have the lowest priority for a place even if they live in the catchment area of the school.

Feeder school priority will only apply in the first year of entry to the school.

NOTE: Criteria 5 only applies to schools which have a Specialist Resource Base on site

Admissions into other year groups

This guidance does not apply where a family has moved a significant distance from their previous home address which makes travel to their current school unreasonable. In this case the Admissions Team will process the application as soon as it is received. A decision as to whether or not there is a place at the school in the appropriate year group will be made by the Local Authority.

Where the school has places available in-year, it will offer a place to every child who has applied for one without condition or use of oversubscription criteria, unless to do so would be to prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources.

It is generally agreed that it is in the best interests of children and schools for school transfers to take place at the beginning of a new term.

In Norfolk where a parent makes an application to change their child's school during the school year it will only be considered by the Admissions Team in line with the following timetable:

- 31 October for a transfer to take place at the beginning of the spring term (after Christmas)
- 28 (29) February for a transfer to take place at the beginning of the summer term (after Easter)
- 31 May for a transfer to take place at the beginning of the autumn term (the beginning of a new school year). Decisions regarding preference(s) will be sent out before the end of the summer term. Applications received after 31 May will be considered after all on time applications. Late applications will be processed until 3 July. After 3 July applications will be processed after 31 October. Where possible decisions regarding late applications will be sent out before the beginning of the new school year.

If a parent believes there are exceptional reasons why their child should move immediately they should provide them to the Admissions Team in writing along with the appropriate supporting documents and they will be considered by the admission authority for the school.

This guidance does not apply where a family has moved a significant distance from their previous home address which makes travel to their current school unreasonable. In this case the Admissions Team will process the application as soon as it is received.

Equal opportunities

The LA will not establish admissions criteria that excludes individuals with a particular protected characteristic. The admissions criteria will not exclude a greater proportion of pupils

with particular protected characteristics, unless the school can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The admissions criteria will not discriminate against disabled applicants, unless the school can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Admissions procedures

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.

The school may assess its ability to cater to the applicant's needs by:

- Inviting the applicant to attend the school for half a day.
- Visiting the applicant's home.
- Visiting the applicant's current education provision.

4. Applications and offers

Applications

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. Parents will provide LAs with the following information within the CAF:

- Their name and their child's name and date of birth
- Their and their child's address and proof of residence

The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met. The LA will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary.

Offers

All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day, where this date falls on a weekend or bank holiday.

Where the school is oversubscribed, the LA will rank applications in accordance with its determined arrangements, and the qualifying scheme will ensure that only one offer will be made per child by the LA.

An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 15 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application. Where an offer has not been responded to within the designated time frame, the LA will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and will explain that the offer will be withdrawn if they do not. 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.

The headteacher will assist the LA 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.

The school must admit all children who have an EHC plan where the school is named. Children with SEND who do not have an EHC plan will be treated equally to all other applicants in the admissions process. This includes children who may need extra support or reasonable adjustments to be made. The details of the school's SEND provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and SEN Information Report.

5. Admissions appeals

Until 30 September 2022, the LA will have due regard to the extension of the temporary regulations changing certain aspects of the admission appeals procedure, in line with the Admissions Policy Appendix: Changes to Procedures for Admissions and Admission Appeals until 30 September 2022.

The governing board will be aware of, and assist the LA where relevant with regard to, the below admissions appeals procedure.

Informing of appeals

When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent by the LA 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. Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Grounds for appeal are not limited.

Constitution of appeals panels

The LA and the appeals panel will act in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance. 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.

A clerk will be appointed to the appeals panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the LA.

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. 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.

Panel members will be independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service. 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
- 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 LA, school or LA who may not act impartially
- Any person who has not attended training required by the LA arranging the appeals panel

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.

Appropriate training will be given, funded by the LA, 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.

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

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

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

The LA 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

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

For late applications, appeals will be heard between 30-40 school days of the appeal being lodged. For in year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 days of the appeal being lodged.

The LA 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.

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

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. 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.

The presenting officer will be responsible for relaying to the attendees the decision not to admit the child, and answer questions where necessary.

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.

Appeal hearings must be private and held in an accessible location. The order of the appeals will be:

- Case for the LA.
- Questioning by the appellant(s) and panel.
- Case for the appellant(s).
- Questioning by the LA and panel.
- Summing up by the LA.
- Summing up by the appellant(s).

Multiple appeals will be heard, either individually or in groups, by the same appeals panel where appropriate. Notes of the hearing will be made and kept securely by the LA 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

When reaching a decision, the LA will have due regard to section three of the 'School Admission Appeals Code'.

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. The final decision will be decided by a simple majority. If votes are split equally, the chair will make the casting vote.

The final decision and accompanying reasons will be communicated in writing to the appellant, LA and the LA. 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.

If a child has been refused admissions due to any SEND, this will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) and not the appeals panel.

The LA will have due regard for the two-stage process outlined in the 'School Admission Appeals Code' when negotiating appeals regarding infant class sizes.

Complaints

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 LA 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. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.

If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsmen.

6. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the governing board on an annual basis. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2023.