



Whitburn Church of England Academy

Admissions Policy 2024

Preface - Vision and values

'But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete eagerness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving' (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Our vision is rooted in this biblical teaching and is expressed through our school motto of 'Excellence for All'. At Whitburn C of E Academy we embrace Jesus' promise of *'life in all its fullness'* (**John 10:10**) and believe in this vision of human flourishing for all, permeated by key elements of wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

As Christians believe we are 'created in the image of God' (**Genesis 1:26f**), Whitburn C of E Academy, as an Anglican school, is unequivocal in our view that a good education must educate the **whole** person; we strive to ensure that all young people and adults in our community develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally and socially.

We act in accordance with the belief that God wants us to excel both in our individual character and in our actions. This means seeking to be the very best we can be in all aspects of our lives, grounded in Whitburn's Christian 'Be Values' that are integral to our school community.

Light, a universal and powerful spiritual and divine symbol, is one that we embrace at Whitburn C of E Academy and, in harmony with our vision and values, we encourage all to *'let your light shine before others'*. (**Matthew 5:16**)

Whitburn Church of England Academy aims to develop its spiritual ethos in accordance with Christian principles and values. The Academy will work in partnership with the Church at Parish, Deanery and Diocesan level and under the guidance of the Church of England. We aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality and encouraging an understanding of the meaning and significance of a spiritual dimension in our lives.

We will support the development of moral values and of a rich and fulfilling spiritual life for all. It will support those of Christian faith within the context of Christian belief and practice and will respect and encourage those of other faiths and no faith. We ask all parents applying for a place at our school to respect this ethos and its importance to the whole school community.

The Academy's full Vision and Values can be found here:

<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/about-us/academy-ethos.html>

Introduction

We intend to admit up to 205 students to Year 7 in each academic year. The Whitburn Church of England Academy Trust Board are the admissions authority for the school. The Trust Board have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities. This arrangement follows consultation with the Local Authority, all other schools in the area and all other Admission Authorities in the area. The general admissions arrangements of the Local Authority for all schools including academies and are set out in the booklet 'Information for Parents School Education' in September 2023 and the Academy will admit students in accordance with South Tyneside Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme.

A link to the scheme is available at <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/36364/School-admissions>

Oversubscription criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Whitburn Church of England Academy will always be offered places. If there is a greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

The Academy operates an equal preference system which means that all first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the following criteria.

- a. "Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because, immediately after being looked after, they became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order (*see note 1*) including children previously in state care outside of England who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (*see note 2*)
- b. Children who will have an older sibling link up to and including Year 11 at the time of admission to the Academy (*see note 3*)
- c. Students from Cleadon Church of England Academy, Marsden Primary, Whitburn Village Primary and East Boldon Junior Schools.
- d. Other children who live the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the Academy receiving higher priority (*see note 4*).

The above distance measurement will also be used as a 'tiebreaker' within each criterion if necessary. Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the Academy receiving higher priority will be used. The Academy will seek proof of residency.

Final tiebreaker

Where two or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places, the tiebreaker will be a random allocation and will be by the drawing of lots to determine the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness the School Admissions Team will administer the random allocation system overseen by an independent adjudicator in accordance with the random allocation procedure.

In determining admissions, priority would be given to those applications where the parental application form is received by the published deadline date.

Once a place at the Academy has been offered and accepted, the Academy will require sight of the child's birth certificate to verify the identity of the child. Where a birth certificate may not be available for children arriving from overseas, the Border Agency may be contacted to verify the child's details.

Note 1:

By a "looked-after child" we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. An adoption order is one made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order).

Note 2

Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child is eligible by asking the child's parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

Note 3

By sibling we mean an older brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. The older sibling must be in Years 7 to 11 at the time the child is admitted to school. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

The Trust Board will not consider any "reverse sibling links" i.e. a younger child gaining entry to the school will not mean an automatic place for an older sibling nor will they consider siblings who will be in Sixth Form at the time the child is admitted to school

Note 4

A student's home address is considered to be a residential property that is the child's only or main residence, and is either:

By normal home address, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place.

We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the Local Authority to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided.

If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to residence), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home Local Authority must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Change of Address after Closing Date (Year 6 to Year 7 Transfer)

It is parents' responsibility to notify the Local Authority immediately of any change of address or change in circumstances after submitting your application form that may affect how your application is considered. For example, if you move house after the submission of your application form, this may affect the category in which your child was considered. If it is determined that your child would not have been eligible for a place at the school offered based on your new address, your child's school place could be withdrawn.

However, the Local Authority and the School will still continue to investigate any change of addresses up until 31 August 2024 and will withdraw places if a school place has been obtained at any stage using a temporary address, relatives address or if we feel a property has been purchased or leased solely to use its address to obtain a place at a particular school, without any intention of ever taking up permanent residence there.

The School will liaise with and will follow the advice of South Tyneside Local Authority, School Admissions Department when any change of address occurs.

Parents are advised to refer to the "Information to Parents" Booklet, which is shown on South Tyneside Local Authority website for further detailed information.

Withdrawing Offers of a School Place

When considering your application, only the address of the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides will be taken into account (a parent/carer means any person who holds parental responsibility, **and** with whom the child normally resides). The address of childminders or other relatives or friends who may help you look after your child must not be used on your application.

We reserve the right to seek proof of your address and it should be noted that an offer of a place may be withdrawn if information supplied by you on your application is intentionally misleading or fraudulent (for example, a false claim to residence). Where a place is withdrawn, your application will be considered afresh, and the right to appeal offered if a place is refused.

Year 6 to Year 7 Transfer - Waiting Lists

In accordance with the published admission number (PAN) the Academy will admit a total of 205 students to Year 7 in September 2024.

If you have been refused a place at Whitburn Church of England Academy, you will have the opportunity to place your child's name on a waiting list if you have ranked the school as a higher preference than the one you have been offered. Waiting lists are established after Friday 8th March 2024 (you should contact the Academy to request that your child's name is placed on the waiting list as this is not an automatic procedure). Children are placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when their application was received and within each criterion their place is ordered by the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the main academy entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the Academy receiving higher priority. The Academy will request proof of residency for parents/carers who wish their child's name to be placed on the waiting list.

If student numbers fall below the published admission number the place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. A child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another late application is received that falls within a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria.

Waiting lists will be held for one term in the academic year i.e. September 2024 until 31st December 2024; no lists will be kept after this date.

Children who are the subject of a 'direction to admit' by a local authority or who are allocated to Whitburn Church of England Academy in full accordance with the agreed Local Authority In-Year Fair Access Protocol take precedence over those on the waiting list. (*Link to the protocol is available via the South Tyneside Council website*).

In-Year Admissions

An "in-year admission" means any application for a place other than the normal year of entry, i.e. outside the normal Year 6 to 7 transfer. Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places

Where a place is available in the requested year group and there is no child on the relevant list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria a. to e. above), a place will be offered, the Academy will seek to transfer the child as soon as possible and within the required 20 school days. The child and parents/carers will be given an induction meeting and the child will follow a closely monitored Induction Programme for a period of 6 weeks to ensure the child settles quickly into the life of the Academy. Children who fall under the agreed Local Authority Fair Access Protocol will follow the same programme of induction.

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel are exempt).

If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Transfer to post-16 provision

The Academy will make every effort to support the transition of all students to their post-16 placement. Where students are identified to be vulnerable or to have specific learning needs, the Academy will continue to support the transition where possible through appropriate liaison.

Parental Responsibility

Who is a 'parent' in relation to education legislation? Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines the term 'parent' as:

- All natural parents married or not
- Any person who has got 'parental' responsibility (we will require documentary evidence)
- Any person without being a natural parent or having 'parental responsibility' who has care of the student (we will require documentary evidence)

At What Age Does my Child Transfer into Secondary School?

Every parent whose child is in their last year of Junior or Primary education (Year 6) whose date of birth is between 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013 will need to complete an application for admission into Secondary School.

Admissions outside of normal age group

Most children will be admitted to a school within their own age group but it is possible for you to request a place outside your child's normal age group. Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the student's interests.

It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the Academy's Special Educational Needs Coordinator in advance of applying for a place. Parents should apply in the normal way together with a written request that the child is admitted outside of his or her normal age group to the requested year group in September the following year providing supporting reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case including from medical professionals or educational psychologists. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.