



**ASPIRATIONS**



**Wykham Park Academy Banbury**  
an Aspirations Academy

# Admissions Policy

## For Admissions in September 2025

Version control	
01/11/2023	Dates amended to reflect 2025-26 Appeals process updated Appendices added with explanatory notes
October 2021	Consultation to reduce PAN in Y7 from Sept 2022

<b>Date of next review:</b>	Sept 2024	<b>Owner:</b>	Principal
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## **THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO Wykham Park Academy**

This document sets out the admission arrangements for Wykham Park Academy.

The Academy will act in accordance with, and will ensure that the Independent Appeal Panel acts in accordance with all relevant provisions of the statutory codes of practice (the School Admissions Code of Practice 2021 and the School Admission Appeals Code) as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with the law on admissions as it applies to maintained schools. Reference in the codes to admission authorities shall be deemed to be reference to the Aspirations Academies Trust, which governs Wykham Park Academy.

Wykham Park Academy will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by Oxfordshire LA.

Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct Wykham Park Academy to admit a named student to the Academy on application from an LA. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the Academy.

### **ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

The admission arrangements for Wykham Park Academy for the year 2025/26 are:

- Wykham Park Academy has an agreed admission number of 180 students in Year 7. The Academy will accordingly admit 180 students into Year 7 if sufficient applications are received.
- Wykham Park Academy has an agreed admission number of 40 students in Year 12 for students outside Wykham Park Academy.
- Wykham Park Academy may set a higher admission number as its Published Admission Number for any specific year. The Academy is not required to consult on any proposed increase to the PAN; however, it must notify the Local Authority of the increase and specify the changes on the Academy website.
- Students will not be admitted above the Published Admission Number unless exceptional circumstances apply.

### **PROCESS OF APPLICATION FOR YEAR 7**

- The Local Authority Common Admissions Form (CAF - secondary) must be completed and returned to the Local Authority for all admissions to Wykham Park Academy by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.
- If the number of students applying exceeds the Pupil Admission Number all applicants to the Academy will be required to sit a Cognitive Ability Test. (See Appendix 1)

*\*It is not compulsory for the following children to sit the Cognitive Ability Test:*

- *Children whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school*
- *Looked after children (Note 1) and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, (Note 2)*

However, it is strongly recommended that these pupils do sit the test as the test will enable appropriate interventions and support to be readily available from the start of term, as well as enable placement in the correct band

**Notification of Offer of Places:**

- Parents will be informed by Oxfordshire Local Authority (or their home authority if they do not live in Oxfordshire) which school they have been allocated on National Offer Day, 1st March 2025. Parents are asked to confirm their acceptance of the offer with the Local Authority in which they live by 16th March 2025.
- Parents and students will then be offered an opportunity to visit the academy before September 2025 and meet staff as part of preparing them to give them the best possible start in the academy.

**Procedures where the Academy is oversubscribed for places in Year 7**

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admissions number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below:

Applications will be considered against the ability band in which the applicant is placed by the Cognitive Ability Test score. The number of places available in each ability band will be determined by the national distribution of ability. This will be determined by an external education testing organisation that administers the online test. After the admission of students whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school, the following criteria will be applied to determine those children who will be offered places within each band.

The criteria are listed in priority order:

1. Looked after children (See Appendix 2 Note 1+2) and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Such students will be given top priority in each band before the oversubscription criteria is applied.
2. Children with a sibling already at the Academy, ordered by shortest distance between home and Wykham Park Academy (see Appendix 2 Note 3+4)
3. Children who currently attend a \*Primary Aspirations Academy ordered by the shortest distance between home and Wykham Park Academy (see Appendix 2 Note 3 + 4).

*\*The philosophy of the Aspirations Academies Trust considers all-through, age 2-19 education to be a very effective practice and brings many educational benefits to our young people and their parents. Wykham Park Academy works very closely with the staff and pupils at both Dashwood Academy and Harriers Academy with many joint initiatives in place. Experience tells us that children who attended one of our primary schools and then subsequently moved to one of our secondary schools, have a much better start to year 7 which results in more positive outcomes for the pupil.*

4. Children of staff in the following circumstances (see Appendix 2 Note 6):
  - a) where the 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
  - b) children of newly appointed staff, filling a post with a “demonstrable skills shortage” (School Admissions Code 2021)

5. All other children, ordered by the shortest distance between home and Wykham Park Academy (see Appendix 2 Note 3+4).

**If at the end of this process, there are unallocated places** in any band these will be filled by unallocated applicants from the next nearest band(s) using the same allocation criteria set out above. Where there are two applications that cannot be separated a fair tie-breaker process shall be used. This process will be conducted randomly through the use of an electronic random sorter. This random allocation will be made/done using an electronic random sorter managed by an appointed person drawing the names. The appointed person will be an independent Academy administrator who has no involvement in the school admission process.

### **Appeals Process**

Unsuccessful applicants may appeal for a place in the academy. Parents wishing to appeal should complete the appeals papers on the Academy Website. The completed papers should be returned to the email address listed in the Appeals section of the website. Appeals will be heard by a panel that is independent of the Academy and the Governors.

### **Late Applications**

Applications received after the closing date will only be considered alongside those received by the closing date under the following circumstances:

The family was unable to complete an application form before the closing date because they moved into the local area after the issue of application forms.

**OR**

The family was unable to comply with the admissions timetable because of exceptional circumstances which prevented the application from arriving on time – the circumstances must be given in writing and attached to the application form.

Applications received after the notification date (i.e. after places have been offered) will be added to the list of continued interest in admission criteria order. The list of continued interest for Year 7 will be kept until the last day of December 2025. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name added to the list. This means that a child's position on any waiting list can move down as well as up.

### **Admission of Children Outside of their Normal Year Group**

The Aspirations Academies Trust as a general rule does not recommend the admission of children outside of their normal year group. However, the decision to admit a child outside of their normal Year group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. In each case, a meeting will take place between the Principal and the parent(s)/carer(s) prior to a decision being made. The Principal of the Academy will discuss the issue with the Chief Executive of the Trust before making a decision. When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

**Withdrawing an offer or a place**

The admission authority, The Aspirations Academies Trust, will not withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application will be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

**Admission to Post 16 provision**

Every student in Year 11 at Wykham Park Academy is entitled to a place in the Banbury Campus Sixth Form providing there is a course suitable for him/her and the student meets the entry requirements. Entry into Year 12 from students outside the whole campus has been set at 40. After the admission of students whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school, the following criteria will be applied:

**Over-subscription Admissions Criteria:**

- a) Looked after children and all previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order (see Appendix 2 Note 1+2). These students should meet the academic requirements for the level of course applied for as published in the Academy prospectus.
- b) Children with a sibling already at the Academy, ordered by shortest distance between home and Wykham Park Academy (see Appendix 2, Note 3,4,5)
- c) Children who have the shortest distance between home and Wykham Park Academy (see Appendix 2 Note 4+5).

**Sixth Form Application Procedure:**

All external students interested in a place at Banbury Campus Sixth Form should complete an application form available directly from the Academy or online from the academy website.

**Late Applications:**

Late applications will be considered, although it will be more difficult to comply with subject preferences. Applications received after the notification date (after places have been offered) will be added to the list of continued interest in admission criteria order. The list of continued interest for Year 12 will be kept until the last day of December of the year of admission.

**Arrangements for In Year Admissions**

All applications made during the academic year (in year admissions) including applications in and outside of the normal year of entry for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, must be made to the Academy (the application form is available on the academy website).

All such applications will be considered and if the year group applied for has a place available in the appropriate band the Academy will admit the child unless the applicant has significant behavioural issues, in which case the child will be referred to the Local Authority Fair Access panel. (Such refusals will only occur where the student concerned has been previously excluded from two or

more schools or where special circumstances apply as specified in the Admissions Code of Practice. If more applications are received than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria above for Year 7 or sixth form places shall apply. This will require the applicant to sit the cognitive ability test.

Parents whose application is turned down are entitled to appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. A waiting list will not be held by the Academy for In Year Admissions in Year 8, 9, 10 or 11 or for In Year admissions for Year 7 after 31<sup>st</sup> December of the first year. All in-year applications will need to be made to the Academy and will be allocated under the admissions criteria, according to their ability band, (This will require the applicant to sit the cognitive ability test), when a place becomes available. Any places allocated under in-year admissions will be notified to the LA to allow it to update its records.

Although most children will be admitted to the Academy within their own age group, the Academy will make decisions on the year group of entry based on the circumstances of each individual case. Parents do not have a right of Appeal if a place is offered in a year group other than the year group in which they applied for.

#### **Fair Access Admissions:**

Wykham Park Academy will adhere to the Fair Access Protocol as determined by the LA to ensure that 'Hard to Place' students will receive a suitable school place. Managed Move requests for students from other Secondary Schools will also be given consideration as part of the adherence to the National Admissions Code.

### **ANNUAL PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Consultation**

Wykham Park Academy will set admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements there will be a public consultation on these arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements the Academy consultation will only take place at least every 7 years. The last consultation took place in Autumn 2021.

## **APPENDIX 1**

Wykham Park Academy is measured for academic performance against national averages.

Wykham Park Academy's aim is to provide places for local children within a profile that compares to the national distribution of ability. This is achieved through the use of three ability bands - high, middle and low. To allocate Year 7 students to the appropriate band all applicants to the Academy are required to sit a Cognitive Ability Test. As these tests are conducted before the students join the academy this also allows the academy to provide an individually appropriate education for each student from the moment they arrive in September. Students are allocated to an ability band on the basis of their Cognitive Ability Test score. There will be 3 ability bands (low, middle, high) - the percentage of places available in each band will be determined by the profile of the national distribution of ability. This will be determined by an external education testing organisation that administers the on-line test.

- When it appears that the academy's applications will exceed the PAN the Test will be sat in the September or October of the year that applications for places are made. There will be a choice of two Test days. This means that Year 6 pupils who are considering applying for a place at the Academy in September 2025 will sit the test in September/October 2024. Any student ill on the day of the test will be provided with an opportunity to sit the test on an alternative day, provided the illness is supported by an official medical note.
- Any student who applies for a place at the Academy without having sat the Cognitive Ability Test will sit the test before the final place allocations are made in March of the year of admission.
- Any student with identified Special Educational Needs, who chooses to sit the test, will take the test without additional support as the test is designed to pick up on any learning issues.
- The Cognitive Ability Test is not a pass or fail test. It is used to allocate each applicant to an ability band based on their test score. Parents will be informed of the test result within 3 weeks of the test being taken.
- When it appears that the academy's applications will exceed the PAN an advert inviting all interested Year 6 pupils to apply to sit the Wykham Park Academy Cognitive Ability Test will be placed in local newspapers and on the academy website as well as through a letter to parents sent out to all local primary and junior schools within a three-mile radius of the academy. Parents will be invited to contact the Academy to book for their child to sit the test. Following this application to sit the test a letter of invitation will be sent out by post, which will include a Test Registration Card (on which the following information is included: Student's Name, Test Session, Unique Child Number and Registration Desk number for the test). This Test Registration Card MUST be brought by the student to the relevant test session. The student WILL NOT be allowed to sit the test without the Test Registration Card as this is proof of the child's identity at the child's home address. Students who apply but have not yet sat the test will be invited to take the ability tests by letter sent to the address stated on the Common Application Form.

## APPENDIX 2

### Notes:

1. Children who are looked after by a local authority or were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after, became subject to an adoption, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

A looked after child is a child who is:

- a. in the care of a local authority, or
- b. being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Previously looked after children include those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

2. Priority is also given under this criterion for looked after children who ceased to be so because they:

Are children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders)

3. In order to meet the sibling criterion, your child's sibling must be attending the school at the time of application and be expected to still be attending at the time of admission in September. This means that there will be no sibling connection for admission purposes as follows:

- a) applicants for entry to Year 7 if they have a brother or sister in Year 11 unless the CAPF records an expressed intention of the sibling staying on into Year 12.
- b) applicants for entry to Year 7 if they have a brother or sister in Year 13.

The definition of a brother or sister is:

- A brother or sister sharing the same parents
- Half-brother or half-sister, where two children share one common parent
  - Step-brother or step-sister, proof will be required that parents are cohabiting (eg council tax bill)
- Adopted or foster children

You must complete the sibling details in the appropriate section on the Common Application Form (CAF).

We reserve the right to seek verification of the information parents have given on the application form and to withdraw the offer of a place if inadequate, inaccurate, deliberately misleading or false information has been given.

4. The address used in an application must be that where an adult or adults with legal responsibility for the child live, as described in the admissions policy. However, we may not use this if we consider it to be an address of convenience.



All school admission applications are subject to address checks to ensure school places are allocated fairly and in accordance with published admission arrangements. These checks may be made using council systems, agencies, fraud departments, other education settings, or other resources available to us. Applicants may also be asked to provide additional evidence to support their application.

We will not accept possible future addresses as a basis for allocating school places. If you move after submitting your application you must inform the School Admissions Team within two weeks of your move so that your application is considered using the correct address for school admission purposes.

It is for the home Local Authority to determine if, on the balance of probability, the address given on an application is a child's normal place of residence or is considered to be an address of convenience. Some examples of circumstances which may be considered an address of convenience are:

- using the address of a relative, friend, childminder or business
- using the address of a parent with whom the child spends the minority of the week \* see shared or joint residence
- purchasing a new property or renting accommodation and using this address in order to gain a school place, whilst continuing to own or rent an alternative property.
- owning a property which is or has previously been used as your home address and applying from another address in order to gain a school place, but still retaining ownership of the initial property
- use of a local address whilst the child lives overseas \* see applications from abroad

In making a decision, the following factors will be taken into account alongside any evidence seen during the address checking process:

- the preference schools and if they are oversubscribed
- if the address being used gains an advantage in the admissions process
- the distance of the properties to the preference schools
- the length of time the arrangement has been in place
- current education providers and services working with the family
- any state benefits in payment

If an address of convenience is found to have been used, the home Local Authority will determine the address to be used based on the evidence found in their investigations. Where this address or preference school falls within another Local Authority, they may be consulted in the decision. If a fraudulent address or address of convenience is found to have been used after the allocation of places, any offer made will also be withdrawn, and this may be the case even if your child has started at the school.

If you are not registered to pay council tax, either because you are not liable or have recently moved, you will be asked to provide:

- A mortgage statement/tenancy agreement and two of the following:
  - Recent utility bill – gas/electricity/water/ TV licence
  - Credit card statement
  - Driving licence
  - Entitlement to benefits letter e.g. Child Benefit (pages 1&2)/Child tax credit/Housing benefit/Income support/ Jobseekers allowance
- Inland Revenue document
- Pay slip/P45/P60 (not more than 1 of these)
- Car/House Insurance certificate

- Electoral register
- A letter confirming placement at your address from Social Services/National Asylum Support Service/United Kingdom Border Agency/Housing Department.

Any proof of address provided must show the full name and match the details provided at the time of application.

Any supporting information not in English language must be accompanied by a certified translation. If we are not satisfied with the documentation provided, we reserve the right to ask for additional evidence of the address used for your application.

### **Shared or joint residency**

The Local Authority will only accept one application per child and only one offer of a school place will be made. We ask that parents work together to agree on the address to be used and the school preferences to be applied for. Any disagreements should be resolved before submitting an application. If parents are unable to reach an amicable agreement, then both parents should seek their own legal advice or recourse through the Family Courts. The Local Authority will not mediate between parents.

Where a child lives with parents with shared parental responsibility, each for part of a week, the address where the child lives is determined using a joint declaration from the parents stating the pattern of residence. The declaration (including the addresses of both parents) must be submitted at the time of making the original application.

If a child's residence is split equally between both parents, then parents will be asked to determine which residential address should be used for the purpose of admission to school. If no joint declaration is received and the residence is split equally by the closing date for applications, the LA will consider the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or if Child Benefit is not being received, the address at which the child is registered with a doctor (GP). You must send us a copy of your latest benefit entitlement notice or your child's medical card. We may also ask for further evidence if required.

If the residence is not split equally between both parents, then the address used will be the address where the child spends the majority of the school week. It is for the home Local Authority to determine the address to be used for the allocation of a school place.

### **Applications from abroad**

This policy does not apply to Crown Servants, who are dealt with under the statutory provisions of the School Admissions Code \* see Members of UK Armed Forces and Crown Servants (see Note 7). If you and/or your child currently live abroad but intend to move to the County of Oxfordshire, we will accept an application ahead of your arrival. Your application will be processed using the home address in the country where your child is currently residing even if your family is returning to a property you own in the UK. If we make an offer of a school place, the child will be expected to start on the first day of term. Parents should ensure that their child has a right of abode or the conditions of their visas otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school.

5. Priority will be given to those children who live closest to Wykham Park Academy: In order to be fair to all applicants, OCC has a standard method of measuring the home to school distance. For all schools where the Local Authority (LA) is the Admissions Authority (AA) for the school and any schools where the Admissions Authority (the Governing Body or Academy Trust) has a policy to use the LA's measuring system, the walking route is measured by using a geographical information system. It starts from a "seed point" which is a point of measurement in

the footprint of the home address. The seed point is provided by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) from information compiled by the Local Authority or from the National Land Property Gazetteer (NLPG) for addresses outside our borough. From the seed point, the route firstly connects to the nearest node of the digitised network. It will always measure using the centre of the road nearest to this point even if your home address is on the corner of two roads. The positioning of front doors, driveways and back gates are not relevant to the route or the measurement and are not programmed to be used by the measuring system. The digitised network is constructed from road data supplied by Ordnance Survey called OS Mastermap Highways Network. OS Mastermap Highways Network has been accurately digitised to measure along the centre of the road, the LA has no control over how OS digitise the road and footpath network. The network starts from the seed point in the property provided as the child's address and continues by the walking route to the nearest of the school gates which is used by pupils to enter the school grounds. Where there are multiple applications with equal distances, the LA's database will randomly order these. The walking route is established using an algorithm within the software used by the LA. This programme integrates with the LA's database (Synergy/School Admissions Management) which is supplied by Access UK Ltd [www.theaccessgroup.com](http://www.theaccessgroup.com). Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Local Authority cannot take a measurement from another measuring system.

6. Under the oversubscription criteria the word staff will mean:

Teaching staff who have been continuously employed by the school for a period of at least two years for the purpose of working in the school as follows:

- All full time teaching staff
- All part time teaching staff with a 45% and above timetable

The two years qualification period may be waived if a post is hard to fill.

The definition of staff does not include contract staff. If a service has been 'in house' and is subsequently 'contracted out' children or staff will no longer be eligible for priority admission under this criterion. The definition does not include peripatetic staff.

7. Children of Service Personnel will not be disadvantaged in the admissions process. Families of UK Service Personnel and other Crown Servants are subject to frequent movement within the UK and from abroad. An official letter from the MOD, FCO or GCHQ should be submitted with the application detailing the relocation date and a unit postal address or quarters in OCC and we will arrange for that address to be used throughout the admission process.