St Andrew's C.of E. First School
Admissions Policy 2025/26
Ratified at FGB1 on 25.10.2023

1. Background information

1.1. St Andrew's First School is a Church of England School in the Birmingham Diocese providing high quality education for pupils between the ages of 4 and 9 years of age.

1.2. St Andrew's First School is a Voluntary Aided school

1.2.1. Voluntary Aided schools are maintained by the Local Authority with a foundation (usually religious and in the case of St Andrew's, the Diocese) which appoints most of the Governing Body. The Governing body is the admissions authority. These schools have to follow the national curriculum, but they can choose what they teach in religious studies. In Voluntary Aided school the governing body employs staff and decides admission arrangements.

1.2.2. The school, however, abides by the School Admission Code (2021), which includes requirements such as cooperating with the Local Admissions Forum, the co-ordinated admission scheme of the Local Authority (LA) and the provision of places for students who have Special Education Needs or who are Looked After

1.3. St. Andrew's C. of E. First School has a distinctly Christian ethos. This underpins the values of the school and reflects its nature. We ask all parents/guardians applying for a place here to recognise and support this ethos and its importance to the school. This does not affect the right of parents/guardians who are not of the Christian faith to apply and be considered for a place at the school.

1.4. The Governing Board is committed to offering a broad curriculum to develop skills and abilities of pupils in many ways including outside the classroom which will help them to become life-long learners. The school is proud of its traditions and, through its admissions policy, Governors wish to maintain the character of the school.

1.5. Usually, children living within our catchment area are able to obtain a place at the school, although this is not guaranteed. We are also usually able to offer places to some children from outside catchment.

1.5.1. A copy of the catchment map is available in Appendix 1 and on the school website: https://www.standrewsfirstschool.org.uk/Admissions/Catchment-Map/

1.5.2. The local authority also have a school search facility on their website https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch

1.6. The school has no selection criteria which refer to ability or aptitude on entry and, as such, we are proud to be a truly comprehensive and inclusive school.

1.7. Our Published Admission Number (PAN) is currently 45. This means that we have spaces to admit 45 children in Reception.

1.8. The school adopts the Local Authority's **Fair Access Protocol. T**he protocol can be found at: https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/policies2023to2024

2. How does the Admissions Process work?

2.1. As the school participates in the LA admissions scheme, applications must be made by completing the Worcestershire on-line application form. Please see the Worcestershire County Council's website for details: **https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions**

2.2. Parents have the opportunity to nominate three schools, ranked in order of preference

2.3. It is very important to note that the application must be received by the LA by the deadline given each year. Please be aware that this application should not be sent to the school directly.

3. Should I attend Open Day?

3.1. The school runs two open days each year – where possible one is midweek and one on a Saturday. All parents and children who have an interest in the school are warmly invited to join on one of these sessions. There will be opportunities to see all areas of the school and speak with leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils. Our Open Days are advertised in the local media and on our website.

3.2. The school will be pleased to provide information and answer questions by letter or telephone, or to meet parents/carers to discuss possible applications.

4. What happens following the January deadline for admissions?

4.1. The LA will forward to the school all applications which name the school, regardless of order of preference

4.1.1. The school is not informed of the order of preference specified, or which other schools families have applied to.

4.2. The Governing Body will rank all applications against the school's published admissions criteria.

4.3. Applications will be sorted in descending order according to the oversubscription criteria (see below) and this ranking will be sent back to the LA to compare against lists of potential offers at other schools nominated on the application.

4.4. The LA will write to parents with a decision on places. Parents will only receive a single offer of a school place under the coordinated admissions process and this will be of their highest ranked school where a place is available.

4.5. Our experience is that the volume of applications we receive will outnumber the places we have available, although this is subject to demographic trends in our admissions area. The number of applicants from each oversubscription category who are allocated places varies each year.

4.6. Governors reserve the right to withdraw the offer of a place if that offer has been obtained through a fraudulent or deliberately misleading application (for example the use of an incorrect home address)

5. What is our policy regarding children with an Education Health and Care Plan?

5.1. Children for whom St Andrew's C of E First School has been named as a school on their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will automatically be offered a place and this place will be deducted from the 45 places available.

5.2. If parents are considering whether St Andrew's C of E First School should be named on their child's EHCP then our SENCo / Headteacher should be involved in the review at that time.

6. What are the school's oversubscription criteria?

6.1. The purpose of the oversubscription criteria is to allow everyone a fair opportunity to apply for a place in the school and to enable the school to be transparent about this process.

6.2. Where there are more applications than places available, pupils will be admitted in the following order of priority:

1) Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. (All those currently in the care of or accommodated by a Local Authority under the terms of the Children Act 1989 and children who were previously in the care of or accommodated by a Local Authority but immediately after being so looked after, became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order.) Children who it appears to the admission authority were in state care outside of England but ceased to be in state care through adoption' (referred to as internationally adopted previously looked after children – "IAPLAC")

2) Children who live in the catchment area of the school, as defined by the bold line on the map available from the school **and who have a sibling** attending the school at the time of the proposed admission (this includes all children living permanently in the household).

3) Children who live in the catchment area of the school, as defined by the bold line on the catchment map available from the school.

4) Children who do not live in the catchment area of the school, as defined by the bold line on the catchment map available from the school **but who have a sibling** attending the school at the time of the proposed admission (see definition below: this includes all children living permanently in the household).

5) Children who live nearest the school by the shortest straight line distance.
The measurement will be taken using the GeoCode Points for each property and the GeoCode point for the School. The Governing Body will utilise the Local Authority software package called Arcview GIS to determine distance. Ordnance Survey supplies the co-ordinates that are used to plot an address within this system. In the event of equi-distant applicants and if there is no other way of separating the application according to the admissions criteria and to admit both or all of the children would cause the legal limit to be exceeded, any available place will be allocated by random selection (lottery). Someone totally independent of the Governing Body will supervise this process.

7. **What is the school's policy on Multiple Births?**

7.1. In the event that one or more but not all children from a multiple birth can be allocated place(s), all of the children from that multiple birth will be admitted, even if this takes the school over PAN.

8. **Will the school accept late applications?**

8.1. Applications made after the closing date will be processed within the coordinated admissions scheme, but will only be considered for places, after all those applications received (or deemed to be received) on time.

8.2. The Governing Board may consider a late application (those submitted after the LA closing dates for applications) as being 'on-time' in the following circumstances where:

- a family has moved home after the closing date for applications,
- it is agreed by Governors that individual circumstances (e.g. medical) apply and the delay was reasonable given the circumstances of the case.

In each case independent supporting documentary evidence will be required; for example evidence that you have permanently relinquished ownership or tenancy of your old home and that the new address will be relevant at the date of admission, or a letter from GP or consultant.

9. **Does the school have a waiting list?**

9.1. If you are unsuccessful in your application for a place, you may request that your child's name be placed on a waiting list, irrespective of whether you make an appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

9.2. As a Voluntary Aided school the waiting list is maintained by the School, not by the LA and parents should contact the school directly to be included in this list.

9.3. If a place becomes available it will be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria. There is no priority for children whose name has been on the list longer than others.

9.4. The waiting list is closed on 31st December and parents wishing to keep their child's name on the list must communicate this to the school in writing at the start of the Spring and Summer terms.

9.5. As part of our agreement with the LA regarding admissions, the school can be required to admit a student allocated as determined through the Worcestershire Fair Access Protocol arrangements. Such students take precedence over those on the waiting list (and may increase the number admitted over PAN)

9.6. The same principle applies in the very rare situation where the school is directed by the Secretary of State to admit a student.

10. **Does the School accept in-year admissions?**

10.1. Applications other than the normal intake to reception class (in-year admissions to all year groups) should be made to school admissions at LA, who will co-ordinate applications. More information can be found by using the following link: https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coordinatedschemes

10.2. If there are no spaces available in the requested year group, the child's name can be added to the waiting list for this year group.

11. **Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry**

11.1. A child is entitled to a full-time place at school in the September following their fourth birthday. The child's parents can defer the date their child is admitted to the school until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which application was made.

11.2. Where parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

11.3. Compulsory school age is the prescribed day on or following the child's fifth birthday. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August: ie: A child born between 01 September and 31 December must be in compulsory education by the 31 December. A child born between 01 January and 31 March must be in compulsory education by 31 March. A child born between 01 April and 31 August must be in compulsory education by the beginning of the final term of the school year (unless the provisions relating to summer-born children below are applied).

12. Admission of children outside their normal age group

12.1. Parents may seek a place for a child outside of their normal age group in special circumstances, for instance if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. Such applications should be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Board of the school, *via the school office,* setting out the reasons for the request. A decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

12.2. Summer-born Children (those born between 01 April and 31 August)

12.2.1. Parents of a summer born child may choose not to send their child to school until the September following the child's fifth birthday, when they will apply for the child to enter Year 1. There is no guarantee that a place will be available at the school at this stage, as the year group may well already be full.

12.2.2.

(a) Parents of a summer born child may, *at the same time as making an application to the Local Authority for a Reception place in the child's normal age group*, make a request of the school's Governing Board that the child may **apply** the next year to be admitted to the Reception Class in the September following the child's 5th birthday instead. The request should be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Board of the school, via the school office, setting out the reasons for the request. The Governing Board will make its decision on the basis of the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned and will set out clearly the reasons for the decision.

(b) If the Governing Board agrees to the parent's request, the existing application for a Reception place may be withdrawn and the parent must then make a **new** application for a place in Reception **as part of the main admissions round the following year**, which will be considered against the normal oversubscription criteria (and there is no guarantee of a place being offered at this school at that stage).

(c) If the Governing Board does not agree to the parent's request, the parent must decide whether to accept any offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday (when, again, there is no guarantee of a place being available at this school).

12.2.3. The admission authority (Governing Board) will expect parents to provide information in support of their request – without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case. This can include professional evidence (e.g. from a speech and language therapist) but there is no requirement for professional evidence.

12.2.4. Once a child has been admitted to the school it is for the headteacher to decide how best to educate them. In some cases it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to the normal age group, but in others it will not. The headteacher will consult with the parents in making these decisions.

12.3. Where a child has been admitted to St Andrew's out of their normal age group the parent will need to apply again to request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to middle (or other) school.

12.3.1. A decision made by one admission authority in respect of admission of a child out of their normal age group is not binding on any other admission authority. Therefore, a child educated out of their normal age group at this school may not be accepted out of their normal age group when moving to a different school or from first to middle school.

12.3.2. The school will provide supporting evidence where appropriate but do not have the power to change any decisions made.

12.4. Parents statutory right of appeal against a decision to refuse admission does not apply if the child is offered a place at the school but it is not in the parent's preferred age group.

If parents are considering submitting an application for their child to be admitted into a class outside of their normal age group, it is strongly recommended that they read the DFE guidance to be found at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921255/Guidance_for_parents_September_2020.pdf

13. **Appeals**

13.1. Parents of children who are unsuccessful in gaining a place at St Andrews First School may appeal to an Independent Appeals panel.

13.2. If you wish to appeal please complete the appeals form available on the school website or from the school reception and return this to the school office.

13.3. You will receive at least 10 school days notification of the appeal hearing and will usually be told of the outcome of the appeal within 5 school days of the hearing.

13.4. Parents are invited to attend hearings and make their case to the Appeals Panel. If this invitation is declined the appeal will be heard using parents' written evidence. You may be represented or accompanied by a friend. Usually, only one appeal is permitted for entry to each academic year.

14. **Definitions**

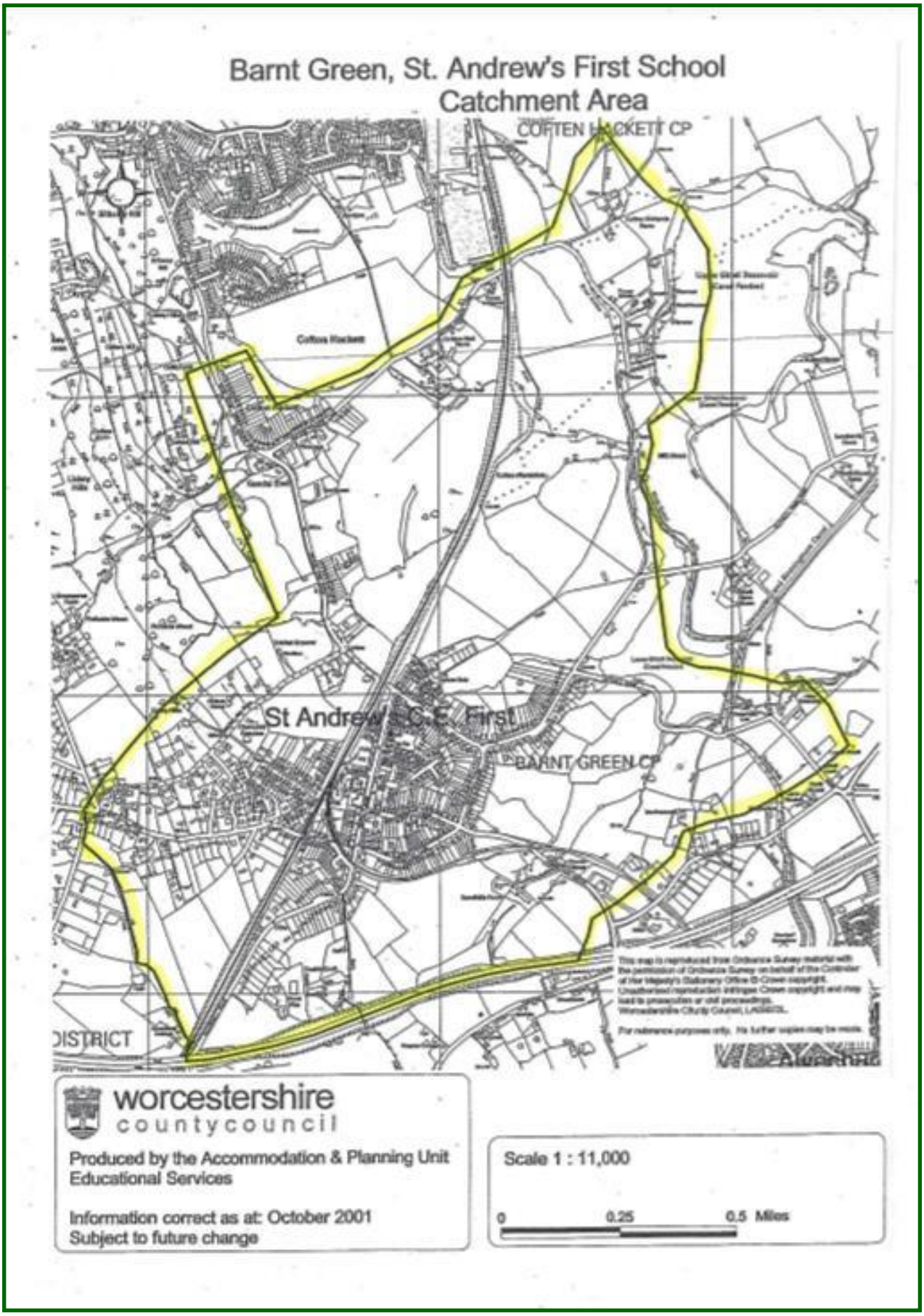
Children Looked After – all those children currently in the care of a Local Authority or accommodated by a Local Authority under the terms of the Children Act 1989 and children who were previously in the care of or accommodated by a Local Authority but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. Children who it appears to the admission authority were in state care outside of England but ceased to be in state care through adoption' (referred to as internationally adopted previously looked after children – "IAPLAC")

Home address – Home is defined as the only or main permanent residential address, at the closing date for applications, where the child usually resides and which is the usual address of the parent/carer with main responsibility for the child. Where parents/carers have shared responsibility, the child's home address will be considered to be that of the parent/carer with whom the child lives for the majority of the school week (e.g. three or more days out of five Monday to Friday during term-time).

Where care is split equally, parent/carers must provide independent supporting documentary evidence to prove that care is equally split. Documentary evidence of home address may be required, including evidence that the child and his or her main parent/carer will be resident at the address at the date of admission.

Siblings – Siblings are brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister (children who share one birth-parents), adopted children, step-siblings (where two children are related by a parent's marriage or civil partnership) or a child of the parent/carer's partner, an adopted or fostered brother or sister. **They must be living at the same address.**

Parent – Includes:

- all biological parents, whether married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child – this could be an adoptive parent, step-parent, guardian or other relative;
- any person who, although not a biological parent and not having parental responsibility, has care of a child. A person typically has care of a child if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

APPENDIX 1 – Catchment map