

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

Policy adopted on: 11th March 2024

RATIONALE

Matchborough First School Academy is situated in the Matchborough area of Redditch, Worcestershire. It is an Academy and as such has its own admissions authority as part of the co-ordinated scheme with Worcestershire Local Authority. This means it determines the priorities for admission should the school be over-subscribed, working alongside the Local Authority. Each application is considered on its own merit in accordance with our criteria. Being part of the co-ordinated scheme ensures that each child receives only one offer of a place as the Local Authority co-ordinates admissions across the county and admission in other local areas, such as Warwickshire, in consultation with neighbouring authorities.

Matchborough First School Academy continues to use the catchment area which pre-dates it becoming an Academy. Your child's catchment school can be obtained via <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch>
A map is also available at the school office.

The school appreciates that parents/carers need to choose their first or subsequent school, carefully. To help parents/carers in this process the school offers an Open Evening in the Autumn Term and one in the Summer Term. Please see our website or phone the school for confirmation of the dates for these. Additionally, there may be times when parents/carers may wish to apply at other times of the school year appointments can be made via the school office.

PUPIL ADMISSION NUMBER (PAN)

The Pupil Admission Number for 2025-2026 in Reception is a maximum of 90 places. Children will be admitted to the school in the school year (academic year) in which they will be 5 years of age (from 1st September to 31 August).

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A RECEPTION PLACE?

Prior to applying for a place all parents/carers are ***strongly advised to read 'The Information for Parents Book on Admissions and Transfers to Schools 2025 – 2026'*** which is available at <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/admissionguides> (also see Appendix 1)
It can also be located in schools, libraries and at your local Worcestershire Hub.

Although we would hope all applicants receive a place at Matchborough First School Academy, parents/carers are strongly advised to name three schools on the form as should the school be over-subscribed the Local Authority will assign a place at the closest school with available places.

All parents/carers living in Worcestershire wishing to send their child to Matchborough First School Academy will need to complete the Common Application Form – County Form (CA1), which is an online form that can also be found on www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

If a parent/carer living outside of Worcestershire wishes to apply for a place at the school, they will need to apply on their own authority's application form, who will ensure their details are passed onto Worcestershire Local Authority for consideration. *Please note MFSA follows and adheres to the coordinated scheme available* <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coordinatedschemes>

The closing date for applications received at Worcestershire County Council, or the parents/carers Local Authority is 15 January 2025.

APPLICATIONS MADE AFTER THE DEADLINE

Any application submitted to the home Local Authority naming Matchborough First School Academy in any order of preference will be forwarded to the school. The Governing Body will rank all applications against the published Admissions Criteria according to the information given by parents/carers in the application.

Applications will be sorted in descending order according to the over-subscription criteria below. This list is returned to the Local Authority for the co-ordination of all parental preferences for places to be allocated, according to the school where their child's name is the highest on the list of subscriptions lists. If it is possible to offer a place at more than one school, then the final offer will be for the school identified as the highest preference.

Parents/carers will be informed by the portal or via email. If parents/carers name Matchborough First School Academy but were not offered a place they will be advised of their right to appeal against this decision with the offer letter. Appeals will be heard by the end of the Summer Term 2024 (*see further information on page 5*).

Parents/carers must confirm acceptance of their place as soon as possible, but with **2 weeks**, indicating whether they are accepting the place at Matchborough First School Academy.

If you wish to withdraw your application for any reason, or wish to decline an offer of a place at Matchborough First School Academy, you must inform the Headteacher and Pupil Admissions and Transfers at your home Local Authority **immediately** in writing.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Late applications received after the closing date will be given the **lowest priority**, no matter which criteria point they meet unless:

- A family has moved into the catchment area of the school, in which case a copy of the solicitor's letter or tenancy agreement will be needed to evidence this
- There were exceptional circumstances that caused the delay, agreed by the Governing Body, evidence of these circumstances may be sought

AGE OF ENTRY TO SCHOOL

All children must legally be in school by the term following their fifth birthday. It is normal for all children to start Matchborough First School Academy full-time in the September after their fourth birthday.

Parents/carers do have the right to defer entry to the term following their fifth birthday. However, if parents/carers are considering doing this, we would strongly advise them to talk to the Headteacher about this decision, and should parents/carers wish to defer after being offered a place, they must inform the Headteacher. As their birthday is between May and August, the place **cannot be guaranteed** a year in advance, as it cannot be kept open. This would mean that your child would not enter school until the September following their normal entry date. Parents/carers would, in these circumstances, need to apply for a Year 1 place sometime between May and July 2026.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health, effectively in the year group below or above their chronological age group. In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group, ie. to Reception rather than Year 1.

HOW TO APPLY FOR YEAR GROUPS OTHER THAN RECEPTION, OR FOR IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

A parent/carer can make an application for a place at Matchborough First School Academy at any time, however these admissions will be co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council (<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coordinatedschemes>). Places can only be allocated if the Year group is not full. The PAN for all year groups is 90.

As with applications to the new intake classes, Matchborough First School Academy asks parents/carers to complete the Standard Application Form (CA1), found online at

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/apply-school-place> and forward it to the Local Authority. Parents/carers from outside Worcestershire must apply via the application form in their own authority and they will forward this to Worcestershire for consideration.

The Local Authority forwards the application onto the Academy for consideration. The Academy's Governing Body will notify the Local Authority of the decision whether to admit or not within 10 school days.

If more than one application is received at the same time for the same year group, each application will be assessed in accordance with the over-subscription criteria. The Local Authority will notify parents/carers of the decision, and if refusing the place, will offer the right of appeal. All appeals must be made in writing to the Governing Body of Matchborough First School Academy **within twenty school days of receipt of notification**.

For in-year applications, appeals will be heard within 30 school days.

WAITING LISTS

Matchborough First School Academy operates a waiting list (the list will be in the order of priority – such as siblings and then distance) for any over-subscribed year group. The process is as follows:

1. Parents/carers will notify the school in writing that they wish their child to be placed on the waiting list for the relevant year group.
2. The Office Administrator will keep any such list, updating when required. The information on the list will include the parent/carer name(s) and contact details, including telephone number and email address (if available). It will also include the child's full name, date of birth, permanent home address, details if looked after by the Local Authority and present school (if applicable). Also the name, date of birth and year group of any sibling(s) on roll at Matchborough First School Academy.
3. At the **beginning** of each term following being placed on the list, parents/carers need to notify the school in writing that they wish their child's name to remain on the waiting list. Failure to do so will result in the name being removed.
4. As places arise, the school will contact parents/carers according to the priority on the list, to allocate the place. Should the place no longer be required, it will be allocated to the next child on the priority list.
5. Parents/carers will not be informed of their place on the waiting list as this can change as new people join the list and others leave, thus changing the priority of a child.

OVER-SUBSCRIBED CRITERIA

The purpose of the published over-subscription criteria is to give everyone a fair and equal opportunity to apply for a place at the school, in line with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. At Matchborough First School Academy the following criteria will be applied to all applications if they are in year or for the new intake. This ensures that should there be a case of over-subscription all applications will be treated equally.

1. Children in care and children who ceased to be in care (LAC/PLAC) because they were adopted or made subject of a residence of special guardianship order, including those who appear to have been in state care outside of the UK and cease to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children with a sibling on roll at the time of application – the sibling must be attending the school at the time of entry of the younger child. *A sibling is defined as a full, adopted, half or step brother or sister living at the same address. Children brought together as a family by a civil partnership and who are living at the same address are also considered to be siblings.*
3. Children living in the school catchment area – this is defined as the address where the child is normally resident. In cases of shared custody, the school will need to see the terms of the residency order to clarify the home address. Where there is no residency order, school will consider that residency is with the parent/carer who has primary, day to day care. In this case, evidence of where the child is registered with a GP may be required should there be any disputes

4. Distance as measured by the shortest route as measured on the Google Maps for walking from the **main** school gate on Matchborough Way, B98 0GD
5. In cases of equi-distance, places will be allocated by random lottery, supervised by an independent source

NB - attendance at our nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered in the main school, and therefore you must apply separately for a place in Reception using the Local Authority admissions process

A child who has an EHCP which names Matchborough First School Academy, will be offered a place at the school if the setting is deemed appropriate.

All Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes are limited to a class size of 30 by law. However, there are exceptional circumstances where this can be exceeded. These are:

- The child has an EHCP, which names Matchborough First School Academy, admitted outside the normal admission round
- If the child is a relevant looked after child, or previously looked after child (LAC/PLAC) admitted outside the normal admissions round
- In circumstances of a procedural error made by the Admission Authority or Local Authority in the original application process
- The child has been admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal
- If the child moves into the area outside the normal admissions round and there is no other available school within a reasonable distance
- The child is of a UK Service Person admitted outside the normal admissions round provided this is accompanied by an official letter regarding their relocation
- The child is a twin/multi-birth and the sibling has been offered a space as there is a vacancy

N.B – in the case of multiple births i.e. if one twin got a place at the school and the other one would send the school over its PAN, the school would automatically admit the other twin and make this a permanent exception to the class size legislation

THE APPEALS PROCEDURE

All parents/carers have the right to appeal the decision not to admit their child to Matchborough First School Academy. Appeals must be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body, c/o Matchborough First School Academy, Matchborough Way, Redditch, B98 0GD stating the child's name and date of birth, their own name and the year group they are appealing for.

The school uses an Independent Appeals Panel to manage its Appeals on its behalf.

Appeals letters will be acknowledged, and the chance to put concerns in writing with evidence will be offered. Further notification of the hearing date will be sent to parents/carers and parents/carers will receive paperwork regarding the appeal in line with statutory requirements at this time. Parents/carers will be invited to attend the appeals hearing to state their case in person. The school and parents/carers will be bound by the decision of the appeal panel to admit or not.

USEFUL CONTACTS:-

Matchborough First School Academy
Matchborough Way
Redditch
Worcestershire
B98 0GD
Telephone Number 01527 883880
Fax Number 01527 883888

Email office@matchborough.worcs.sch.uk

Website www.matchborough.worcs.sch.uk

Further Information

Worcestershire Pupil Admissions

Telephone Number 01905 765765

Online Postcode Catchment area check

Web address <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolsearch> Parent Partnership Service: local information and independent advice on pupil admissions and transfers to schools

Telephone Number 01905 727940

Web Address: www.ppsworcs.co.uk

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education): a national charity that provides independent advice for parents/carers of children aged 5 – 16

Telephone Number 0808 800 5793

Website www.ace-ed.org.uk

TIMELINE FOR RECEPTION ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Process

- 1) 1 September 2024: The online application process will open in Worcestershire – www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions
For other Local Authorities please see their websites
- 2) 15 January 2025: The closing date for applications is 15 January 2025
- 3) 28 January 2025: Last date at which Late Applications can be considered by the Governing Body as to whether application to be treated as Late or On Time
- 4) All applications must be ranked, in accordance with over-subscription criteria (and not just up to PAN)
- 5) 16 April 2025: Local Authority to send out all decision letters, on behalf of the Academy's Governing Body to parents/carers
- 6) All unsuccessful applicants to be notified of their right to appeals by the Local Authority