



Downsell Primary School

Admissions Policy

July 2015



This Policy is to be read in conjunction with 'Starting Primary School 2015/2016 - Admissions brochure'

Apply online: www.eadmissions.org.uk

Email: primary.admission@walthamsforest.gov.uk

Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled infant, junior and primary schools in Waltham Forest

1. How will admissions be decided?

The Local Authority is required by law to co-ordinate admissions to all infant, junior and primary schools (except private or special schools) in the borough. Parents/carers residing in the London Borough of Waltham Forest must complete the Local Authority's Common Application Form, which will be available and able to be submitted on-line, and ensure it is returned to School Support and Pupil Services by their set deadline, which is in January, regardless of where the preferred schools are located.

Parents/carers may list up to 6 maintained schools, within and/or outside the borough, for which they wish their child to be considered on the Common Application Form. Should parents/carers wish their children to be considered for any voluntary aided denominational or foundation schools, such schools must also be included on the form. Voluntary aided denominational schools will also require parents/ carers to complete their Supplementary Information Forms which must be returned directly to the schools concerned by their respective deadlines.

A parent/carer's child's attendance at a nursery class attached to an infant or primary school does not guarantee admission to that school. Parents/carers must apply for a place if they wish their child to attend the main school. Parents/ carers seeking the admission of their child to a school in another Authority's area must name these schools on the Waltham Forest Common Application Form. The Local Authority is part of the Pan-London Scheme that will co-ordinate admissions to schools across the capital. However, if parents/ carers apply for places at voluntary aided denominational or foundation schools outside Waltham Forest they may be required to complete a Supplementary Information Form and submit it directly to the school concerned. School Support and Pupil Services will consider all the applications for community and voluntary controlled schools and prepare proposed offer lists for these schools based on the application of the admission criteria outlined below. Voluntary aided and foundation schools, which are responsible for their own admissions, will do the same and send their proposed offer lists to School Support and Pupil Services.

School Support and Pupil Services will check all the lists to see if any child is on more than one. The intention here is to ensure that no child receives more than one offer of a school place. The offer to be made will be the highest preferred school named on the Common Application Form that the child qualifies for under the various admission criteria. It is important, therefore, that parents/ carers list their preferences in true priority order.

If your child has a Disability

It is unlawful for a school, in relation to certain activities, to treat a disabled child less favourably than a non-disabled child, without justification. These activities include

admissions and a school must make reasonable adjustments, as necessary, to ensure that this is the case.

2. Admissions criteria – Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

When the demand exceeds the number of places available in a school, places are allocated to community and voluntary controlled schools by applying the following criteria in descending order of priority to applicants who have expressed any preference for the school.

i. Looked after children

ii. Exceptional medical or exceptional social grounds (supporting medical or other evidence must be provided at the time of application).

iii. The attendance in September at the school of an older brother or sister at the start date in Reception. This will include children in partner junior schools.

iv. The distance of the home address from the school, as measured by a straight line from the school, those pupils living nearer the school being given higher priority.

Applications from out-borough residents will be considered using the same admissions criteria. The law requires that no distinction be made between applicants resident in Waltham Forest and those residents outside the Borough when these criteria are applied. Please see the guidance below on the application of the admission criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools.

Looked after children

A looked after child, as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, is a child who is in the care of a local authority, or provided with accommodation by a local authority.

Exceptional medical or exceptional social grounds

Applications under this criterion can only be considered if supporting documents in the form of a letter or report from a doctor, social worker or other appropriate professional is submitted with the Common Application Form.

The exceptional medical or social reasons must relate to the child. The evidence supplied by the doctor, social worker or other appropriate professional must clearly set out the reasons why the preferred school is the most suitable and the difficulties that would be caused if the child attended and had to travel to another school. (Please note that under the Disability Discrimination Act the general expectation is that schools will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual children with disabilities or medical needs.)

Consideration will be given to each submission by a panel of Local Authority officers. The panel may seek clarification regarding the evidence supplied and/ or additional information.

Older brother or sister

An older brother or sister is defined as:

- a brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household who attends the preferred school in any year group, excluding Year 6, (the final year of primary education).
- a biological brother or sister who attends the preferred school in any year group, excluding Year 6, (the final year of primary education) irrespective of their place of residence.

3. Distance of the home address from the school

Distance is measured by a straight line from the single post office address point of the child's permanent home to the main gate of the school. All distances will be measured using a computerised mapping system called a Geographical Information System (GIS) with data supplied by the Ordnance Survey. In the event that two, or more, applicants applying for a single place at a preferred school live at addresses that are located at exactly the same distance from the preferred school, or live in the same block of flats, the place will be offered on the basis of lots drawn by an officer of the Local Authority who is not involved in the admissions process.

Home Address

The home address is a key part of the admissions process. It is the child's normal place of residence that will take precedence. There have been occasions when parents/ carers have tried to use false addresses to obtain a place at a school. To prevent this occurring, the Local Authority undertakes checks on addresses. Applicants who do not currently have a child attending a Waltham Forest primary school who will still be on roll at the school in September 2011 should provide proof of their home address. This must be a copy of one of the following:

- Council Tax notification
- Utility bill dated within the last 6 months (gas, electricity, water, landline phone)
- an exchange of contracts letter from a solicitor
- a signed tenancy agreement from a letting agent

If a parent/ carer is found to have used a false address to obtain a place at a school, the offer of a place will be withdrawn. Should there be doubts about the address to be used, parents/ carers may be asked to provide evidence concerning the child's normal place of residence. This could include a court order stating where the child should live during the course of the week. In all cases the Local Authority would expect that the parent/ carer with whom the child is normally resident receives the child benefit for the child.

If parents/ carers move address during the admissions process they must notify School Support and Pupil Services immediately of their new address, and provide verification of the new address. This should be supported by evidence from a solicitor regarding the date of exchange of contracts if parents/ carers are purchasing a new home or the signed tenancy agreement if they are renting a property. The length of a tenancy agreement from the letting agent should be sufficient to cover the date on which their child would start attending their preferred school.

If parents/ carers have more than one property they may be required to provide proof of the normal place of residence for your child.

Twins and multiple births

Other than when infant class size limits would be breached, for community and voluntary controlled schools in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin, and their sibling cannot be offered a place, the Local Authority will ensure that both twins are offered a place. In the case of other multiple births, if the majority of children can be offered a place, the Local Authority will offer places to the remaining children. For example if two triplets can be offered a place, the remaining child will also receive an offer of a place.

4. Changing Preferences

Parents/ carers can change their preferences as long as their request is received by the closing date by writing to School Support and Pupil Services or, if their initial application was made online, by changing them online and resubmitting their application.

Late Applications

Applications for places received after the Local Authority closing date will not be considered until all of the applications received by that date have been dealt with unless the parents/ carers have just arrived in the borough; the delay has been created by factors outside of their control; there are other exceptional circumstances involved. It is crucial therefore for parents/ carers to adhere to the deadline to stand a realistic chance of any of their preferences being met. Where a parent/ carer moves from one London Borough to another after submitting an on-time application under the terms of their former home authority's scheme, Waltham Forest will accept the application as on-time up to the published date on the basis that an on-time application already exists within the Pan-London system.

Using all your preferences

The Local Authority strongly recommends that parents express more than one preference and include a school local to their home address as one of their preferences. A local school must be named as one of the parents/ carers preferences in order for it to be considered; this will not be done automatically.

School preference order

Parents/ carers should put their preferences in their true priority order. If the parents/carers of a child differ as to the preferences they wish to express for their child, they should resolve that difference before making an application, as the Local Authority will only process one application for each child.

The rank order of parents'/ carers' preferences is confidential to the Local Authority. In accordance with the Department of Education Admissions Code schools must not use admissions criteria that require parents/ carers to put them as first preference to gain a higher priority. It is important that parents/ carers, when selecting their preferences for school admission, take into account how their child will travel to school.

Offers

This Local Authority will send by first class post and by e-mail notification of the outcome to applicants residing within the borough.

This Local Authority will ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, that each Waltham Forest applicant who cannot be offered a place at one of their preferred schools listed on the Common Application Form, receives the offer of an alternative school place. Under such circumstances applicants residing within the borough will be allocated a place at the nearest community or foundation school to the applicant's home address with a place available.

This Local Authority will inform all applicants residing within the borough of their highest offer of a school place and, where relevant, the reasons why higher preferences were not offered, whether they were for schools in Waltham Forest or in other participating Local Authorities

5. Post Offer

The Local Authority will request that resident applicants accept or decline the offer of a place by their set deadline in April, or within two weeks of the date of any subsequent offer.

The Local Authority will automatically place children on a waiting list for higher preference schools for the first term in the normal year of entry. At the end of this period parents/ carers will need to request that their children's names be placed on the waiting list for community and voluntary controlled schools. If the school concerned is a foundation or voluntary aided school, or located in another

borough, then parents/ carers will be advised to contact the individual school concerned or the maintaining local authority to ask whether a waiting list is maintained and, if so, request that their child's name can be added to the list.

Appealing against admission decisions

If parents/ carers are unhappy about not being allocated a place for their child at one of their preferred schools, they may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. To obtain an appeal form, parents/ carers will need to contact School Support and Pupil Services.

Change of school at other than a normal transfer time

Should a parent request a transfer of their child at other than a normal time of transfer such as from an infant to a junior school, application should be made to School Support and Pupil Services.

Transfer from infant to junior schools

When a child attending an infant school is due to transfer to Year 3 there will be an entitlement to transfer to the partner junior school. Parents who wish to apply for a Year 3 place at schools other than the partner junior school will need to complete an application form. These applications will be considered using the admissions criteria detailed above once demand has been met by pupils transferring from the partner infant school.

Deferred entry to infant and primary schools/ part-time attendance at school

Children are normally admitted to schools in the September following their fourth birthday. However, schools must allow parents of children who are offered a place at a school before they are of compulsory school age to defer their child's entry until later in the school year. Where entry is deferred, schools must hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child. Parents/carers cannot defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after their child's fifth birthday. Parents/carers can also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. (A child reaches compulsory school age in the term following their fifth birthday.) This must be in writing to the headteacher. Parents/carers are welcome to meet with the headteacher to discuss. The school will determine the nature of the flexible hours. Reception aged pupils are encouraged to attend school full time alongside their peers.

Admission to Nursery Classes

A number of community schools have nursery classes, including Downsell Primary. Children can be admitted part-time to nursery classes for a maximum of **five** terms prior to the term they will start main school.

For further information about the admissions arrangements For Downsell Nursery setting, parents/ carers should contact the school office.

Attendance at a nursery class does not mean an automatic transfer to the Reception class of the main school.

If a child is admitted to a nursery class their parents/ carers must express a preference for admission to the main school using Waltham Forest's Common Application Form, if they reside in Waltham Forest, or the Common Application Form used by their home local authority if they live outside the borough.

Applications outside of the normal year of entry (in year applications)

a) Admissions are dealt with directly by the Local Authority. Parents can apply for a school place by completing a common application. Where there is a space in the requested year group, a place will be allocated for the school chosen. The Local Authority will hold waiting lists for schools where class sizes are full.

b) Parents/carers have the right to appeal and should do so following the guidance and procedures as set by the Local Authority.

Any parent or carer who would like to visit the school is welcome to do so by contacting the school office on **020 8556 0103**.

Date of next review – July 2016