

## WIRRAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

Applications submitted by the 15 January 2025 will be considered first and places allocated up to the admission number of the school and in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Children who are looked after (in care), and children who were looked after but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order ('previously in care').
2. Parents of children who live 'in zone' and already have older brothers or sisters at the school living in the same household at the time of the start date. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. Where there is more than one child with a sibling in the same year group priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school.
3. Parents of pupils who live 'in zone' and nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route.

**If children do not live in the school's catchment area and if places remain available, places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria:**

4. To children who already have older brother or sisters at the school when they are due to start and living in the same household. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. Where there is more than one child with a sibling in the same year group priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school.
5. To pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route.

### NOTES

#### 1. Catchment zones.

- 1.1. Parents are advised to always include their zoned school as one of their preferences. A catchment area finder using the street name is available on the Council's website [www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions)
- 1.2. Please note that a place in your catchment school cannot be absolutely guaranteed, for example a school with an admission number of 30 may have more than 30 applications from parents living within the catchment area. Places would only be able to be offered up to the admission number and not beyond.

#### 2. A Looked After child is a child who one of:

- 2.1. In the care of a Local Authority

- 2.2. Is being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their Social Services functions under section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.
- 2.3. A previously Looked After child is one who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. This also includes 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.)

### **3. Siblings.**

- 3.1. A sibling is a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother of sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, where they are living in the same family unit/household at the same address.
- 3.2. In the case of an infant school, we will also treat a brother or sister at the junior school as a sibling but they will be given lower priority to children at the same infant school.
- 3.3. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school.
- 3.4. Where there is more than one child with a sibling in the same year group priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school.

### **4. Home address.**

- 4.1. This must be the child's permanent home address where he/she lives with a person of parental responsibility as the main carer as defined by the Children Act 1989.
- 4.2. Applicants must not give the address of a business, relative, childminder, friend, a temporary address or an address to which they hope to move.
- 4.3. The home address must not be where parents have taken out a short term let on a property solely to use the address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence there.
- 4.4. Arrangements where parents leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be "ordinarily resident" with that person.
- 4.5. Proof of residence may be requested which may include:
  - 4.5.1. A solicitor's letter confirming completion date of a sale,
  - 4.5.2. A signed rental agreement showing the start and duration of the tenancy, and may include proof of sale of a previous property.
  - 4.5.3. Copies of Council tax and utility bills relevant to the property may also be requested.

- 4.6. The information provided may be shared with other Departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil's addresses.

## **5. Applications from separated parents.**

- 5.1. Only one application can be processed for each child; therefore, it is important that both parties in shared custody arrangements are in agreement over the preferred school(s) named.
- 5.2. Where a child spends equal time with both parents, the child's main residence should be submitted as their home address.
- 5.3. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then the application will be accepted from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident". This is defined as the address at which the child lives for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). Proof of address and residence arrangements will be required with the application or may be requested.

## **6. Changes of address.**

- 6.1. Parents and carers must inform the Council immediately in writing of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form.
- 6.2. The Council will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed which could be:
- 6.2.1. A letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date;
- 6.2.2. A signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration.
- 6.3. In addition, further information may be requested - for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application including evidence of disposal of previous property.
- 6.4. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 28<sup>th</sup> February. Proof of residency received after 28<sup>th</sup> February will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date.

## **7. Deferred entry.**

- 7.1. Parents can request deferred entry or part-time attendance up until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday). The request must be put in writing to the local authority.
- 7.2. Parents should note that if a summer born child delays entry to the September after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, the child will ordinarily be expected to enter Year 1, not Foundation 2.

- 7.3. Parents intending to request their child enter Foundation 2 rather than Year 1 are advised to apply as usual and to contact Wirral Council prior to 15<sup>th</sup> January to discuss actions.
- 7.4. Requests will be considered on the circumstances of each individual case and will require agreement from the allocated school.

## **8. Applying for a place.**

Parents must return online or paper forms to the Children and Young People's Department by 15<sup>th</sup> January to ensure the allocation of a school place on 16<sup>th</sup> April or next working day. Applications received after the published deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> January will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

## **9. Late applications.**

If places remain after all "on-time" applicants have been allocated places, places will then be allocated to late applicants (received after 15<sup>th</sup> January) up to the school's admission number according to the admission criteria above.

## **10. Home to school distances.**

- 10.1. The "shortest road route" from home to school starts at the "seed point" of the home address as provided by the Ordnance Survey compiled from Royal Mail and/or local council data. The starting point connects to the nearest point of the Authority's digitised routing network.
- 10.2. The digitised network is based on the Integrated Transport Network (ITN) supplied by Ordnance Survey and is accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads. The Ordnance Survey ITN dataset is the most accurate road dataset available and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The ITN has been augmented by the Authority to take into account public footpaths and alleyways etc. that are approved to be safe for use by children, accompanied as necessary by an adult, by the Authority.
- 10.3. The end point of the "shortest road route" is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Authority based on information provided by the school.
- 10.4. The shortest road route is not necessarily a driving route as it may use in part a non-driveable route, such as a footpath. The shortest road route is also not necessarily a walking route, because the measurement is along the centre of the road, not the edge (pavement or equivalent).
- 10.5. The same measuring system must be used for pupils in relation to admission to schools as this treats all pupils equally. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account. Online systems that parents may use for comparison, including Google Maps and walk-it.com etc. use the free Ordnance Survey Meridian dataset which is far less detailed, and consequently

less accurate. They will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

10.6. For addresses outside the Authority's digitised network of approximately 48 square miles, including overseas addresses, an internet mapping solution will be used, e.g., [maps.google.co.uk](https://maps.google.co.uk).

10.7. As a general guide, routes without pavements AND street lighting will be considered to be unsafe.

10.8. In the event that two or more applicants where this distance would be the last place to be allocated, one application will be chosen at random.

#### **11. Continuing interest list.**

11.1. A continuing interest list of children whose parents have expressed an interest in obtaining a Foundation 2 place at the school will be maintained until the end of August. This will include both late and on-time applicants.

11.2. Priority on the list will be given in accordance with the published criteria and does not take into account how long the child has been on the list, or whether an appeal has been submitted.

11.3. Each added child requires the list to be ranked again in line with the published admission criteria.

11.4. The Authority will contact parents directly if a place becomes available for their child.

11.5. In August, the Authority will then write to the parents of those children who have expressed a continuing interest to ask if they wish to remain on the list, which will then be held open until the end of the Autumn term. Schools cannot make offers of places to parents.

11.6. It is not necessary to submit an appeal (see below) in order to be added to the continuing interest list.

#### **12. In Year applications.**

Applications must be made on a common Primary School Transfer form stating up to three school preferences, directly to the Mainstream Admissions team, stating the reasons why a transfer is being requested. Applications will be dealt with as set out in the Wirral Co-ordinated Scheme for Admissions.

#### **13. Infant Class Size limit.**

It is the duty of the governing body of schools to comply with regulations on class size limits at Foundation 2 and Key Stage 1, where classes are limited to 30 children. There are a

limited number of exceptions which are set out in the School Admissions Code and in the Wirral Co-ordinated Scheme for Admissions.

**14. Transferring from Community Infant to Community Junior schools.**

All children on roll at an Infant School are eligible to transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 to the linked Junior school even if they do not live in the school's catchment area. Other children must apply for an in-year transfer and the admission criteria will be applied in determining whether a place will be allocated (see above).

**15. Appeals.**

All parents will be informed of the school place allocated by the Local Authority. The notification will also inform the parent of the right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal, which is to an Independent Appeal Panel. Parents should, if possible, submit an appeal in writing within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.

**16. Nursery schools and classes.**

Applications must be made directly to the school. If there are not enough places for all children who have applied, the school will give priority to children who will become 4 during the academic year. Within this category, they will give priority in the following order:

16.1. Children with a particular medical reason for going to the school

16.2. Children who live in the catchment area of another school which does not have a nursery class

16.3. Children who live in the catchment area of the school or another school which does have a nursery class

If there are places left after all the four-year-olds have been offered a place, the school will then offer places to children who become 3 during the academic year in the following priority order:

16.4. Children with special educational needs identified through a statutory assessment

16.5. Children whose parents receive Income Support, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Working Tax Credit

16.6. Children whose birthday falls between 1 September and 31 December

16.7. Children whose birthday falls between 1 January and 31 March

16.8. Children whose birthday falls between 1 April and 31 August

Within any category, the school will give priority to children who live nearest to the school measured by the shortest available walking route.

**Note that attendance at a particular nursery or pre-school does not guarantee that a place will be allocated at a particular school.**

**17. Withdrawal of places.**

- 17.1. The Authority has the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, including but not limited to, sibling connections or place of residence.
- 17.2. Wirral Council regularly check addresses and **any deliberate misrepresentation will result in a place being withdrawn.**
- 17.3. The Council acts on behalf of all Wirral admission authorities and reserves the right to request independent confirmation of the child's place of residence, as felt appropriate. The Mainstream Admissions team may have to share the information provided with other departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil's addresses.

**18. Children with Special Educational Needs.**

Schools are obliged to offer a place to a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school following a statutory assessment.