

Admissions Arrangements for Academic Year 2026/2027 Admission Policy

Approved by Governors: March 2026

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at Woodlands School
- Set out the school's arrangements for allocating places where applications exceed the number available
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer a place

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department of Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, Woodlands school is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#). This policy complies with the school's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Normal admissions round

The period during which parents apply for state-funded school places at the normal point of entry using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

Looked-after children

As defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989, these are children who, at the time of application, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions.

Previously looked-after children

Children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Became subject to a child arrangements order (section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended)
- Became subject to a special guardianship order (section 14A of the Children Act 1989)

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside England and were subsequently adopted. A child is considered to have been in state care outside England if they were cared for by a public authority, religious organisation, or other provider whose main purpose is to benefit society.

Parent/carer

Any person who holds parental responsibility as defined by the Children Act 1989, or who has care of a child on a full-time or part-time basis.

Child's Home Address

A child's home address is the residential (not business) address of the parent with whom the child lives and sleeps for more than 50% of the time from Sunday to Thursday nights during term time.

This will usually be the address where the child is registered with their GP, hospital, dentist and/or optician, and/or the address used to claim Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit (if eligible) at the time of application.

If there is any uncertainty about a child's home address, Woodlands School may request documentary evidence to determine which address meets this definition. The address that meets this definition will be used to process the application, even if it differs from the address provided by the parent.

4. How to apply

Applications in the normal admissions round must be made using the application form provided by your home local authority, regardless of where the school is located. For example, applicants living in Thurrock must apply via Thurrock Local Authority.

Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs) are required only for applicants wishing to be considered for the Aptitude for Sport or Performing Arts places. The SIF is available from the Woodlands School website from September in the year of application.

Offers of places are made by the local authority on National Offer Day. Further information can be found on the local authority website.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/admissions>

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents may request that their child be admitted outside their normal age group.

Requests must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher at the time of application and at least one week before the admissions deadline. Requests must include reasons for the request and any supporting evidence.

The Headteacher will make a decision before the application deadline, taking into account:

- Parents' 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 out of their normal age group
- Whether the child was born prematurely
- The headteacher's professional judgement

Requests will normally be considered within the main admissions round and will not be treated as lower priority. Parents will be informed of the reasons for the decision.

There is no right of appeal if a place is offered but not in the preferred year group.

6. Allocation of Places

Our Published Admissions number (PAN) is 300. There is no guarantee of a place at the school.

Oversubscription Criteria

All children whose Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan names the school will be admitted before the allocation of any other places.

Where applications exceed available places, the following oversubscription criteria will be applied in order. Places will be allocated in a fair, clear and objective manner.

1. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

2. Children with a sibling attending the school

A sibling is defined as a brother, sister, step-sibling or adopted sibling living at the same address and attending the school (excluding the final year). Biological siblings attending the school (excluding the final year) who do not reside with the connecting parent will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Extended family members are not considered siblings, regardless of place of residence.

For mid-year admissions, the sibling must be attending or have been offered a place at the time of application.

Where one child from a twin, triplet, or higher multiple birth is offered a place at the Academy within the Published Admission Number (PAN) through the normal admissions process, but the remaining child or children are not, the Academy will admit the other twin, triplet(s), or sibling(s) of the higher multiple birth, even where this results in the PAN being exceeded.

3. Children of staff at Woodlands School, where:

The member of staff has been employed at the school for at least two years at the time of application, and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post with a demonstrable skills shortage.

4. Aptitude for Performing Arts or Sport

Up to 30 places (10% of the PAN) are allocated based on aptitude testing. Applicants must submit a SIF by 12 noon on Friday 2nd October 2026. Tests will take place on Saturday 3rd October 2026. Results will be issued within 10 days. Places are allocated by rank order. In the event of a tie, straight-line distance will be applied.

5. Straight-line distance from home to school

Distance is measured electronically by the local authority from the child's home address to the school's main entrance. In cases of shared care, the address where the child lives for the majority of the week will be used.

Proof of address may be requested. Places obtained through fraudulent or misleading information may be withdrawn.

Waiting List;

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists will be maintained until the end of August and, where necessary, until the end of the autumn term. Positions may change as new applicants are added. This applies to both 'on time' and 'late' applications.

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in the Essex Fair Access Protocol to ensure vulnerable and unplaced children are allocated a school place promptly.

Any application will be processed in accordance with the usual in-year admission procedures (see section 7).

Challenging behaviour

Admission will not be refused on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round, except where permitted under the School Admissions Code. For in-year admissions, refusal may occur where statutory criteria apply.

The exception to this is where we may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13) apply.

Children of UK service personnel and crown servants

Applications from service families with confirmed postings will be considered in advance of relocation, subject to availability and appropriate evidence.

Overseas Applications

Mid-year applications from pupils educated overseas will be considered individually, subject to place availability, age, academic profile, English proficiency and curriculum compatibility. Additional documentation may be required.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

Offers may be withdrawn if made in error, not accepted within a reasonable timeframe, or obtained through fraudulent or misleading information. Offers will not be withdrawn once a child has started at the school, except in cases of proven fraud.

7. Mid-Year Admissions

Applications may be made at any time outside the normal admissions round. Information and application forms are available on the school website.

<https://www.woodlandsschool.org/mid-year-admissions>

As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place.

Where places are unavailable at the time of your application, you will be added to the waiting list for the relevant year group, which will be ranked in accordance with the priority afforded by the oversubscription criteria. When a space becomes available, it will be filled using the waiting list of the relevant year group. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest. Upon receipt of your application, we will aim to write to you within 10 school days to confirm if a place is being offered or not.

If you do not hear within this timescale, please contact the school directly to ask about your application. Before an offered place at Woodlands School is confirmed, various documentation according to circumstances including proof of address will be required.

8. Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal against a refusal of a place. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 20 school days of the refusal letter using the school's appeal form. Appeals are heard by an independent panel.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Admission arrangements are consulted upon in accordance with statutory requirements.

Signed: 
Head Teacher

Dated: 9th March 2026

Signed: 
Chair of Governors

Dated: 9th March 2026

