



Willowcroft Community School

Admissions Policy 2025-2026
Reception to Year 6
(Statutory)

Admissions Arrangements to Foundation

Willowcroft Community School has a Published Admissions Number (PAN) for entry to the Foundation Stage 1(FS1) Year of 60. The School does not use academic or other ability as selection criteria.

The Governing Body (who are also the Directors) of the school, not Oxfordshire Local Authority (LA), is responsible for deciding on admissions to the school but works closely with the LA who co-ordinates admissions to the school.

The arrangements for school admissions are in the Oxfordshire booklet 'Starting School'. Details of how to obtain this will be sent to parents living in Oxfordshire and it is also available from the Admissions Team, Children's Services, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1NA.

The booklet contains a Common Application Form (CAF), explains the timetable for application, details of how parents will be informed of the result of their application, and how parents can express a preference for a school and give reasons for that preference. The completed CAF form should be returned directly to the Local Authority or an application submitted online by 15th January 2024. The booklet also gives details of how applications received after the deadline will be handled, and of how continued interest (waiting) lists will be handled. Alternatively parents can now find this information by applying online by visiting www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

- Please note that parents living outside Oxfordshire at the time of application should apply for a place at the school on the common application form of the local authority (LA) in which they live at the time of application. That LA will co-ordinate their application and liaise with Oxfordshire LA.

This policy has been drawn up taking account of the Oxfordshire County Council guidance entitled 'A guide to School Admissions in Oxfordshire', School Admissions Code 2014, Oxford Diocesan Board of Education guidelines and appropriate legislation. It should be read in conjunction with the current issue of the school's 'Information for Parents' handbook, which will give further details of the school.

In accordance with legal requirements, children who have an Education Health Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs that names the school in either Part 4 of a statement or section I of an EHCP, will be admitted to that school.

Entry 2025 and Deferred Entry

At our school, pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1st September to 31st August) in which they will reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021 may therefore apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2025. There are 60 places available. Our policy is not to offer admission in September 2025 to children who were born on or after 1st September 2021.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1st September 2020 and 31st March 2021 may request that their child is not admitted until later in the school year (no later than the term, using a three term year, after the child's fifth birthday, when they reach compulsory school age). The school will hold any deferred place for the child although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1st April 2021 and 31st August 2021, parents who do not wish them to start school in year 2025-2026, but to be admitted in September 2026 for school year 2026-2027, should discuss this with the school at an early stage. They may decide not to apply for a Reception place in the school but to apply in the second half of the summer term 2025 for a Year 1 place in September 2025. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring from the 2025-2026 Reception Year group. Alternatively, they may decide to apply in the normal round (no later than 15th January 2026) for a Reception Year place in September 2026, but would need to provide strong supporting reasons for seeking a place outside the normal year group.

Unless the child reaches compulsory school age, parents may also request that they attend part-time. In such cases, detailed arrangements should be discussed with the head teacher.

Oversubscription Criteria

In the event of there being a greater demand for admissions than there are places available, the places will be allocated using the following criteria; these are listed in order of priority.

1. Children who are looked after by a local authority within the meaning of Part 1 of the Children and Families Act 2014 at the time of their application and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). Further references to previously looked after children in this Code means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after.
2. Disabled children who need to be admitted to a school on the grounds of physical accessibility. The definition of disability is that contained within the Equalities Act 2010, Part 2.
3. Children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:
 - a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
4. Children, in catchment area, who have a brother or sister on roll at the time of application who will still be attending the school at the time of entry. If there are more applicants than places in this category, priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education & Families' Geographic Information System.
5. Children who live in the school's designated area.
If there are more applicants than places in this category priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education & Families' Geographic Information System.
6. Children living outside the designated area who have a brother or sister on roll at the time of application who will still be attending the preferred school at the time of entry. If there are more applicants than places in this category priority will be given within this group to children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education & Families' Geographic Information System.
7. Those children who live closest to the school by the nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education & Families Geographic Information System.

Admission outside the normal age group

Children who are gifted and talented or have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group.

In addition where the parents of a summer born child choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1.

Any decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case. This will include:

- a) the parents' views;
- b) information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;

- c) where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- d) whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group;
- e) whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and
- f) the views of the head teacher.

When informing a parent of the decision on the year group to which their child should be admitted, the Directors will give clear reasons for the decision.

Where the Directors agree to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school) The application will be:

- processed as part of the main admissions round, unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible; and
- considered against the determined admission arrangements only, including the application of oversubscription criteria where applicable.

The Directors will not give a lower priority on the basis that the child is not of the correct age.

Children considered for late transfer would almost certainly have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Discussion relating to late transfer would normally be initiated within an annual review of the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Any late or early transfer of a child who does not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs would require evidence of the need for such a transfer and the agreement of the Directors. Transfers of this kind are likely to be very uncommon.

Parents' statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied will not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

Random Allocation

If the distance "tie break" produces an identical result for two or more applicants Willowcroft will use random allocation to determine who will be offered a place. This will be carried out for Willowcroft by the Local Authority (an impartial third party).

Siblings/Brother or Sister

For admission purposes for Willowcroft, a sibling is defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step brother or step sister who will be resident at the same address at the time of entry.

Twins and Children from Multiple Births

Where the parent has made the same preferences of school and through the normal operation of the admission arrangements the last available place at Willowcroft has been allocated to one twin, or child from a multiple birth, the other twin, or the other children from the multiple birth, will be offered a place at the school. This means that in these circumstances the Published Admission Number would be exceeded.

The nearest designated public route as defined on the Directorate for Children, Education & Families' Geographic Information System

For admissions purposes the route from home to school will be measured using the shortest designated route as determined by Oxfordshire County Council's measurement system.

The start point of a measurement is the "seed point" of the home address. The "seed point" is provided by Ordnance Survey from information compiled from Royal Mail and from district or city councils. The seed point normally falls within the bounds of a property. It is possible to amend the location of a seed point, but this is neither necessary nor possible for most addresses. Seed points are accurate to the nearest ten centimetres.

From the seed point the route firstly connects to the nearest point of the digitised network.

The digitised network is constructed from road data supplied by Ordnance Survey and is called the Integrated Transport Network (ITN). The Integrated Transport Network has been accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads and takes corners at right angles. This is the same underlying information as used by internet-based mapping solutions (e.g. Google Maps). However, the LA has a more accurate start point than internet-based mapping solutions and the ITN has been augmented by the LA to take into account other available public routes, for example alleyways, public footpaths and bridleways.

The end point of the "shortest designated route" is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by students for entry and exit to the school site at the start and/end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the LA and consulted with each individual school to ensure accurate placement of the gate and its availability for use.

The shortest designated route is established using an algorithm within the bespoke software used by the LA. This software is called RouteFinder and is produced by Higher Mapping Solutions (www.highermappingsolutions.com). This programme integrates with the LA's database (ONE) which is supplied by Capita Children's Services (www.capita-cs.co.uk).

The "shortest designated route" is not necessarily a driving route because it may use in whole or in part a non-driveable route, for example footpaths. The "shortest designated route" is also not necessarily a walking route, for example where roads are used the measurement is along the centre of the road not along the edge (pavement or equivalent) of the road.

Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the LA cannot take a measurement from another measuring system into account because this would constitute maladministration of the admissions process.

Home Address

The address on the application should be the child's address at the time of application. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night).

Changes of Address

Changes of address which occur after the closing date may be taken into account if proof of this change is provided by the date published in the LA's Admissions Rules. To confirm your new address we need one of the following:

- A solicitor's letter advising contracts have been exchanged (if the property is being purchased); or
- a copy of a tenancy agreement (if the property is to be rented). If this tenancy agreement comes to an end before September 2016 we may not accept the address for admissions purposes; or
- a copy of your Council Tax Bill showing the same name(s) as in Section 5 of the CAF.

Parents may also be asked to provide proof of address from correspondence they have received from HM Revenue & Customs, Child Benefit Division or Tax Credits Division. Such correspondence must pre-date the application you have made.

The Local Authority will act as Willowcroft's agent in establishing a child's address.

Multiple Addresses

Where children spend time with parents at more than one address then the address given on the form should be the one that they live at (i.e. sleep at) for the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night). If children spend time equally at different addresses then this should be declared in writing and signed by all parties with parental responsibility. We may ask for proof of the living arrangements (i.e. a court decision) and we may ask for confirmation of an address you have given. If it is accepted by Willowcroft Primary School that a child spends time equally at two different addresses (for example, one week with each parent in turn during term-times), the address used for admissions purposes will be the address most favourable (i.e. closest) to the first preference requested.

The Local Authority will act as Willowcroft Primary School's agent in establishing the home address.

Fraudulent Applications

If a place has been obtained on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application (for example, a false claim to residence in a designated/ catchment area) and this results in the denial of a place to a child with a stronger claim, the admission authority for the school may withdraw the offer of the place. This follows the guidance in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13 of the School Admissions Code (February 2012) published by the Department for Education:

"[2.12] An admission authority **must not** withdraw an offer of a place unless it has been offered in error, parents has not responded within a reasonable amount of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority **must** give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application **must** be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

2.13] A school **must not** withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child had been at the school **must** be taken into account. For example, it might be considered appropriate to withdraw the place if the child has been at the school for less than one term."

The Local Authority will act as Willowcroft Primary School agent in establishing whether a place has been obtained on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application

Coordination of Admissions for the Normal Admissions Round

Willowcroft is part of the coordinated admission process for Oxfordshire for entry to Reception in 2025/26

The Scheme is published on Oxfordshire County Council's public website.

In Year Admissions (Reception to Year 6)

All Other Admissions to other years at the school or to the Foundation Year, once offers of places have been made, depend on whether or not there are places available.

The School Admissions Code (2014) mandates the adoption of strategies that allow all schools to admit a more even share of vulnerable children.

In accordance with this, the school adheres to the Local Authority's fair access protocol. Children in this category will be given the highest priority in both the oversubscription criteria and the continued interest list. Where necessary these children will be admitted above the admission number that applied to the year group at entry to Foundation.

The above arrangements cannot be used where this would involve contravening infant class size limits.

Willowcroft School is part of the in-year admission scheme for Oxfordshire. Therefore, in-year applications will be processed through Oxfordshire County Council.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child in the relevant continued interest (waiting) list with a higher priority, a place will be offered. As soon as school places become vacant, we fill these vacancies from any waiting list, even if this is before any admission appeals have been heard. Children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to this school in accordance with an In-Year Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

For children of UK Service personnel and other Crown Servants, we will treat a family returning to the area as meeting the residency criteria for that catchment even if no house is currently owned in that area once proof of posting has been provided. In the situation, where the Service does not yet have a postal address, the Governors will use the Unit postal address or quartering area address, provided there is official confirmation of the future move.

We will endeavour to handle admission applications outside the normal admissions round, or in-year applications, as quickly as possible to minimise the time a child is not at a school.

If a parent has not responded to the offer of a place within 14 days we will remind the parent of the need to respond and point out that the place may be withdrawn if they do not.

It has to be noted that the only way that a place can be offered once there are 60 children in the year group, or the current class size limits of 30 have been reached, is to appeal.

More details of this process are given at the end of this document.

For those applying through the normal admissions round for F1 the continued list will be maintained from immediately following initial allocation to the end of the academic year of entry.

In the case of those applying in-year the continued interest lists will be maintained from 1 August until 31 July of the year of application.

Appeals

If the application is not successful then the Directors' letter of refusal will give reasons for their decision based on the listed admission criteria. You will also be sent an appeal form at the same time. The Directors will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an independent panel. This panel's decision is legally binding on the school and on the family.

It has be noted that in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same school year (1 September- 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address.

The Directors have made every effort to ensure that this policy complies with all relevant legislation including the School Admissions Code 2014, equal opportunities legislation and the Infant Class Sizes rules.

For further information, in the first instance, please contact the school.

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