



Admissions Arrangements for Unity Schools Partnership Suffolk Primary Schools 2027-28

Version: v2

Type: Trust Policy

Author: Rebecca Clarke

Date approved: 15 December 2025

Approval level: Trust Board

Admission Arrangements for 2027-2028

1. INTRODUCTION

Unity Schools Partnership (USP) schools follow the School Admissions Code and the law relating to admissions. This accords with the Trust's funding agreement with the Department for Education. USP is the admission authority for all its schools.

All Primary schools are required to follow the relevant Trust Primary Admissions Policy which should be clearly displayed on individual school websites. This replaces individual school admissions policies. For nursery admissions, schools follow separate Nursery Admissions Policies at each school, which again should be displayed on the schools' websites with application arrangements.

Attendance at a USP primary school's nursery provision does not guarantee a place into that school's Reception class.

As part of the admission arrangements for each Suffolk Primary School, there is an admission number for each normal year of entry to the school (Reception). This is known as the Published Admission Number (PAN). Each USP Suffolk primary school and their published PAN is listed in **Appendix 1**.

2. ADMISSION TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Suffolk Local Authority (LA) currently co-ordinates the admission of Reception age students for our Suffolk schools. We have one primary school in Cambridgeshire (Ditton Lodge), one primary school in Essex (Steeple Bumpstead), six primary schools in Norfolk (Robert Kett, Silfield Oak Heartsease, Henderson Green, Lingwood and Valley) and one infant and one junior school in Norfolk (Colman Infants, Colman Juniors)— for information on those schools, please see their school websites. This document applies to USP's Suffolk primary schools.

Parents/Carers apply for a place at one of our Suffolk primary schools through their home LA's admission process. Our schools will use Suffolk's timetable published online for these applications and Suffolk will make the offers of places as required by the School Admissions Code. The deadline for applications is 15 January for a September Reception place that year.

The LA allocates places on behalf of the academy trust following consultation with academies, for students at the beginning of their education.

3. ADMISSION OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

If the number of applications for a Reception place is greater than the school's PAN, we use the admissions oversubscription criteria below to decide who gets a place.

Children who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) which names the school must by law be offered a place at that school. EHCP admissions are arranged via a separate admissions process and enquiries should be made directly with the child's home LA about this. Admissions to a specialist unit or a specialist resource base within a USP primary school are also arranged via the EHCP admission process.

The following admissions oversubscription criteria show the order of priority for places at USP Primary Schools in Suffolk.

For applications to the normal year of entry (Reception), these criteria will be applied according to the evidence provided to show the circumstances existing before midnight at the end of the closing date.

For in-year applications, these criteria will be applied according to the evidence provided to show the circumstances existing at the time of application.

1) Children in care (looked after children as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) and children who were previously in care (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, immediately following having been in care, including those 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).

2) Sibling: where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission but not in a nursery attached to the school. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap in calendar days between the child's date of birth and the date of birth of any sibling already attending the school, or who has been offered a place at the time of application. The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident as defined below) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

3) Children who are ordinarily resident in the catchment area (as defined below) who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies'). All straight line distances are calculated electronically by Suffolk County Council using data provided jointly by the Post Office and Ordnance Survey. The data plots the coordinates of each property and provides the address-point of the child's home (where they are ordinarily resident as defined below) and the main school gate between which the straight line distance is measured and reported to three decimal places. Where there is more than one home within a single building (for example apartments) we will measure to a single point within that building irrespective of where those homes are located.

4) Children who live outside the school's catchment area who live nearest to the school. We will measure the distance by a straight line ('as the crow flies') as set out in criterion 3) above.

Sibling tie-breaker

Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap in calendar days between the child's date of birth and the date of birth of any sibling already attending the school, or who has been offered a place at the time of application. In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school have the same number of days difference in age from their closest aged sibling, the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by someone independent of the school.

Distance tie-breaker

It is possible that the PAN of the school will be reached in any one of the categories set out above. For this reason, all applications will be prioritised according to the criteria described. Decisions will be made about the offer of places in accordance with those priorities. If it is necessary to use a tie-breaker to distinguish between two or more applications (other than in the case of a sibling tie-breaker as described above), a distance criterion will be used. We will give priority to the applicants who live nearest to the school as measured by a straight line as per the approach described in 3) above. In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at a school live the same distance from the school, the place will be offered to one applicant on the basis of lots drawn by someone independent of the school.

Twins, triplets and other multiple births

If the final place available at a school is offered to a twin, triplet or other multiple birth and the remaining sibling/s would ordinarily be refused, we will offer places to the remaining sibling/s at the same school. The law requires that this will apply even in those primary schools where this would mean that more than 30 pupils would be admitted to an infant class. Where a sibling of a twin, triplet or other multiple birth has a school named on their EHC plan, we will from the date of issue of the EHC plan treat their twin, triplets or other multiple births under the sibling oversubscription criterion for the named school. This does not apply to siblings of children in a specialist unit or a specialist resource base for Hearing Impaired provision or a nursery, because they do not meet the sibling definition in the oversubscription criteria.

4. DEFINITIONS FOR ADMISSION CRITERIA

Parent For the purposes of this policy, references to parent include:

- all natural (biological) parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person (this could be a step-parent, guardian or other relative);
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. A person has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

Children in care (looked after children) A 'child in care' or a 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Children previously in care (previously looked after children) Children previously in care (previously looked after children) includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

Children adopted from state care outside of England 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 and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted

Ordinarily resident By ordinarily resident we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main home address will be required to support the application.

Agreement in writing by the parents/carers will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

Catchment area Every school serves an area of streets or villages. Catchment area lists and maps are available online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/catchmentmaps . If you live near to a boundary line on the map, please check your address against the catchment area and/or street lists. A list or copy of a map can also be obtained from the Admissions Team.

5. FRAUDULENT OR MISLEADING APPLICATIONS

As an admission authority we have the right to investigate any concerns we may have about your application and to withdraw the offer of a place if we consider there is evidence that you have made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information, for example a false address was given which denied a place to a child with a stronger claim. We reserve the right to check any address and other information provided so we can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly.

6. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

Local Authorities are required to have Fair Access Protocols to make sure that unplaced, vulnerable children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. USP Suffolk primary schools will comply with Suffolk's Fair Access Protocol. This may mean admitting children above the PAN.

7. LATE APPLICATIONS

All applications received by the Local Authority for a place in Reception after the deadline but before the first day of the autumn term will be considered to be late applications. Late applications will be considered after those received on time unless the LA agree that there are very exceptional reasons for an application being late and it is made by the exceptional late date in the LA's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme with supporting evidence . This only applies in circumstances outside your control which made it impossible for the application to have been made on time. Further information, including confirmation of the exceptional late date, is available from the Local Authority on 0345 600 0981 or at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

8. WAITING LISTS

If you apply for a school place in the normal year of entry and one or more of your preferences are refused, your child's name will automatically be placed on a waiting list for these schools. Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in our admissions oversubscription criteria. Looked after children or previously looked after children allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

The order of the waiting list can change each time a child's name is added or the circumstances of a child already on the list changes. As a result, a child's place on the list can go up or down (for example due to withdrawals or late applications). If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list, you must let us know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list. Written evidence of this will be required.

Having your child's name on a waiting list will not affect your right to appeal for any of the schools you have been refused a place at.

Late applicants will be added to any waiting lists in oversubscription priority order if their parental preferences cannot be met. If a place becomes available at a school, it will be offered to the child who is ranked highest on the waiting list. Places are not offered based on the date on which names were placed on the list.

The waiting list for a 2027/28 Reception place will close on 31 December 2027.

USP does not hold in-year applications after this date on a waiting list.

9. MAKING ANOTHER APPLICATION FOR A PLACE AT THE SAME SCHOOL

A parent or carer can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside of the normal admissions round. If your application for a school place is refused, we will not determine a further application for a place in the same school in the same school year, unless there has been a significant change in the circumstances of the parent/carers, child or school. Such circumstances might be a house move or a place becoming available at the school. If there is no significant change in circumstances, you can make another application for the following school year. This will not normally be considered more than one term ahead of the date when you want your child to start at the school.

10. DEFERRED OR PART TIME ENTRY FOR THE RECEPTION YEAR

Parents and carers offered a place in the Reception Year for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

Parents of summer born (April-August) children may also defer their child starting school until the September after they turn five. However, in such cases children will be admitted to Year 1 unless a request for admission outside normal age group (see paragraph [12] below and Appendix 2) has been approved by USP for the child to be admitted to Reception outside their usual age group.

11. IN-YEAR ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

USP, as the Admission Authority, is responsible for in-year admission arrangements. This responsibility is devolved to the Trust's Primary Admissions Committee. Parents who wish to transfer their child to a USP Suffolk primary school during the course of a school year are advised to contact the relevant school secretary to obtain an in-year admissions form.

The School will, upon allocation of a school place to a pupil transferring in-year, notify the LA of the proposed admission to enable the LA to keep up-to-date figures on the availability of places.

12. APPLICATIONS FOR A PLACE OUTSIDE THE NORMAL AGE GROUP

It is expected that children will normally be educated within their normal age group (chronological year group). Parents may request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group, USP will consider such requests and will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned in line with the School Admissions Code. This includes when a parent or carer wishes their summer born (April to August) child to start full-time education in the Reception Year group after reaching compulsory

school age, rather than entering Year 1 with their chronological year group.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for further information about the process of requesting a place outside a child's normal age group.

Appeals

All applicants refused a place (note this does not include those offered a place in their chronological year group where their parents requested a place in a different year) have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Information on how to make an appeal will be provided in the letter refusing your child a school place.

Appendix 1

Pupil Admission Numbers for Unity Schools Partnership's Suffolk primary schools (PAN):

School	PAN	Notes
Abbots Green Academy**	75	
Burton End Primary Academy*	60	
Clements Primary Academy**	30	
Coupals Primary Academy*	60	
Glemsford Primary Academy**	30	
Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy	60	
Kedington Primary Academy	30	
Langer Primary Academy	30	
Laureate Community Academy**	30	
Place Farm Primary Academy**	60	
Tollgate Primary School*	60	
Wells Hall Primary School**	60	
Westfield Primary Academy*	60	
West Row Primary School	45	
Wickhambrook Primary Academy	30	
Woodhall Primary School*	60	

*Schools with Nursery provision - attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee a place in that school's Reception class(es).

**Schools with Nursery provision from 2 years old – attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee a place in that school's Reception class(es)

Appendix 2: Requesting admission outside normal age group

In line with the School Admissions Code and Suffolk County Council's coordinated admissions scheme, the Academy Trust recognises the rights of parents to request that their child is admitted to a year that is not their child's normal age group. This may include summer born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) though most summer born children will thrive if they are admitted to reception aged 4.

In the case of summer born children parents may choose to defer their child's entry to school until the September following their fifth birthday. In such cases, the Academy Trust will consider requests for admission into Reception rather than Year 1, taking into account the individual circumstances of each child.

Parents may also request admission outside normal age group for other reasons (for example due to a child having missed a lot of school due to medical issues), the process and considerations for all types of request will be as set out below, other than the specific timing requirements that apply in relation to Reception places.

For an in year application, requests must be made at the time of application. For a request relating to a child starting Reception outside their normal age group, the request should be made well in advance of the usual admission window – see process below. Requests should include any supporting information the parent wishes to provide. While professional evidence (e.g. from early years providers or medical professionals) may support the request, it is not mandatory and parents are not expected to seek evidence they do not already have. The Trust will make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include considering the following factors when making its decision:

- The parent's views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group
- Whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The views of the headteacher of the school concerned

The decision will be made by the Academy Trust, via the Trust Admission Committee, and will be communicated to parents along with the reasons for the decision. In the case of a request relating to a Reception place, this will be before the closing date for applications as long as the request was made in time. If the request is agreed, parents must withdraw any pending application for the child's normal age group and reapply in the following admissions round. If a request relating to starting Reception outside the child's normal age group is declined, parents may either apply for a place in Reception for the year their child turns five or make an in-year application for Year 1 the following year.

Process for Requesting admission outside normal age group

Initial Contact

Parents/carers wishing to explore this should contact the school to arrange a meeting. For requests relating to starting Reception outside normal age group parents should do this by the end of the autumn term after the child turns three.

Written Request

After the meeting with the school, a formal written request must be submitted to the school office, outlining

specific reasons why admission outside their normal age group is in the child's best interests—socially, emotionally, and academically. Supporting evidence is encouraged but not mandatory.

Decision and Confirmation

The Trust's Primary Admissions Committee, will then consider the request, taking into account the considerations listed above and reaching a decision based on the circumstances as to what is in the child's best interests. Parents/carers will receive written confirmation of the decision with reasons. In the case of decision relating to a child starting Reception outside their normal age group, it will state that, if they apply via the normal admissions process one year later, the school will process the child's application in the main admissions round for their preferred Reception year.

If USP agrees to the deferral, the decision will be honoured across all USP Suffolk primary schools. However, any decision made by USP will not be binding on any other admission authorities.

Considerations and Implications

Admissions Criteria Apply

If a request is agreed to it does not guarantee a place. Applications will be subject to the usual admissions process and criteria. Summer born status does not confer priority.

Multiple Preferences

Parents/carers should seek agreement from all admission authorities for schools listed as preferences on their application. If the first-choice school cannot offer a place, the second or third choice must also have agreed to the deferral for it to be honoured.

Changing Plans

If parents/carers later change their mind and have missed the deadline for Reception admissions, they will need to make an in-year application. Places are not guaranteed.

Maintaining Flexibility

It is strongly recommended that parents/carers submit an application in the usual admissions round, even if deferral is agreed. This allows for reconsideration should the child's development accelerate or family circumstances change.

Future Transfers

If a child starts school outside their normal age group, future transfers to other schools may not guarantee placement in the same year group. Receiving schools will decide whether to admit the child into the cohort they are being taught in.