

Woodland Academy Trust
Willow Bank Primary School
Admissions Arrangements
2023-2024

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Woodland Academy Trust is committed to inclusion, diversity and promoting equal opportunity for all. All schools within the Trust share this commitment, providing an inclusive environment. This objective applies to all policies and procedures and the Trust will at all times adhere to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and any other associated guidance.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the admission arrangements for Willow Bank Primary School for entry in 2023/2024.

We understand how important the choice of school for your child is for you, and we want to do everything we can to support you and give you all relevant and helpful information, so please do contact us for clarification if you require this.

We can offer your child every opportunity to develop into happy and fulfilled adults and pride ourselves on the quality of education that we can offer all of our children with well-resourced and safe learning environments.

At Willow Bank Primary School, we welcome all pupils, and places at the school are offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner. We work to the principle that any parent accessing our admissions arrangements will be able to understand easily how places for that school will be allocated and will not be alienated or discouraged from applying based on admissions criteria.

We look forward to welcoming your child on their first day at Willow Bank Primary School.

The table below sets out who the admission authority is and other responsible bodies in our school.

Type of school	Who is the admission authority?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at the school?
Academy	Bexley LA on behalf of the Trust	School	Bexley LA

2. Admission number(s)

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school; the PAN (Pupil Admission Number) for new Reception pupils is 60. [Admissions - Willow Bank Primary School](#)

The school will publish its PAN annually. The school will notify the LA of any increases to the agreed PANs and will reference the changes on the school's website. The school will consult on any proposal to decrease the school's PAN – consultation will not occur where it is proposed to increase or keep the same PAN.

If the school decides that it can accept more pupils than laid out in its PAN, it will notify the LA in good time so that the LA can deliver its coordination responsibilities effectively.

In line with statutory requirements, the school will not refuse admission to any age group, other than the relevant age groups, on the grounds that the number of children admitted has already reached the PAN; however, the school may refuse admission on the grounds that the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

3. Application process

All admission applications for Willow Bank Primary School, (including in-year admissions) are administered by the London Borough of Bexley via their School Admissions team.

The 'Admission to Primary Schools' brochure, produced annually by the Bexley Local Authority, sets out details for admission to schools and can be downloaded here:

[Primary schools your child can go to | London Borough of Bexley](#) or alternatively please email the school office at wbpoffice@watschools.org.uk or check the school website.

Applications should be made online at: www.bexley.gov.uk/admissions or on the Local Authority's primary common application form at www.eadmissions.org.uk and submitted by the closing date published by Bexley.

You can use the application form (called a common application form - CAF) to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order – the schools do not have to be located in the LA area where the parents live. The following information is required for the CAF:

- Your name and the child's name and date of birth
- The parents and your child's address and proof of residence

The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met. The LA will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary.

The Council's School Admissions Team can also be contacted on 020 8303 7777 or by email: schooladmissions@bexley.gov.uk If you have any queries using the application process. If you have missed the application deadline, please contact the [School Admissions team](#) for details of how to submit a late application.

4. Offers

All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day where this date falls on a weekend or bank holiday.

Where the school is oversubscribed, the LA will rank applications in accordance with the determined arrangements, and will ensure that only one offer will be made per child by the LA.

An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 20 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application. Where an offer has not been responded to within the designated time frame, the LA will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and will explain that the offer will be withdrawn if they do not. If any application is found to be fraudulent after a child has started at the school in the first term of the new academic year, the school may withdraw the place. If the fraudulent application is found after this time, the pupil will not be removed.

The headteacher will assist the LA with deciding on which year group a child will enter. Once a decision has been reached, the child's parents will be informed in writing along with an explanation of how the decision was reached and any reasons why.

The school must admit all children who have an EHC plan where the school is named. Children with SEND who do not have an EHC plan will be treated equally to all other applicants in the admissions process. This includes children who may need extra support or reasonable adjustments to be made. The details of the school's SEND provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and SEN Information Report.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from Bexley Local Authority.

5. Oversubscription criteria

The Trust board will aim to ensure that oversubscription criteria is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and compliant with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. This means that the oversubscription criteria will not unfairly disadvantage, whether directly or indirectly, any child based on a protected characteristic or economic disadvantage.

All children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order, ¹, 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
2. Priority will next be given to children with siblings at the school. Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former pupils of the school.
3. Priority will next be given to children on the basis of social or medical need. Definition of medical, health, social and special access reasons will be applied in accordance with the school's legal obligations, in particular those under the Equality Act 2010. Priority will be given to those children whose mental or physical impairment means they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Equally this priority will apply to children whose parents'/guardians', physical or mental health or social needs means that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Such claims will need to be supported by written evidence from a suitably qualified medical or other practitioner who can demonstrate a special connection between these needs and the particular school.
4. We use the distance between the child's permanent home address and the school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by NLPG. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When we apply the distance criterion for the school, these straight-line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school.

6. Tie break:

In the case of two or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the school will use the distance between the school and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the school's front gates. A child's home address will be considered to be where he/she is resident for the majority of nights in a normal school week.

Where the distance between 2 children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be independently verified.

¹ 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).

² 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. Section 23ZZA(8) of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by Section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017).

7. Equal opportunities

The school will not establish admissions criteria that excludes individuals with a particular protected characteristic. The admissions criteria will not exclude a greater proportion of pupils with particular protected characteristics, unless the trust board can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The admissions criteria will not discriminate against disabled applicants, unless the school can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

8. In-year admissions

The school will follow the same process for in-year admissions as for admissions at the start of the academic year.

The school will publish a link to the LA's in-year admissions arrangements on the school website by 31 August each year. [Applying for school in-year | London Borough of Bexley](#)

The school can also assist with enquiries for in-year admissions. Enquiries should be sent to the school office wbpoffice@watschools.org.uk who can advise on available spaces and provide the application form to be sent to Bexley admissions.

Where the school has places available in-year, it will offer a place to every child who has applied for one without condition or use of oversubscription criteria, unless to do so would be to prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources.

The school will consider all such applications and if the year group applied for has space available, then a place will be offered. If a place is not available, then the child's parent can ask for their child's name to be added to the appropriate waiting list. As with admissions at the start of the academic year, parents whose applications are turned down are entitled to appeal through the process outlined below.

The school will ensure that parents can access a hard copy of the information from the LA about in-year applications upon request.

The school will provide the LA with details of the number of places available, or any supporting evidence, no later than two school days following the request of such information from the LA.

9. Waiting lists

For admissions at the start of the academic year, the school will operate a waiting list which is maintained until 31 December on year of entry. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order set out in the oversubscription criteria. When additional children are placed on the waiting list, the list will be re-ordered in line with the oversubscription criteria – no pupil will be prioritised based on when their name was added to the list.

The LA will make clear in the admissions arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group for the admissions round.

Parents may request that their child is placed on the waiting list if they are not successful in receiving a place. Where a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

For in-year admissions, if there is a waiting list for that year, the child will be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available, or the child finds a new school setting. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order as admissions at the start of the year – when a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

If a child on the waiting list is offered a position at the school, the parents will be notified by email and will have the option of accepting or rejecting the place within 28 days.

10. Admission appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed by the LA why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If you wish to appeal, you must set out the grounds for your appeal in writing. Details of the appeals procedure can be obtained by contacting the school office.

You can find details of the school's appeals timetable here: [School Appeals - Willow Bank Primary School](#)

Until 30 September 2022, the LA will have due regard to the extension of the temporary regulations changing certain aspects of the admission appeals procedure, in line with the Admissions Policy Appendix: Changes to Procedures for Admissions and Admission Appeals until 30 September 2022.

The governing board will be aware of, and assist the LA where relevant with regard to, the below admissions appeals procedure.

10.1 Informing of appeals

When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent by the LA which includes the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Grounds for appeal are not limited.

10.2 Constitution of appeals panels

The LA and the appeals panel will act in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance. The judicial function of the appeals panel will be transparent, accessible, independent and impartial, and will operate in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

A clerk will be appointed to the appeals panel who is independent of the school and the education functions of the LA.

The appeals panel will comprise a chair and at least two other panel members. The panel will also include at least one lay person and a person who has experience in education. The chair of the appeals panel is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including introducing parties, explaining individual roles and how the hearing will be conducted, and ensuring that parties have sufficient opportunity to state their case and ask questions.

Panel members will be independent from the school and will remain independent for the duration of their service. The clerk is responsible for assigning members of the appeals panel; however, they will not assign the following disqualified persons:

- A member of the LA
- A member or former member of the governing board of the school
- An employee at the LA or governing board of the school, other than a teacher or TA
- Any person who has, or at any time has had, any connection with the LA, school or LA who may not act impartially
- Any person who has not attended training required by the LA arranging the appeals panel

There will be three members of the panel available at all times during the appeals process. If any member has to temporarily withdraw, the hearing will be postponed until the panel member returns. If the panel member is unable to return, they will be replaced, and the appeals will be reheard.

Appropriate training will be given, funded by the LA, to all panel members and clerks before they take part in a panel hearing. As a minimum, this training will include:

- The law relating to admissions.
- The panel's duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.
- Procedural fairness and natural justice.
- The roles of specific panel members, e.g. the chair.

Members of the appeals panel will receive travel and subsistence allowances where applicable and will be compensated for any loss of earnings or expenses.

The rate of payment is set by the LA and has due regard to the recommendations of the remuneration panel.

The appeals panel must not have a vested interest in the outcome of the hearing.

The LA will indemnify the members of the appeals panel against any legal costs and expenses they incur in connection with any decision taken in good faith whilst acting as a member of the appeals panel.

10.3 Appeals hearings

The LA will publish an appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year. The timetable will comply with section three of the 'School Admission Appeals Code'. Appeals will be lodged and heard for the normal admissions round within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

For late applications, appeals will be heard between 30-40 school days of the appeal being lodged. For in year admissions, appeals will be heard within 30 days of the appeal being lodged.

11. Complaints

Appellants do not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the LA has accepted a second application from the appellant due to a material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.

If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsmen.

12. Monitoring arrangements

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust on an annual basis. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.