

## **Witton Park Academy**

### **Admission Arrangements for 2017/18 Academic Year**

Witton Park Academy has an agreed admission number of 240 pupils into year 7.

All preferences expressed will be considered equally. If the number of children requiring admission does not exceed 240 all the children will be offered admission. If the number of children requiring admission exceeds 240, then the admissions authority (the Academy Trust) will consider all preferences equally against the oversubscription criteria shown below.

#### **Process of Application**

Applications for places at the Academy will be made in accordance with Blackburn with Darwen LA's co-ordinated admissions arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form provided and administered by the child's home LA. The Academy will use the following timetable for applications

- September to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 – Applications for Sept 2017 admissions can be made via the LA admissions process by either applying on-line on the LA website or by completing the Common Application Form (available in the LA booklet).
- October 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 – National Closing date for submission of Common Application Form to the home LA.
- March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 - offers made to parents by home LA

#### **Admission criteria in the event Witton Park Academy is oversubscribed**

Where the number of applications is greater than the published admission number, all applications will be considered equally and against the criteria set out below.

Children with either an education, health and care plan or a statement for special educational needs for whom the Academy is named in the plan/statement will be admitted first. The remaining applicants who have named the Academy as a 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> preference will then be considered equally against the Academy's admission policy, in the priority order given below:

(a) 'Looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after' but immediately after being looked after were adopted or became subject to a residence/child arrangement order, or special guardianship order. 'Looked after' means that the child was (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.

(b) Children with an older sibling (sibling means a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, not cousins, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address) who will still be attending the Academy when the younger child is admitted;

(c) Children with proven and exceptional medical, social or welfare needs which are directly relevant to the Academy. If you wish to be considered under this category there is certain evidence you must provide. Please see the note below which provides full details regarding the application of this criterion.

(d) Children who live nearest the school (geographical proximity). Under this category, the remaining places will be offered to children who live nearest to the Academy. The distance will be measured by the Local Authority in a straight line between the home front door and the main gate of the school using a computer.

### Tie-breaker

If category (b) to (d) is oversubscribed, geographical proximity (as set out in category (d)) will be used as the 'tie-breaker' to decide between the remaining cases. Places will be offered to children who live nearest to the Academy. The distance will be measured by the Local Authority in a straight line between the home front door and the main gate of the Academy using a computer. If after measuring distances it is still not possible to decide on the child/ren to be offered admission (for example two children living in the same block of flats or in the same house) the Local Authority's system of random allocation will be used to decide which of the children can be offered a place. The draw will take place at the Local Authority's offices, and the names will be drawn by a local authority officer who is independent of the admissions process.

For September 2016 admissions, the Academy received 391 applications for 240 places.

### Priority for Twins/Multiple births

If an application has been made for places for twins/ triplets/2 or more siblings in the same year group and insufficient places are left within the published admission number (i.e. one of the siblings is the last child who can be admitted within that number) it may be possible for the Academy to offer places to the other sibling(s) in the birth group.

### **NOTE – Criterion (c) Medical, social, welfare reasons**

If you feel that there are exceptional medical/social/welfare needs relating to your child which support the need for your child to attend a particular school, and wish your application to be considered under criterion (c) you must state this on your application form AND provide appropriate written supporting evidence for your application from a doctor, social worker or other professional. This evidence must explain why the Academy is the most suitable and what difficulties would be caused if the child had to attend another school.

This evidence should accompany the application form. If necessary, parents can submit the application form and send the supporting evidence at a later date but the supporting evidence MUST be received by the Local Authority on or before the closing date for applications. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the Local Authority receives the supporting evidence.

If you do not provide the supporting evidence on or before the closing date, then it will not be possible to consider your application under the medical/social/welfare criterion,

Please bear in mind the following points in relation to this criterion –

1. only *exceptional* reasons associated with the child and directly relevant to the suitability of that specific school (i.e. showing why the child needs to be admitted to that particular school) are normally accepted under this criterion.
2. all schools can make provision for special educational needs and can also manage common conditions – e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy.

After the closing date, during the early stages of the allocations process, all applications which have requested consideration on the grounds of medical/social/welfare need are considered separately by a panel from the Admission Authority. This involves considering all statements and evidence provided by parents to support the application. The panel may, at their own discretion, contact parents/carers and third parties (with parental consent) to request further information where this is needed to reach a decision.

The Panel's focus in assessing each claim for consideration under this criterion will be to assess whether the evidence provided (a) actually confirms that this child has an exceptional medical/social/welfare need AND (b) demonstrates a clear and exceptional need for this child to attend that specific school for reasons arising from the exceptional medical/social/welfare need.

Where the reasons claimed are not considered exceptional or do not disclose an exceptional need for the child to attend that specific school, then the application will be dealt with under the other admission criteria for the Academy.

## **Operation of waiting lists**

Where in any year the Academy receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until 31<sup>st</sup> December in the year of Admission. This will be maintained by the Local Authority on behalf of the Academy and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria a-d set out above. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Please note that looked after children, previously looked after children and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access protocol must take precedence over those on the waiting list.

## **Late Applications**

Late applications received after the closing date of 31 October will only be considered after all the on-time applications have been considered and allocated places. . A late application will not affect the right of appeal or the right to be placed on the waiting list..

## **In-Year Applications**

In-year applications will be considered when they are received and places will be offered if they are available. In the event that more applications are received at the same time than there are places available, then the applications will be ranked under the published oversubscription and places offered accordingly

## **Appeals**

The Academy shall ensure that parent(s)/Carer(s) will have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is refused a place at the Academy. The independent appeal panel will be independent of the Academy. The arrangements for appeals will comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended). The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

The Academy will act in accordance with and will ensure that the independent appeal panel is trained to act in accordance with, all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department for Education ("the Codes") as they apply at any given time to academies and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to academies. For this purpose, reference in the Codes or law to "admission authorities" shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the Academy.

Details of how to appeal will be included in the letter advising that a place has been refused. The Academy will provide information for parent(s)/carer(s) about the appeals process.

The Academy may, if it chooses, enter into an agreement with a LA or any other organisation for it to recruit, train and appoint appeal panel members, and to arrange for the process to be independently administered and clerked.

### **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents/carer(s) may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if a child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health

#### Children who are already of secondary school age

Parent(s)/carer(s) must submit their written request for admission out of the normal age group to the Governing Body. If their request is agreed and a place is available in the requested year group, the child will be admitted.

#### Children who wish to seek admission to Year 7 outside their normal age group (i.e. who are currently placed in a lower year group).

Parent(s)/carer(s) will need to submit a normal Common Application Form (CAF) to the Local Authority (in writing or online) for admission into the normal age group at the same time as they submit a written request to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted out of the normal age group.

**Please note:** This Governing Body will not honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parent(s)/carer(s), therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

The Governing Body will make a decision on the request before the Secondary national offer date if at all possible.

If the request is agreed, the parent(s)/carer(s) must make a new application for the next main admission round the following year, and their current application for the normal age group should be withdrawn before a place is offered.

If their request for admission outside the normal age group is refused, parent(s)/carer(s) must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group that they receive from the Local Authority, or to refuse it and make a further in-year application to the Governing Body for their child to be admitted outside their normal age group when they leave the current primary school.

#### Making the decision

Parent(s)/carer(s) seeking admission of their child outside their normal age group must send their written request to the Governing Body. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/ carer(s) to provide the Governing Body with all relevant information relating to this request, including the parent(s)/carer(s) views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; medical history and views of a medical professional (where relevant); whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; and whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group.

The Governing Body is required to take into account the views of the Head Teacher on the application as well as the information from the parent(s)/carer(s). The Governing Body will make their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each individual case, and in the best interests of the child concerned.

The Governing Body will then inform the parent/carer of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to and will provide the reasons for their decision.

Parent(s)/carer(s) have a statutory right to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. As the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, the right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred year group. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside their normal age group.

### **Address of pupil**

The address used on the common admission form must be the current one at the time of application, i.e. the family's main residence. If the address changes subsequently, the parents must notify the Academy. Where the parents live at different addresses, and there is shared parenting, the address used will normally be the one where the child wakes up for the majority of Monday to Friday mornings. Parents may be asked to show evidence of the claim that is being made for the address, e.g. identity cards of various sorts showing the child's address as the one claimed. Where there is dispute about the correct address to use, the governors reserve the right to make enquiries of any relevant third parties, e.g. the child's GP, Council Tax Office, Electoral Registration Officer, utilities provider or Child Benefit. For children of UK Service personnel and other Crown Servants returning to the area proof of the posting is all that is required.

### **Fraudulent applications**

Where the governing body discovers that a child has been awarded a place as the result of an intentionally misleading application from a parent (for example, giving a false address in order to gain an advantage), which effectively denies a place to a child with a stronger claim, then the governing body may withdraw the offer of the place. The application will be considered afresh and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused.