

# Church Stretton School Admissions Policy

## Including Admissions Arrangements for 2025-26

Admissions Arrangements Determined by the TrustEd Schools

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Review Frequency:      | Annually            |
| Date of Determination: | February 2024       |
| Committee:             | CSS LGB / Standards |
| Date of next review    | Annually            |

## Statement of intent

TrustEd Schools is the admissions authority for each academy in the trust. Within the TrustEd Schools Aims and Values document is the statement that *“We aim to ensure that all members of our schools’ and trust’s communities are visible and that equal opportunity is a reality.....”* At all of our academies, we welcome all pupils, irrespective of faiths, cultures, races, disabilities or family backgrounds. Church Stretton School is no exception.

We admit our pupils in-line with the Equality Act 2010, School Admissions Code 2021, the School Admission Appeals Code 2022, Human Rights Act 1998 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all school places are allocated and offered in an open and fair way.

The number of places available in each year group is determined by the capacity of the school, and is called the ‘agreed admissions number’. Our published admissions number (PAN) is 96.

The table below sets out the admission authority 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 a school? |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Academy        | Academy trust                   | Schools Adjudicator                           | Academy trust*   |

\* We commission Shropshire Council to organise appeal hearings on our behalf – this ensures they are independent.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the related statutory legislation, including but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

1.2. This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2021) School Admissions Code
- DfE (2022) School Admissions Appeals Code

## 2. The admissions process

- 2.1. The LA, Shropshire Council, must collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single prospectus.
- 2.2. At the normal point of entry i.e. Year 7, parents/carers apply to the LA for places at their preferred schools. If the child is not resident within the Shropshire LA area, applications are made via the home local authority. Parents/carers may express a preference for up to three schools. If a school is undersubscribed, any parent/carer that has stated a preference for that school must be offered a place. If a school is oversubscribed, the school must rank applications against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the LA.
- 2.3. All preferences are collated and parents/carers then receive an offer from the LA at the highest preference school available.
- 2.4. **Church Stretton School** as well as all other schools and academies, is required to comply with the Greenwich Judgement (1989), which states that maintained schools may not give priority to children for the sole reason that they live within the LA's administrative boundaries. We do not treat pupils living outside the LA area in which the school is located less favourably just because they live outside the area.
- 2.5. Admission authorities must determine arrangements annually. If no changes are made for seven years, the arrangements must be consulted on for a minimum of six weeks and take place between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> January.
- 2.6. Determined arrangements can be objected to and referred to the schools adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year. Any decision made by the schools adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and arrangements amended accordingly.

## 3. Adopting clear and fair admissions

- 3.1. **Unacceptable admission criteria – our admission arrangements will not:**
  - Place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria.
  - Take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a named feeder school.
  - Introduce any new selection by ability.
  - Prioritise pupils whose parents/carers rank the school higher than others.
  - Give priority to children whose parents/carers provide financial or practical support to the school.
  - Give priority to children based on the occupational, marital, financial or educational status of their parents/carers.
  - Discriminate against those applying for a place outside their normal age group, where the admission authority has agreed to this practice.
  - Name fee-paying schools as feeder schools.
  - Include interviews for children or parents/carers.

## 4. Admission arrangements

### 4.1. Drafting admission arrangements – Church Stretton School will include:

- A clear, fair and objective set of admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria.
- A PAN for each relevant age group.
- Oversubscription criteria for each point of entry.
- Procedures to admit pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school.
- Procedures to give highest priority to looked after children and previously looked after children.
- An explanation of the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel.
- A requirement for parents/carers of children in an attached nursery unit or a unit run by the school to apply for a place in reception.

4.2. **Trusted Schools** is the admission authority. Our academy trust is responsible for consulting on and determining the admission arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Our trust will consider applications to the school rather than the LA. Our trust becomes responsible for organising admission appeals in compliance with the School Admission Appeals Code, not the LA. However, we normally discharge this responsibility by asking Shropshire Council to administer independent Admissions Appeal Hearings on our behalf.

### 4.3. Determining admission arrangements

- At a meeting of the trust, the admission arrangements will be reviewed and the Trust will be asked to consider them and agree to them as final. They will agree to them by quorate according to the terms of their articles.
- A decision will be minuted and, once made:
  - The trust must notify all relevant parties and those consulted of the School Admissions Code.
  - The trust will publish the arrangements on the school website.
  - The trust will send a copy of the arrangements to the LA by 15 March.

## Considerations

### 4.4. Children outside their normal age group

- Admission authorities must make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case, taking into account:
  - The best interests of the child.
  - The child's academic, social, and emotional development.
  - Any additional information provided by parents, educational psychologists, or other relevant professionals.

### 4.5. Children of UK service personnel

- For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or Crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, the Trust will follow the same provisions as published by Shropshire Council in their admissions arrangements.

### 4.6. Children from overseas

- Admission authorities must treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with European Union (EU) law or Home Office rules for non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals.

### 4.7. Excluded children

- Admission authorities must not refuse to admit children in the normal admissions round on the basis of their poor behaviour elsewhere. Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools, there is no need for an admissions authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion. The twice excluded rule does not apply to pupils who were below compulsory school age at the time of the exclusion, children who have been re-instated following a permanent exclusion (or would have been had it been practicable to do so), and children with SEN statements or EHC Plans.

### 4.8. Fair access

- All schools within the TrustEd Schools are fully compliant with Shropshire Council's Fair Access Protocol.

## 5. Oversubscription criteria

### 5.1. Oversubscription

- Where the number of applications for a place at Church Stretton School exceeds the number of available places, the following oversubscription criteria apply.

- Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan, which names the school which the child should attend because their needs can be met best by that particular school, will be offered places before other children.
- After that places will be offered up to the admission number in the following priority order:

**Priority 1:** Priority will be given to Looked after Children and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted.

a) Looked after children and children who were previously looked after in England (being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions) but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.

b) Children who appear to the Admissions Authority to have been in state care outside of England (accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society) and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, subject to a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.

**Priority 2:** Very exceptionally, priority may be given to a child who has a particular health reason requiring them to attend a specific school. This will only be allowed if parents/carers can provide written evidence from a medical professional that in the view of the Admissions Authority confirms that attending that particular school is essential to the medical well-being of the child. The Admissions Authority reserves the right to contact medical professionals to ascertain the relevance of the medical condition.

**Priority 3:** Children living inside the catchment area who will have an older sibling of compulsory school age (11 –16) at the school on the day they are due to start there.

**Priority 4:** Children of staff members who have been continuously employed at Church Stretton School, on a permanent contract, for at least two years at the time of application.

**Priority 5:** All other applicants living within the catchment area.

**Priority 6:** Any places that are left will be offered to children who live outside the catchment area. If there are not enough places for all of them, we will look at the following criteria:

- 1) Priority will be given to children living outside the catchment area who will have an older sibling of compulsory school age (11 –16) at the school on the day they are due to start there.
- 2) Next priority will be given to children living outside the catchment area, who have attended a state-funded primary school that lies within the secondary school's catchment area, for more than a whole academic year immediately prior to transfer. (See appendix)
- 3) Finally, all other children who live outside the catchment area.

If, in any of the above categories, there are more applications than there are places available, priority will be given on the basis of distance measured as a straight line on a computerised mapping system between the home address and the nearest appropriate entrance gate of the school by pinpointing their eastings and northings. The shortest distance will be given priority.

Where two addresses are within the same block of flats, the lowest number of flat or nearest the ground floor will be deemed to be the nearest in distance. (Please see tiebreaker below.)

#### Notes:

Catchment area maps can be viewed on the General Map viewer available from 'Maps' at the foot of the website [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk) or, in case of doubt, individual addresses can be checked by contacting the Admissions Team. Published admission numbers are listed in the Parents' Guide to Education booklet.

The definition of a sibling is the brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, half-brother or half-sister living at the same address as part of the same family unit and of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 – 16 years). Adopted and foster siblings are also included. Older siblings must still be attending the school on the date the younger sibling is due to start there. However, cousins or other relatives who take up residence in the home will not be given priority under the sibling criterion. In the case of twins or triplets from the same address the school will endeavour to admit both or all siblings.

All applicants are required to give correct information about the genuine residential address of the child. This is normally expected to be with the parent/carer who has care of the child for the majority of the time (that is school nights during the week in term time) but where care is shared equally, the home address will be determined by which parent/carer receives the relevant Child Benefit.

In the event that two individual applications are exactly the same after all other criteria have been taken into account a tie breaker will be used. This will be by random allocation and overseen by an independent party not connect with the admissions process. There is no cost associated with the admissions process to TrustEd Schools Academies.

Parents/carers may request that their child defers transfer to secondary school in a later cohort. Such requests should be made in writing to the local authority by the closing date for applications (31<sup>st</sup> October) in the age-appropriate application year. Requests will be considered by the admission authority on the basis of the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

## 6. Admission appeals

- 6.1. Parents/carers have the right to appeal The Trust's decision. An independent appeals panel must hear the appeal and our school must act according to the panel's decision.
- 6.2. **Church Stretton School** is required to offer all pupils refused admission the right to an appeal in front of an independent appeals panel. TrustEd Schools is responsible for setting up the appeal and must do so in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The panel must be independent of the school. The Trust has arranged for Shropshire Council to administer admissions appeals on its behalf. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should do so

via the Shropshire Council Website <https://shropshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/application-results-and-appeals/appeal-against-allocation-of-school-place/>

- 6.3. Complaints about maladministration on the part of an appeal panel for an Academy, or that an Academy Trust has failed to comply with the Appeals Code in setting up a panel, are investigated by the agency appointed to investigate complaints about Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State. This is the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who can investigate complaints about maladministration on the part of an Admissions Appeal Panel. Complaints about the process should be made by either online by completing an appeal form from the EFA.

A link to the Academy independent admission appeal complaints factsheet is below for your information;

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-independent-admission-appeal-panel-complaints?utm\\_source=EFA%20e-bulletin&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=e-bulletin&mxmroi=2305-29059-80126-0](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-independent-admission-appeal-panel-complaints?utm_source=EFA%20e-bulletin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=e-bulletin&mxmroi=2305-29059-80126-0)

- 6.4. Any person or body who considers our arrangements unlawful, or not in compliance with the Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the schools adjudicator. The schools adjudicator must consider whether the referred arrangements comply with the Code and with the law relating to admissions.
- 6.5. Objections to admission arrangements for entry in **September 2025** must be referred to the schools adjudicator by **15 May 2024**.

## 7. Mid Term Admissions

- 7.1. Admissions to Year 7 during the Autumn Term are managed by the Local Authority, who will hold any waiting list.
- 7.2. Mid-term or In-Year applications
- 7.3. Mid-term applications will be dealt with using the same admissions criteria given above. Applications must be made via the Shropshire Council online portal (Synergy - Homepage (shropshire.gov.uk) If there is a space in the relevant year group a place will be offered. A formal letter from Shropshire Council's Admissions Team will be sent to the parent advising them of the offer and the need to contact school directly to arrange a start date.
- 7.4. If there are no vacancies in the year group, Shropshire Council's Admission Team will speak to the Headteacher to consider whether additional places can be offered. A decision must be notified to parents within 15 days of making the application.
- 7.5. If a place cannot be offered, parents will receive a formal letter and information on how to appeal against the decision from Shropshire Council's School Admissions Team.
- 7.6. Shropshire Council will maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants. If any vacancies arise, places will be offered to applicants included on the waiting list in strict accordance



with normal published oversubscription criteria. If a place can be offered the applicant will be expected to take up the place within 6 school weeks or by the start of the next half term, whichever is the earliest date, with the exception of Reception children who have deferred entry until later in the same academic year. If an offer of a place is refused, the name will be removed from the waiting list.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust and Local Governing Body of the school on an annual basis.
- 8.2. Church Stretton School may propose changes to these arrangements each year.
- 8.3. Trusted Schools, as the Admissions Authority, is responsible for determining the admissions arrangements, ensuring consultation takes place as needed, within the prescribed timescales.
- 8.4. Any changes must be consulted on and where no changes are made, consultation is required at least every seven years.

Appendix A: Church Stretton Catchment Area

