



Admissions policy

(Admission academic Year 2020-21)

Delegation:

This policy has been delegated to the School Governance Committee by the Board of Trustees as acknowledged within the scheme of delegation.

Current revision: 10.10.18

*Date for further revision: 10.10.19

Reviewer: Kevin Oakley (Head teacher)


(Chair of SGC)

10.10.18_____
(Date)

*Subject to any relevant changes in legislation / guidelines or staffing for roles identified herewith.

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1. Introduction

Phoenix Infant Academy is part of the Baylis Court Trust and the Governing Body is the admissions authority. The Governing Body has determined to operate admissions in line with the Slough Borough Council Admission Arrangements. The Council Appeal Procedure on Admissions forms a part of this policy. Further details are on the school's website.

Phoenix Infant Academy operates within an equal preference scheme and welcomes all children.

The planned admission number for 2020/21 is **90**.

Our governing body applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced a new framework for school admissions as of September 2000. This was later revised in the Education Act of 2002. Our admissions policy conforms to the regulations that are set out in that Act and are further explained in the statutory School Admissions Code of Practice and the statutory Appeals Code of Practice. These were revised in January 2003 and came into force in September 2004 which was revised in February 2012.

2. Aims and objectives

We seek to be an inclusive school, welcoming children from all backgrounds and abilities. All applications will be treated on merit, and in a sensitive manner.

The only restriction we place on entry is the number of spaces available. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we adopt the procedure set out below to determine whether a child is to be accepted or not. It is our wish for parents and carers to find a place for their child at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to excess demand on the places available.

We treat applications for children coming from overseas in accordance with European Union law or Home Office rules for non-European Economic Area nationals.

3. Application Procedures

Our school is an Academy and it determines the admission arrangements in agreement with the local authority (LA). The Admissions Authority for our school is the LA, which publishes its entry regulations every year. Parents and carers can receive a copy of these regulations directly from the LA.

The LA's annual admissions prospectus informs parents and carers how to apply for a place at the school of their choice.

Parents and careers have a right to express their preference, but this does not, in itself, guarantee a place at that particular school. Application should be made on a form that can be obtained from the local Education Department, and should be returned by the date stipulated on that form. The school will notify parents and carers of the decision as soon as all the applications have been considered.

In this area, children enter school at the start of the academic year in which they become five. There is one admission date per year, early September (i.e. when the autumn term begins.) Therefore, parents and carers who would like their child to be admitted to this school during the year their child is five should ensure that they return the necessary application form by the fixed end of year by the Local Authority.

Applications must be made using the Common Application Form which will be made available by the Local Authority's School Admissions Team. Applications can also be made online via the Local Authority's website www.slough.gov.uk/admissions

Applications must be made direct to the Local Authority no later than 15th January 2019.

All places will be offered by the Local Authority's School Admissions Team on behalf of the Governing Body, within the primary admissions operational in the Local Authority's area on 16th April 2019.

You must apply to the authority where you live. If you are unsure, for example if you live near council boundaries, it is whichever Local Authority you pay your council tax to. You can apply for a primary school in any area, but you must apply to your home authority. If you live outside the local area, please contact your home authority to request an application.

4. Infant Class Size

The Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1973) as amended by SI 2006/3409 prescribed that infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher. (The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 – introduces certain exceptions relating to children of multiple births and children of UK service personnel).

5. Admission outside of year group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child has experienced problems such as ill health.

In addition, the parents of a summer born child may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. (The term summer born children relates to all children born from 1 April to 31 August. These children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).

It is likely that most requests for summer born children to be admitted out of their normal age group will come from parents of children born in the later summer months or those born prematurely.

6. Oversubscription Criteria

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs that names Godolphin Infant School, then that school must give your child a place.

In the event of the school being oversubscribed the Governing Body's criterion gives priority to the following children:

6.1 Looked after or previously looked after children:

Prerequisite of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.

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).

In the case of previously looked after children, Slough admission authority may request a copy of the adoption order, residence order or special guardianship order and a letter from the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that he or she was looked after immediately prior to that order being made.

6.2 Medical Conditions:

Priority will be given when a child or their parent/carer has a serious medical condition. Supporting evidence will be required and this must set out the particular reasons and the level of risk to the child or family's health as to why this school is the most suitable and only school and the difficulties that would arise if the child had to attend an alternative school. If you are applying on-line you must send the supporting document(s) to the School Admissions Team with your child's name and date of birth clearly stated.

6.3 Social or welfare reasons for admission:

Where there are exceptional sensitive individual and compelling family circumstances, which are directly relevant to Godolphin Infant school these may also be considered at the time of application.

Requests for consideration within this criterion will require appropriate professional reports e.g. from a social worker, police officer or educational psychologist. The report must demonstrate exact reasons and the impact on the child or family's circumstances as to why this is the only suitable school compared to other schools available. Only exceptional reasons directly relevant to this school will be considered. The higher priority of social or welfare reason will be given to the child for the preferred school only if the submitted report unequivocally proves the circumstances and why an alternative school is unsuitable. If supporting evidence is not provided, it will not be possible to consider the application under the social and welfare criterion. All information which is submitted will be considered as being confidential.

6.4 Siblings:

Priority is given to children who have siblings attending Godolphin Infant school at the time of application and who will be attending at the time of admission. This includes full brothers and sisters who may not live at the same address. Stepchildren or foster

children who live at the same address are also classed as siblings. You must give full details of all siblings in the application.

6.5 Distance:

The address you state on your application must be the current one at the time of application. If your address changes after you have submitted your application, you should notify the School Admissions Team immediately.

Distances are measured using the Council's Geographic Information System.

If the Local Authority is unable to determine eligibility on distance, i.e. two or more addresses are equal distance from the school; a random allocation will be carried out. In the event of a random allocation, someone independent of the Children's Services Department and of the school would supervise the process, and parents would be invited to attend.

NB. The shortest safe walking route continues to be a consideration for assisted transport purposes.

Where there are more preferences than there are places available, the Governing Body employs its oversubscription criteria to objectively determine which children should be offered a place at Godolphin Infant School.

In the event of the admission number being reached within any one of the oversubscription criteria in the order listed, the distance criteria will be used as a 'tie breaker'.

6.6 Children of UK service personnel (uk armed forces)

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, admission authorities must:

- a) Allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address.
- b) When considering the application against our oversubscription criteria. We accept a Unit postal address or quartering area address for a service child. We will not refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, or reserve blocks of places for these children;
- c) We whole-heartedly support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.

7 Late Applications

Applications received after the published closing date will be treated as late applications.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and where appropriate evidence is provided, will those applications received after the closing date (but before offers of places have been made) be considered concurrently with those applications received on time.

The circumstances which might justify a late application include, but are not restricted to, the illness of a single parent/carer which might have reasonably impinged upon their ability to submit an application on time or where a family has just moved into the area.

8 Fraudulent Applications

If it is found that a child has been allocated a place due to misleading information having been provided, for example an incorrect address, then the offer of a place may be withdrawn and the offer of an alternative school will be made by the Local Authority.

9 Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will be set up in the week following the letters being sent to parents. As places become available, the child highest on the waiting list will be offered the place. This is not dependent on whether an appeal has been submitted.

The School Admissions Team will maintain the waiting list until the end of the Autumn Term.

10 Appeal Arrangements

All appeals will be co-ordinated by the Democratic Services Section of Slough Borough Council on 01753 875317.

Where the Governing Body is unable to offer a place because the school is oversubscribed, parents have the right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel, set up under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2002.

Parents should notify as soon as possible after receiving the letter refusing a place, if they want to appeal. Parents will have the opportunity to submit their case to the panel in writing and also to attend in order to present their case. You will receive 10 school days' notice of the place and time of the hearing.

11 How do I submit an appeal?

Slough Borough Council will acknowledge receipt of your appeal form within 15 working days.

If you do not hear anything within that time, please telephone 01753 875317 to check that the form has been received.

A copy of your appeal form will then be sent to the admission authority who will prepare a statement detailing how the school's admission criteria have been applied and the reasons for not offering your child a place at your preferred school.

The admission authority also supplies to the panel copies of any relevant previous correspondence, including your application form, if applicable. All this information will be circulated to you and the Panel before the hearing.

You can submit written material in support of your appeal up to the appeal date, although it would be helpful if you submit the material as early as possible.

You will receive ten school days' notice of the date and time of your appeal. You will be informed of the venue and the procedure to be followed at the appeal. You will also be sent a copy of the admission authority's statement before the hearing.

12 Who attends the appeal?

You have a right to attend the hearing and it is very helpful if you can attend to put your case. A friend or another family member may also attend to support you or help you put your case. Legal representation is seldom required and you should be aware that the Panel is unable to pay any of your costs.

If you decide not to attend the hearing and do not request an alternative time or date, your appeal will be heard in your absence based on the written material you have submitted.

A representative from the admission authority, sometimes supported by the school's Head Teacher, attends to put the school's case.

The clerk to the Appeal Panel will be present throughout the hearing. The Clerk has no role in the decision making process but is an independent source of advice and takes a note of proceedings. The Chair will then ask you to put your case. You will be given as much time as you need and it is important that you tell the Panel everything that is relevant to your case. The Panel and the admission authority's representative will then ask you questions on what you have said.

IV. The Chair will give both parties the opportunity to sum up their case before being asked to leave the room.

V. The Panel will then discuss the appeal in private and come to a decision which will be recorded by the Clerk.

Appeals are timetabled and every effort is made to keep to your appointed time. Please note that there is occasionally some delay if previous appeals have taken longer than expected.

13 What will happen at my appeal?

Hearings should be as informal as possible but the normal procedure is as follows:

- The chair will welcome you to the appeal, outline the procedure and introduce to you the other Panel Members, the admission authority's representative and the Clerk.

- The admission authority's representative will begin by explaining why your child has not been offered a place at your preferred school. If you or the Panel wish to ask any questions on what has been said this is the time to do so.

14 How is the decision made?

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states that there cannot be more than 30 pupils in an infant class (Reception, Year 1 or Year 2). In most cases, the admission authority will have refused to admit your child because to do so would cause a class to breach the legal limit of 30. If yours is an infant class appeal, this will be explained in the papers circulated before the hearing. If you are unsure, contact the Clerk.

It is important to note that for this type of appeal, the powers of the Appeal Panel are extremely limited and Panel Members are only allowed to consider strict criteria as set out by the Appeals Code.

An infant class appeal may only be allowed if any of the following criteria apply:

- a) The admission of your child would not breach the legal limit
- b) The admission criteria were not lawful
- c) The admission criteria were incorrectly or impartially applied and your child would have been offered a place if they had been correctly and impartially applied.
- d) The decision to refuse was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

The threshold for finding that the decision to refuse admission was not one that was a reasonable authority would have made is high.

To find a decision 'unreasonable', the panel would consider that, given all the information available to the admission authority at the time "no sensible person who had applied his mind to the question could have arrived at it".

It is only in rare cases that an Infant Class Appeal is allowed.