



Admissions Policy

Priory Fields School

2026-2027





The Whinless Down Academy Trust
Admissions Policy
Priory Fields School
For the Academic Year 2026-2027

The Whinless Down Academy Trust has adopted the following arrangements with respect to the admission of pupils to any of our academy schools.

Pupils will be admitted to the Reception Year before their fifth birthday, usually entering at the start of the academic year (September 2026 – July 2027). The number of intended admissions to the Reception Year in September 2025 is 60 for Priory Fields School in line with the school's PAN.

Where the school is undersubscribed all applicants will be offered a place.

Before the oversubscription criteria is applied, the academy will admit any pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school. As a result of this, the published admission number will be reduced accordingly.

Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit.

OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order 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. 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. Sibling / Current Family Association

A brother or sister attending the school being applied for; in this context brother or sister means children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers or sisters. The sibling link is maintained as long as the family live at the same address as when the first child applied, or has moved closer to the school than when the first child was offered a place, or has moved to an address that is less than 2 miles from the school using the distance measured by the method outlined in the distance/nearness of children's home to school criterion.

3. Medical / Health and Special Access Reasons

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 the chosen school within our MAT. 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 the chosen school within our MAT. 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 school.

4. Children of Staff at Whinless Down Academy Trust

A child of a current member of staff of the school will be considered eligible for a place at the school:

- a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

This priority will apply to all staff at the school.

5. Distance / Nearness of children's home to the school

We use the distance between the child's permanent home address (defined in KCC's annual admissions prospectus) 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. Where applications are made from properties or abodes that are not registered to the NLPG, including new build properties, KCC may be required to use planning sites or other relevant co-ordinates. In exceptional circumstances where alternative co-ordinates are not available, measurements will be determined by a Senior Admissions Officer and confirmed by Head of Service.

In the unlikely event that two or more children live in the same block and in all other ways have equal eligibility for the last available place at the school, the names will be allocated a number and drawn randomly, this must be supervised by someone independent of the academy, to decide which child should be given the place.

Applications for entrance should be made through Kent Primary Admissions Scheme, if applicants live outside the area at the time of application, these should be made through their home local authority. You will be required to complete the Reception Common Application Form (RCAF) online through the KCC website www.kent.gov.uk/ola. Telephone 03000 412121. National closing date for applications is 15th January 2026 and National offer day is 16th April 2026. Late applications will be placed on a waiting list and places allocated based on the above criteria.

Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal against any refusal to admit their child. Appeals should be directed to an Appeals Committee established within the terms of the Education Act 1996. Details of the appeals procedure can be obtained from the Governance Professional to the Trust Directors. The Appeals Committee will notify the Appellant of the outcome:

- Appeals must be lodged in line with the Local Authority's published date in May 2025 (date to be confirmed), except where the initial application was a late application, in which case the appeal must be lodged within 21 days of the allocation decision being sent to the parents.
- The Academy will acknowledge an appeal within seven working days of it being lodged.
- Appeals relating to other admissions can be made at any time.

DEFERRED ENTRY FOR INFANTS

Parents offered a place for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take a place up part-time, until the start of the term beginning immediately after their child has reached compulsory school age. Parents should contact the Head Teacher to discuss a request to take up a place part-time or for a deferment.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting on his or her schooling. All such requests will be considered on their merits and either agreed or refused, on that basis. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows:

Parents should contact the Head Teacher to discuss and submit a request for admission out of the normal age group, but should continue to make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time.

With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (state which one), and the reasons for that request.

Parents will submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, Head Teacher etc. Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include:

- whether the child is 'summer born' and is seeking admission to a year group other than the Reception Year (or is seeking admission to the Reception Year rather than Year 1);
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and
- whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

The academy will consider each case on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the request and the child's best interests. We will also ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before final offers are made, and the reason for any refusal.

Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time. An application from a child who would 'normally' be a Year 1 child for a Reception Year place will be considered alongside applications for the Reception Year.

Right to Withdraw a Place

After a place has been offered the academy reserves the right to withdraw the place in the following circumstances:

- When a parent has failed to respond to an offer within a reasonable time; or
- When a parent has failed to notify the school of important changes to the application information; or

- The admission authority offered the place on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent.

Waiting Lists

Parents of children who have not been offered a place at the school may ask for their child's name to be placed on a waiting list. The waiting list, which will be maintained until 31 July 2027, will be operated using the same admissions criteria listed above. Placing a child's name on the waiting list does not guarantee that a place will become available.

This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. It is possible that when a child is directed under the Local Authority's fair access protocol they will take precedence over those children already on the list.

Waiting lists will be re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever a child joins or leaves the waiting list.

In-Year (Casual) Admissions

Applications for a place at the Whinless Down Academy Trust should be made via the school office; where you can complete an 'In Year Casual Application Form' (IYCAF) in the office or request one by post.

This form must be returned to the address of the school where you would like to request a place:

Priory Fields School
Astor Avenue
Dover
Kent
CT17 0FS
01304 211543

The school will offer a place, if one is available and the child meets the criteria for admission. If a place cannot be offered, parents will be offered the opportunity of placing their child's name on a waiting list. This does not prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place.

By Whinless Down Academy Trust Board
Review Autumn 2025