

Admissions Arrangements for Arbor Academy Schools 2025-2026

Admissions arrangements for Arbor Academy Trust Schools:

- Davies Lane Primary School (Waltham Forest)
- Selwyn Primary School (Waltham Forest)
- Woodford Green Primary School (Waltham Forest)
- Northwold Primary School (Hackney).

Introductory Statement

Arbor Academy Trust is the overall admissions authority with decision making delegated to the Academy's Trust Board.

Arbor Academy Trust will comply with the School Admissions Code (DfE September 2021) and the School Admission Appeal Code. This admissions arrangement is based on the current codes but will be reviewed in the light of any future changes in the law. An Independent Appeals Panel hears any appeals from parents whose child has not been allocated a place at an Arbor Academy Trust Primary School, and who lodges an appeal in accordance with the procedure specified by the Trust.

How to apply for a place

Davies Lane Primary School, Selwyn Primary School and Woodford Green Primary School are located in Waltham Forest. You can make your application through Waltham Forest by applying through the eAdmissions website. The eAdmissions guide (PDF) explains how to apply for your child's school place online. Northwold Primary School is located in Hackney and you can make your application through Hackney by applying through the admission website

If your child is born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 they would normally start reception class in September 2025. You must apply before 15 January 2025 even if you wish to delay or defer their start in reception.

When completing your application form please ensure that you tick the relevant box to indicate any additional priority your child may have for being allocated a place at the school (such as a sibling attends, there is a medical or social reason or your child is a looked after or previously looked after child).

It is your responsibility to provide evidence to support your priority claim and this must be submitted with your application by the closing date. If you submit the evidence after the closing date, it may not be possible for school admissions to consider it before places are allocated on national offer day. If you tick the box on the application form but you do not provide any supporting evidence, your application will not be considered under this priority, and you will not be reminded to submit your evidence.

Pupil admission number

The Academy has the following admission numbers for each school:

- Davies Lane Primary, 120 pupils in Reception
- Selwyn Primary, 90 pupils in Reception
- Woodford Green Primary, 30 pupils in Reception
- Northwold Primary, 60 pupils in Reception

The Academy will accordingly provide for the admission of the above numbers in Reception each year if sufficient applications for entry are received. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, Arbor schools will offer places to all those who have applied.

Admissions Criteria for Arbor Academy Trust Schools

Special Educational Needs

Children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plan are placed in schools under the terms of the Education Act 1996 and the Children and Families Act 2014. They are not considered under the Admission Criteria referred to below. These children and young people will be allocated a place at the school named on the EHCP.

Oversubscription criteria

If there are more applications than there are places available at a school, we will use the following criteria, in priority order, to decide who should be offered a place.

The following criteria will be applied to determine which pupils have priority for admission:

Priority 1 – Looked After Children or previously Looked After Children

Priority 2 – Medical or social reasons or Children ‘At Risk’

Priority 3 – Siblings

Priority 4 – School Staff Children

Priority 5 – Distance

1. Looked After Children or previously Looked After Children

Looked after children are children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. This includes children in state care outside of England, but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. In relation to school admissions legislation a ‘looked after child’ is a child in public care at the time of application to a school. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately after leaving care. For previously looked after children, a copy of the order under which they left care must be provided. If the child is adopted from care, you must provide a copy of the Adoption Order.

2. Medical or Social reasons or Children 'At Risk'

Medical or social reasons can only be taken into account where information is provided by the closing date. Failure to provide such information at that stage may affect whether or not the child is allocated a place at the preferred school under this criterion. Applications will only be considered under this category if they are supported by a written statement from a doctor, social worker, psychologist or other relevant independent professional. The information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need, and demonstrate how the specified school is the only school that can meet the defined needs of the child. In all cases the medical or social need must be permanent or long term. For medical conditions affecting the mobility of the child or parent, consideration will only be given to the school nearest to the home address. Examples of possible exceptional medical or social reasons:

- Any acute or chronic condition that would make it difficult for a child to attend any school other than the school closest to the child's address.
- Any acute or chronic medical condition that requires regular, long-term attendance at a particular medical establishment which is closest to the school named.
- A child and their family who are considered 'at risk' due to circumstances beyond the family's control such as fleeing domestic violence (housed in a refuge). Consideration may then be given for the named child to be given a school away from the area of their previous home address for safeguarding purposes.
- An existing restraining order that may put a family 'at risk' if the school were to be outside the remit of distance agreed by the courts.

3. Siblings

Sibling means:

- A full brother or sister
- A half brother or sister
- A step brother or sister
- A foster brother or sister
- An adopted brother or sister
- The child of a parent or carer's partner living at the same address

In all cases the sibling must be living at the same address and must still attend the school at the time of admission of the child for whom the application is being made. If you do not provide the name and date of birth of your child's sibling when you make your application, we will not be able to take it into account and it will affect your child's chances of being offered a place at that school.

4. School Staff Children

School staff children will be given priority under this criterion:

- 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 for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. You should provide a letter from the school in support of your application confirming that you are employed by them and fall within this criteria.

5. Distance

Distance is measured using a straight line from the centre of the child's permanent address (as defined by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer) to the designated main gate of the school. If parents are separated and have equal custody then they must select one parent's address to be used for the application. Where a child lives with one of their separated parents for different parts of the week, we will consider the child's home address to be where the child sleeps for most of the school week. If the child spends equal amounts of time at two addresses, the parents must agree which address they wish to be the child's main address before we can process the application.

- Distance is measured using a straight line (using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer)
- All distances will be measured in miles using a computerised mapping system called Routefinder GIS.
- If more than one applicant lives in a multi-occupancy building (for example, flats) priority will be given to the applicant whose door number is the lowest numerically and/ or alphabetically.

Tie-breaker

The tie-breaker is to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated. The tie-break for two or more applications will be a lottery tie-break draw (where names are drawn at random out of a blind draw) which will take place with the assistance of an impartial third party (LA officer), who does not work for the Trust's admissions team.

Multiple births

If the last child to be offered a place is one of multiple births, all multiple birth siblings will be admitted to the school as 'permitted exceptions' to the infant class size legislation which limits infant classes to no more than 30 children.

Delayed start and deferred entry to reception

By law, children must be in full-time education the term after their 5th birthday. This is called compulsory school age.

Where a child has been offered a place at an Arbor Academy Trust school, that child is entitled to a full time place in the September following their fourth birthday.

If you feel your child is not ready to start school in the September after their fourth birthday, you can:

1. Ask the school if they can go part-time until they reach compulsory school age. You must do this as soon as the place is offered.
2. Ask to delay the admission to later in the school year. This must not be beyond compulsory school age or the start of the final term of the school year.

3. Ask to admit your child outside of their normal age group, if they were born in summer. However, we believe this should only happen in exceptional circumstances. It is up to parents to provide supporting evidence in such cases.

Deferred Entry

If you wish to defer your child's start into the Reception class from 2025 until 2026, you must apply in the normal way for a Reception place in September 2025 (deadline 15 January 2025).

If your child was 'summer-born', i.e. born between 1 April and 31 August 2021, you can request to defer their admission to reception class for a full year.

If you wish to defer your child's start into the reception class from September 2025 until September 2026, you must apply in September 2025 (deadline Wednesday 15 January 2025).

If you would like to request deferral at a school in Arbor Academy Trust, you must make your request directly with the school.

If you are unsure about how you should request deferral please contact the school office at the school you wish to apply for.

You may wish to provide evidence to support your request from relevant professionals working with your child/family that demonstrate why it is in your child's best interest to be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort.

Considering your request

In line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) Arbor Academy Trust acknowledges your right to defer your summer born child's start at school until they reach statutory school age i.e. the term after their fifth birthday. By requesting deferral, you indicate your intention to exercise this right.

Your request to defer will be considered during Spring/Summer 2025.

Decisions for Arbor Academy Schools will be made by the admissions authority of the school i.e. the academy trust.

The decision will confirm whether, in September 2026 at age 5, it is in your child's best interest to enter Reception, out of cohort, or enter Year 1 directly, skipping reception entirely. Decisions will be based on your child's individual circumstances including your views and the views of the head of schools of your preferred schools and evidence of your child's social, academic and emotional development. Arbor Academy Trust places significant weight

on the views of the head of school of your preferred schools because they have the best knowledge of their school and how the children joining their school can be supported.

How will I be advised of the outcome of my request?

If you submit your reception application and your request for deferral by 15 January 2025 you will be advised of the outcome of your request in writing prior to national offer day (16 April 2025).

If your request for deferral is received after 15 January 2025 it is likely you will hear the outcome after national offer day.

You will be advised whether your request has been agreed. Your request will be agreed where the head of school of your preferred schools agrees deferral is in your child's best interest.

Where the headteacher/ head of school of one of your preferred schools does not consider deferral is in your child's best interests, their views will be provided to you in writing.

With this information, you must then decide whether you will withdraw your application for a September 2025 start and reapply in the September 2026 cohort. You will not be permitted to hold a Reception place in two different year groups.

If you choose to defer your child's start in Reception please note the following information carefully:

- There is no statutory barrier to your child being admitted outside their normal age group but you do not have the right to insist they are admitted to a particular age group
- One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision to allow deferral made by another admission authority
- Your child reaches statutory school age at the start of the term after their fifth birthday and must start school at that point
- If deferral is agreed and your child currently attends a nursery class in an Arbor Academy Trust school, you will need to re-apply for them to continue in the same class. Note that there is no guarantee your child will continue in the same nursery class they currently attend
- If deferral is agreed, when submitting your deferred application for your child to start in September 2026 you should list only schools that have agreed to allow deferral. If you list a school that has not previously agreed to allow deferral and they remain unwilling to accept an application out of cohort then the preference will not be processed
- If you are unsuccessful gaining a place at any of the schools you list on your deferred application then your child may be required to enter Year 1 directly and skip reception if the alternative school offered is unwilling to educate your child out of cohort

- If your child is educated out of cohort and they change schools there is no requirement for their new school to continue to educate them out of cohort.
- Secondary schools are not currently required to accept a child into Year 7 at secondary transfer who has been educated out of cohort during their primary education. This means that your preferred secondary school(s) may insist your child enters Year 8 directly skipping Year 7

What if I am unhappy with the outcome of my request?

The decision about whether to allow deferral is final.

If you are unhappy with the decision and/or the process followed to reach the decision for Arbor Academy Trust, you can raise a formal complaint directly with the school.

If, after exhausting the formal complaints procedure, you remain unhappy the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman can investigate whether something has gone wrong in the way we dealt with your deferral request.

The Ombudsman cannot overturn the decision but if they find that something has gone wrong they can:

- ask the admission authority to reconsider its decision, or
- recommend that our procedures are reviewed so that the problems you experienced do not happen to other parents.

Children who attend a school nursery

Attending the nursery at any Arbor Academy School does not guarantee admission. It does not give a child any guarantee or priority for admission to the reception class. If your child attends the nursery, you must make a separate application for admission to the reception class along with all other parents.

Waiting List Procedure

Waiting lists will be maintained for the Academy for children not offered a school place. Position on the list will be determined by applying the over-subscription criteria. Positions on the waiting list may change due to new or late applications where these have a higher priority based on the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be adjusted to take account of late or in-year applications. Names will be removed from the lists if requested or if the offer of a place that becomes available is not accepted. The waiting list closes on 31 December 2025. If applicants then want their child to rejoin the waiting list, they will need to re-apply by completing an in-year application form. This waiting list will then remain open until the end of June 2026.

Withdrawing an Offer of a Place

The Trust Board reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if:

- It was made in error.
- Parent(s) / carer(s) fails to respond to the offer of a place within a reasonable period.
- It is established that the offer of a place was obtained through a fraudulent or misleading application.

Where parent(s) / carer(s) fail to respond to the offer of a place, the Trust Board will give the parent(s) / carer(s) a further opportunity to respond and explain to them that the offer of a place will be withdrawn unless they respond by the specified date. Where an offer of a place is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the Trust Board will consider the application afresh, and will offer a right of appeal if admission cannot be offered.

The Trust Board will not withdraw the offer of a place once the child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether or not to withdraw the offer of a place, account will be taken of the length of time the child has been at the school. Where the child has been at the school for less than a term, the Trust Board may consider it to be appropriate to withdraw the place.

We will take strong action and the school place offered may be withdrawn if a false address is given or one where the child is not actually living when s/he is not at school.

Independent Appeals Panel Procedure

Any parent/carer whose child is not offered a place at an Arbor Academy Trust School has the right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application.