



ADMISSIONS POLICY 2017 - 2018

Approved 28th January 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'B Lovegrove'.

Signed by Chair of the Trust (Mr B Lovegrove)

Supporting Belvoir High School and Melton Vale post 16 Centre

part of Belvoir and Melton Academy Trust

(Company No.08165692) Barkestone Lane, Bottesford, Nottinghamshire. NG13 0AX

Policy and Procedures

Admissions Policy 2017 - 2018

Person responsible for the Policy Principal Autumn 2015

Reviewed and adopted by Governing Body 28th January 2016

Next Review Autumn 2016

Contents

1. Principles.....	1
2. Legal Position & Other Requirements: Summary.....	2
3.School Admissions	3
4.Parental Preferences & Criteria used for Prioritising Admissions to Schools	3
5.Out-of-Catchment Requests and Admissions	5
6.Exceeding the Admission Number (AN)	6
7.Miscellaneous	7

1. Principles

1.1 The following principles will be applied in a manner consistent with our continuing commitment to comprehensive, community-based education.

1.2 The school’s admissions policy should:

- a. Offer clarity regarding legal requirements and statutory guidance.
- b. Maintain parental rights and ease the process of admission for parents and children.

1.3 Children’s entitlements are as follows:

- a. entitlement to a place in their catchment area school (dependent on the parent applying at the appropriate time);
- b. entitlement to a place in their preferred school if there is room;
- c. entitlement to be considered according to the same priority criteria as other children where the preferred school is oversubscribed.

2. Legal Position & Other Requirements: Summary

2.1 The Governing Body is the admissions authority: it must publish its policy and consult on it annually.

2.2 The Local Authority is required to coordinate admissions for all residents in its area. To this purpose it must have an approved scheme for coordination.

2.3 The Local Authority has a duty to provide school places for all pupils resident in its area: Leicestershire achieves this by giving high priority to catchment area children, and by allowing parental preference wherever possible.

2.4 Parents have a right to express a preference for a school place, including where the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Parents must ensure suitable full-time education for their children by attendance at school or otherwise.

The School Leaving Date for 16 year-olds is the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child becomes 16.

2.5 Each school has an Admission Number (AN) for any one year group. If this number is to be altered, in some cases statutory notices must be published to allow interested parties to make representations.

2.6 The Governing Body cannot argue that a child should not be admitted unless the admission would prejudice the efficient use of resources or efficient education: this normally means that the Admission Number (AN) must have been reached.

2.7 The Governing Body must allocate spare places according to objective and published priority criteria. The Greenwich Judgement means that children from other Authorities must be treated in the same way as Leicestershire children. The Rotherham Judgement disallows priority being given to parents who do not express a preference over those who do.

2.8 Parents whose preferences are refused have a right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Committee whose decision is binding, except for children with statements whose parents can appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

2.9 The Local Authority has a statutory power to direct the admission of a pupil to a maintained school (ie community, voluntary or foundation).

2.10 There are no required staffing ratios for secondary age children in education law. Headteacher and teacher associations may issue guidelines on staffing levels

2.11 DFE guidance on admissions and appeals is contained in two Codes of Practice.

3. School Admissions

3.1 For admittance into Year 7 at the start of the school year, parents must complete the Local Authority application form and send this to the School Admissions Service.

The School Admissions Service will need to check for factors such as exclusions or Statements of Special Educational Needs, and will endeavour to process applications promptly.

3.2 For admittance at any other time, the parent should contact the school.

3.3 Places will normally be allocated up to the Admission Number (AN), but for exceptions see the section on exceeding the AN. **The AN for Belvoir High School in September 2015 is 130.**

3.4 Pupils admitted following appeal will have their admission confirmed by the School Admissions Service (the Governing Body having been directed, in effect, to admit the pupil in these circumstances).

4. Parental Preferences & Criteria used for Prioritising Admissions to Schools

4.1 Application forms for school places allow parents to express one or more preferences for school places. Parents should rank their preferences, so that if more than one preference can be agreed the one which the parent wants most is offered. However, the Local Authority considers all preferences to have equal value eg one parent's first preference and another parent's second or third preference are to be considered equally against the admissions criteria. Requests for community and voluntary controlled schools are prioritised according to the LA admissions criteria.

4.2 Requests for a place at Belvoir High School are considered against the school's admissions criteria (see below).

4.3 Late applications receive the lowest priority ie they are only considered after all other applications which were received on time, unless there is a significant reason for lateness (see separate section on late requests).

4.4 Priority criteria for Autumn 2015 admissions onwards

If there are too many requests, priority will be given to children in the appropriate age-range, whose parents applied on time, in the following order:-

- a. Children who are in public care and previously looked after children.
- b. Pupils who live in the catchment area. (See note (ii) below.)
- c. Pupils who will have attended a feeder school for at least two years before the time of transfer. (*See note (v) below.*)
- d. Pupils who will have an older brother or sister attending the same school at the same time. For Belvoir High school, this priority is limited to siblings in the 11-16 age band or siblings at MV16 who attended Belvoir High School for the whole of Key Stage 4.
- e. Pupils who have exceptional social or domestic needs that make it essential they attend the school requested. (Professional documentation confirming the situation must be submitted with the application.) (*See note (iv) below.*)
- f. Pupils who live nearest to the school, distance to be measured in a direct line from home to the main school using an electronic device. (*See note (vi) below.*)

Notes:

- i. Combinations of the above criteria are used where appropriate, in priority order.
- ii. The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home. If a child lives at more than one household (for example, if the parents are separated), the home which is the principal abode during the school week during term time will be adjudged to be the place of residence.
- iii. The term "brother or sister" includes half brother or sister or legally adopted child being regarded as the brother or sister.
- iv. If criterion **e.** above is used, the following are examples of the sort of cases which might be regarded as exceptional:-

- A child whose parent's occupation has an enforcement role which may bring the parent into conflict with parents of children attending the allocated school and therefore needs to attend the alternative school.
- A child whose parent has recently died or is suffering from a serious illness.
- A child who has suffered severe bullying which is recognised by the present or most recent school as an on-going problem and which is having a significant effect on the child's health.
- A child who has been abused and placed on the child protection register and who needs to attend an alternative school to avoid the abuser.
- A child with a serious medical condition which would make the preferred school particularly suitable. (Asthma and eczema do not come into this category.)
- Children identified as "hard to place" and subject to consideration under the Fair Access Protocol.

This list is not exclusive, and each case will be considered on its individual merits.

- v. For criterion **c.** above, the child must have been enrolled at the feeder school on or before the start date of the Autumn Term two years before transfer to the secondary phase of education.
- vi. For criterion **f.** above, measurement of distance is direct line from home to school using a computerised system.

In a very few cases, it may not be possible to decide between the applications of those pupils who are the final qualifiers for a place (e.g. children who live at the same address [flats] or have the same distance measurement). If there is no other way of separating the applications and if to admit both or all of the children would cause the legal limit to be exceeded, then the child (or children) who will be offered the place(s) will be randomly selected by drawing lots.

5. Out-of-Catchment Requests and Admissions

5.1 Parents are encouraged to visit both the catchment and the preferred school, in order to make informed judgements.

5.2 During the main period when parents are considering transfer requests for entry into Year 7 the following September, applications should be made using the Admissions Forms for the home Local Authority i.e. the LA in which the family residence is located. These will then be forwarded to Leicestershire for processing.

5.3 For applications at other times, parents should contact the school and complete the school's application form.

6. Exceeding the Admission Number (AN)

6.1. At the time of main admission/transfer decisions, if there are more requests for in-catchment children than the admission number (AN), the AN may be exceeded to accommodate the catchment area children.

6.2 In normal circumstances, the AN will not be exceeded in any one year group by the admission of out-of-catchment pupils. If there are more out-of-catchment requests than places available within the AN, places will be allocated up to AN according to the priority criteria, with any outstanding requests normally refused.

6.3 Parents whose requests are refused have a right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Committee whose decisions can override local policy. (**NB:** In the case of parents whose children have Statements of Special Educational Needs, the appeal is to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.)

6.4 It may be that in exceptional circumstances the school will admit out-of-catchment pupils above AN or the Local Authority may ask the school to exceed its AN. These situations should be viewed as exceptional and not as precedents for subsequent years or for other schools.

Exceptional circumstances might be:

- a. the admission of children who would have siblings in the school;
- b. if admission assists the Local Authority in fulfilling its responsibilities for the overall provision of places, within the context of efficient use of resources;
- c. Children in public care;
- d. "Hard to Place" children whose cases fall within the Fair Access protocol.

6.5 If an exceptional request to exceed AN is made, either to the Local Authority or to the school, any decision to approve this must be made in conjunction with interested parties.

a. Parents' requests for entry in the following September into Year 7 must still be referred to the School Admissions Service.

b. The Governing Body will make the final decision, taking account of the views of interested parties and the Local Authority's position.

7. Miscellaneous

Early Transfer or Admissions or Children Staying on Outside the Normal Age-Range

7.1 Early transfers or admissions or children staying on outside the normal age-range are exceptional and must be approved by the school.

7.2 The parent must request the exceptional arrangement in writing to the school.

7.3 Professional advice (e.g. from an Educational Psychologist) on the suitability of the arrangement may be sought in some cases, but this would not override any admissions decision. If the child has a Statement of Special Educational Need, the view of the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENA) must be sought.

7.4 Children transferring younger than the normal age for transfer are subject to the same priority criteria as children in the normal transfer age-group, as long as:

a. the relevant schools agree that early transfer is appropriate;

b. the child has been taught in classes with the academic year group which is one year older for at least three years. (NB: this would normally exclude vertical grouping arrangements in primary schools.)

Children Who Move Out of the Catchment Area

7.5 A child who has started attending and whose place of residence changes to an out-of-catchment address is entitled to retain his/her place in the school and should not be asked to leave or have their name deleted from the register.

7.6 Such an entitlement does not hold if the child changes phase of education in which case entitlement to a place is according to the new address.

7.7 If there are queries about transport in these situations, refer to Environment and Transport.

Excluded or Potentially Disruptive Pupils

7.8 The Local Authority does not allow the refusal of admission on the grounds that the pupil may disrupt the education of other pupils, but will consider exceptions according to the School Admissions Code. The School Admissions Code allows the refusal of places for children with “challenging behaviour”, but stringent conditions apply. (School Admissions Code 3.13). There is no definition in the School Admissions Code of “pupils with challenging behaviour” for admissions purposes.

7.9 The Local Authority is not able to refuse admission where such a pupil lives in the catchment area and the parent has applied properly, or where there is a place available within the AN. The Local Authority expects pupils excluded from a previous school to be admitted automatically to the catchment area school at normal age of transfer to the next phase of education (dependent on the parent making proper application), unless the parent prefers another school in which case a place will be allocated if there is room.

7.10 There is no obligation to comply for mid-term transfers with a parental preference for a child who has been permanently excluded from two or more schools, for a period of two years following the latest exclusion. Parents of such children lose their right of appeal regarding admission. The school has the right of appeal against a direction to admit such a child to the Secretary of State.

7.11 A permanently excluded pupil must not be removed from the school register until any exclusion review is complete or until the time limit for notification of appeal has passed.

Children with Special Educational Needs

7.12 Legislation does not allow the refusal of admission because it is believed that the school cannot cater for the child's special educational needs.

7.13 Pupils with special educational needs but no Statement are dealt with through normal admissions policy, and schools cannot refuse to admit a pupil on the grounds that he/she does not have a Statement or is being assessed for a Statement.

7.14 All governing bodies are required by section 324 of the Education Act 1996 to admit to a school a child with a statement of special educational needs that names the school. This is not an oversubscription criterion and schools must admit Statemented children whether they have places or not.

Late Requests and Appeals

7.15 Late requests for school places e.g. those received after the closing date , will be considered on their merits, but generally will have the lowest priority of all requests, even when the parents are requesting the catchment area school. This means that it is probable that a late request will not be allowed if the school is oversubscribed and there is no clear and significant reason why the parent did not apply at the appropriate time eg parent ill for some time or family returning from abroad.

7.16 The governing body will ensure an independent panel is appointed to hear appeals.

Arrivals in Catchment and Late Applications

7.17 Catchment requests for pupils who move into the school's area will be regarded as late if they are not received within 90 days of the family's house move.

7.18 Late appeals will be disallowed unless the appellant can provide clear and convincing reasons why the preference was not expressed at the normal time or why the notice of appeal was not submitted by the normal deadlines.

Withdrawal of Places or of Offers of Places

7.19 In exceptional cases the school (and Local Authority) reserves the right to withdraw a school place, or an offer of a place where a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable time (i.e. within 20 school days of the expected start date) or where the place has been obtained by false or misleading information, for example an incorrect address or date of birth.

7.20 Offers of places may also be withdrawn if they were based on an address and the parents' address changes before the child is admitted.

Home-School Agreements

7.21 The School Standards & Framework Act does not allow signing a home-school agreement to be a condition for admission.

Deleting a Child's Name from the Register

7.22 The Education Pupil Registration Regulations describe the circumstances in which a child's name can be deleted from a school's register. In normal circumstances it is not reasonable to delete a child's name from the school's register until it is confirmed that he/she is receiving education elsewhere. In unclear cases advice will be sought from the Leicestershire Local Authority School Admissions and Pupil Services – Court Team. Pupil Services Court Team, CYPS, Leicestershire County Council, Room 100b Penn Lloyd Building, County Hall, Glenfield, Leics, LE3 8RF. Tel 0116 3056743. Fax: 0116 3056330. Email: pupilservicescourteam@leics.gov.uk

Changes of Address

7.23 Principles:

- a. Residence in the catchment area is necessary to give entitlement to a place on request.
- b. Where the school is over-subscribed, the school will seek to clarify parents' claims of change of address.
- c. Generally, only one address is recognised for each family, and only one family for each address.
- d. Places, or offers of places, may be withdrawn if they were based on incorrect information from the parents or their representatives.
- e. Each case is considered on its facts.

7.24 When a family moves, the relevant Local Authority will offer a place in their new catchment area school on request (dependent on proof of residence – see verification of address below) regardless of numbers in the school and whether or not other requests have been refused.

7.25 What is generally not accepted when allocating places in over-subscribed schools:

- a. Purchase of a second property by a family, while the first property is retained.
- b. Rented accommodation, while a previous property is retained.
- c. Offers on intended purchases or sales of properties.
- d. Informal accommodation arrangements with friends or relatives.

7.26 Exceptional circumstances:

The school will always give serious consideration to any exceptional situations, such as where a family has been forced by circumstance to move into temporary accommodation, having lost their previous residence, or where there is a long-term separation between the parents and the child spends time in the week at two separate parents' addresses.

7.27 Verification of address:

a. Parents' written confirmation and declarations will be sought regarding important information. Parents will be asked to verify in writing that they are residing at the address claimed and intend to remain in the catchment area. Places will be withdrawn if such declarations are subsequently found to be incorrect or not honoured and the school is oversubscribed.

b. Documentary evidence such as Council Tax payment and electoral roll information will be sought.

c. Claims of new residence in the school's catchment area will be judged on circumstances and the documents provided; completion of both sale and purchase, where relevant, are normally necessary before a place is allocated.

d. Officers may be authorised to visit addresses to clarify whether families are living at the addresses claimed. Such visits will be undertaken in a reasonable fashion, by officers carrying appropriate identification.

Significant Change of Circumstance

7.28 The school (and Local Authority) considers fresh information in support of a parental request for a school place, even if it is received at a late stage in the admissions process. In normal circumstance there will be no difficulty in meeting the parent's preference if all the school places have not been allocated.

7.29 Where the school's places have all been allocated, the school (through the School Admissions Service) will be unable to offer a place, but may give higher priority to the parent's request if a place subsequently becomes available, according to the family's circumstances, in accordance with the priority criteria.

7.30 Where a parent's appeal has been unsuccessful and the school is still full but fresh information is provided by the parent, the school and School Admissions Service

will reach a conclusion on whether or not there has been a significant change in the family's circumstances. If the school and School Admissions Service are satisfied that there has been a significant change, they will make a further decision which will give rise to a further right of appeal. This will normally preclude the situation where children have had to seek medical attention for distress or anxiety as a result of unsuccessful appeals.

7.31 Verification, e.g. from professional persons or bodies, may be sought from the parent to confirm a change of circumstances.

"Relevant Areas" for Consultation

7.32 Admission authorities consult within "relevant areas" on admissions arrangements. In Leicestershire, "relevant areas" are as follows:

- a. For community and voluntary controlled schools in Leicestershire the geographical boundary of Leicestershire is the "relevant area".
- b. For Belvoir High School as a foundation school the "relevant area" is 8 kilometres (secondary).

How and When to apply changes to a school's Admission Number (AN)

7.33 If the school's AN is increased, this should be applied immediately to every year group in the school, unless this would have a detrimental effect on teaching and learning, e.g. limits to the number and size of rooms available or large numbers in classes.

If the school's AN is decreased, this should be applied only to the entry year group, unless numbers in other year groups need to be restricted, for instance if there is overcrowding in other year groups.

Waiting lists

7.34 The school will keep a list of all pupils whose application for admission was unsuccessful due to oversubscription. This list will be updated with any in year applications.

7.35 If a place subsequently becomes available for any reason, the school will contact parents to offer a place using the following criteria to prioritise:

1. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence over those on a waiting list.
2. Distance from school to the family home.

7.36 If a place is offered and declined, the pupil will be removed from the waiting list. This does not remove the parent's right to reapply and have their application considered at a later date.