



Water Hall Primary School
Admission arrangements
2021

Water Hall Primary is part of Tove Learning Trust and as such the Trustees are responsible for deciding admissions criteria.

There are two ways to apply for a place at Water Hall Primary School:

Normal Entry (Reception only)- apply through Milton Keynes Council - School Admissions Team

This is for children starting school for the first time in the September following a child's 4th birthday or starting junior school for the first time in September following a child's 7th birthday.

These admissions are managed on behalf of Water Hall Primary School by Milton Keynes Council School Admissions Team.

In-Year admissions - apply directly through Water Hall Primary School

This is for people joining our school at any other time. When applying in-year for a place at our school, an in-year application form must be completed for each child, you can contact our admissions team on 01908 377833 or complete the form via the school website.

Parents/carers living in the UK can apply for a school place whether or not they are resident in Milton Keynes, although they should ensure the place can be accessed within six school weeks of making the application (see sections on reserved places and withdrawing offers of places).

Families that are moving from overseas should provide a copy of the child's passport, EEA residence card or evidence to show that they have a right of abode in the United Kingdom (ie Visa, endorsed passport). Where documentation cannot be provided, applications will not be considered until the child is in the United Kingdom and it is confirmed that there is a legal right to attend a state school.

Applications will be processed in date receipt order and could take up to 15 school working days to process. Where possible, correspondence will be sent by email to ensure timely receipt of information. Correspondence will be sent by mail where an email address has not been provided.

It is not always possible to secure a place at our school. We are required to admit up to our published admission number (PAN) if we receive sufficient applications, even if people are applying from outside the catchment area. This means that popular schools often fill up at the beginning, even if there were not that many people living in the catchment area at the time. National legislation does not allow for places to be reserved for people yet to move into an area. Water Hall Primary School carries out home visits prior to a child starting at school.

If parents/carers are declined a place at Water Hall Primary school, you will be offered the right of appeal and asked if you wish your child's name to be added to the waiting list (please see section on waiting lists). Proof of residency or documentary evidence of a house move will be required to determine the priority ranking on the school's waiting list.

Admission arrangements for children starting school for the first time

Milton Keynes Council manages our admissions for children starting school for the first time.

By law, a child must have started primary school at the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday - this is the start of compulsory school age.

The council's policy is to enable the admission of pupils at the beginning of the academic year in which their fifth birthday falls - that is, children may be admitted below compulsory school age. This means that pupils who were born between 1 September 2016 and 31st August 2017 may start school in September 2021.

When applying for a school place for the first time the council's policy is that:

- Attendance at the nursery does not guarantee admission to the school.
- Parents/carers can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year or until the term after the child reaches compulsory school age in that school year (see below).
- Parents/carers can request that their child attends part time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

If a child is starting school for the first time the application must be made via the council's co-ordinated scheme. The closing date for receipt of an application is annually in January - please check directly with the Council for exact dates.

Infant Class Sizes

Infant classes (ie those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single, qualified school teacher. The council must therefore, refuse admission to a school if admission of an additional child to an infant class would result in the class being in breach of infant size legislation and result in the school have to take "qualifying" measures, eg employ another teacher.

The infant class size legislation makes allowance for the entry of an additional child in very limited circumstances. These pupils will remain an "excepted pupil" for the time they are in an infant class or until the numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The "excepted children" are:

- a Children with statements of special educational needs or Education Health Care Plans who are admitted to the school outside the normal admissions round.

- b Looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- c Children admitted, after initial allocation of places on the offer date, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or council in the original application process.
- d Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal.
- e Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance.
- f Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round.
- g Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an expected pupil.
- h Children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

Oversubscription

Water Hall Primary may admit 45 children in each year group. Legal class size limits of 30 children will apply to children in reception, year 1 and year 2. Should more applications be received than places available oversubscription criteria is detailed below.

1. A “looked after child” or “previously looked after child”.
2. A “sibling” at the school who is expected to be “on roll at the school at the time of admission” of the younger sibling and the “place of residence” is within the “catchment area” of the school.
3. The child’s “place of residence” is within the “catchment area” of the school and there is no sibling.
4. There is already a “sibling” at the school who is expected to be “on roll at the school at the time of admission” of the younger sibling and the place of residence is outside of the catchment area.
5. “Distance” from the school to the place of residence.

In the case where the school is oversubscribed (more applications than places available), the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school concerned will not normally be exceeded unless there are exceptional circumstances. The PAN for Water Hall is 45. In order to determine those applications that are successful, Water Hall Primary School will use oversubscription criteria in order of priority. For the purposes of these criteria the following definitions apply:

Looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by the local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. Previously looked after child is a child who has been looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.

Sibling is a child of the family, sharing a parent by birth or adoption or living at the same address at the time of application and until and including the date of the offer letter. In the case of same age siblings, where there are insufficient places available to admit the children, the school will be authorised to exceed its Published Admission Number to allow admission of the subsequent child. On roll at the school at the time of admission means attending the school in national curriculum year groups (R to 6 inclusive) at the time the younger sibling is attending the school. The catchment area for each community and voluntary controlled school is defined at Annex B of this policy. 8

Place of residence is determined to be the address of the parent or carer with whom the child spends the majority of time as a child of a family during term-time and proof of the home address, if required, should be a council tax reference number. If clarification is required of a particular catchment area, applicants should contact the Council for further details. If the child spends equal time with each parent/carer, the parents/carers must reach agreement as to which address will be classed as the child's place of residence for the application form. If agreement cannot be reached, the application received from the parent/carer in receipt of child benefit would be the application to be processed. Proof of receipt of child benefit would need to be provided.

Distance from the school to the place of residence is measured from the school's main entrance to the place of residence in a straight line. This will be measured using the council's geographical information system.

It should be noted that where oversubscription results in the PAN being reached within one of the five priorities, then sub prioritisation within priority will take place using distance between the child's home address and the school's main entrance, measured in a straight line with those living closest to the school receiving the higher priority. In the event of joint oversubscription, having exhausted distance, random allocation will be used as the ultimate tiebreaker. For applicants living in flats, the distance will be measured from the school's main entrance to the front door of the ground floor flat underneath the applicant's main residence. Where two or more pupils live at the same distance the tie breaker will be random allocation.

Admission of a child into a year group other than that normally associated with their age

By law, 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. The school will only admit children outside of their chronological (age) year group in exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers should write to Water Hall Primary School's admissions team if they wish to submit a request. Any such request will be discussed with the Headteacher.

The decision will be based on the individual circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This includes taking into account the parent's views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant their medical history and the views of a medical professional, whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The views of the Headteacher will also be taken into consideration.

Reserved places

The law does not allow admissions authorities to reserve places for children who may, or may not, apply for a place later (except for the children of service personnel – please see specific section below). The council will therefore not reserve places in any circumstance. The law also precludes admission authorities from offering places in advance of parents being able to access those places due to a purported move to the area. In order for a place to be offered the place must therefore be accessible from the current address unless evidence has been received that a move is imminent (exchange of contracts or letting agreement will be accepted as evidence of imminence).

Children of 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, the Water Hall Primary/the council will:

- Ensure that the needs of the children of these families are taken into account
- Allocate a school place in advance of the family arriving in the area, if the application is accompanied by an official government letter (eg MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended area), address, if the applicant would meet the criteria on relocation. For in year admissions, the place must be taken up no later than the beginning of the term following the offer.
- Accept a Unit postal address or, if appropriate, a “quartering area” address (the address of the closest house in the nearest “quartering area”), for applications from service personnel in the absence of a new home postal address.

Water Hall Primary School will not reserve places for blocks of these children.

Children with challenging behaviour

Water Hall Primary School will not refuse to admit children through the normal admissions round on the basis of their behaviour elsewhere (unless the child has been permanently excluded twice) or make subjective judgements as to the suitability of certain children for our school.

Outside of the normal admissions round (in year), applications from children with “challenging behaviour” may be referred for action under the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol, even if there are places available at Water Hall Primary School. Parental preference therefore may not apply in these instances, although parents/carers will be offered the right to appeal if they are declined a place. This process is more clearly detailed in the published Fair Access Protocol. This process does not apply to Looked After Children, or children with an EHCP naming the school in question as these children must be admitted.

Children who have been permanently excluded twice

Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools, a parent can still express a preference for a school place, but the law provides that the requirement to comply with that preference is removed for a period of two years from the date on which the latest exclusion took place. This does not apply to:

- Children with a statement of special education needs or Education Health Care Plan.
- Children who were below the compulsory school age when excluded
- Children who were reinstated following a permanent exclusion or who would have been had it been practicable to do so.

A permanent exclusion is regarded as taking effect from the first school day the Headteacher has informed the parent/carer that the child should not attend school.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health Care Plan

All admission authorities are required by section 324 of the Education Act 1966 to admit to a school a child with a statement of special education need or an Education Health Care Plan that names that school. This is not an oversubscription criterion and the Water Hall Primary/the council will therefore admit such children whether the admission number has been reached or not.

Children with Special Educational Needs with no statement or Education Health Care Plan

Children with special educational needs will be treated as fairly as any other applicant. The law does not permit refusal of admission because it is claimed that the school cannot cater for the child's special educational needs and the council will consider such applications on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria.

Declining the offer of a place

Following the offer of a place, Water Hall Primary School will assume that the parent/carer has accepted the place unless they inform the school otherwise. A school place will not be withdrawn solely because the parent/carer is dissatisfied and declines the offer. The school must have notice from the parent/carer of how the child will receive full time education either at a school or otherwise. This is because the school/council has a duty to ensure that all children are receiving their education entitlement.

Withdrawing offers of places

Once an offer of a school place has been made, the school will only withdraw that offer in the following circumstances:

When a parent has failed to respond to an offer within a reasonable time. These arrangements define a reasonable time as 14 days from the date of the offer letter, inclusive. If a parent has not responded to the offer of a place within this time limit, the school will remind the parent of the need to respond within a further seven days.

When the place was offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent which effectively denied a place to another child.

When a place was offered under co-ordination in error.

The school will not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child had

been at the school will be taken into account, for example, it might be considered appropriate to withdraw if the child has been at the school for less than one term. Where a place is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application will be considered afresh and a right of appeal offered if a place is refused.

Waiting Lists

For normal admissions, if the Council is not able to offer a place at the school then the parent/carer will be asked to confirm in writing if they would like their child to be placed on a waiting list for those schools for which a place has been declined. The waiting list will be held until the end of the academic year.

For in year admissions, if Water Hall Primary is not able to offer a place at the school then a decline letter will be issued and the parent/carer will be asked to confirm in writing if they would like their child to be placed on the waiting list. The waiting list will be held until the end of the academic year.

As required by law, the waiting lists will be ordered in line with the oversubscription criteria and not in the order that the applications were received. Children may therefore move down the waiting list if a subsequent application meets a higher oversubscription criterion. If a vacancy occurs, the place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. Proof of residency or documentary evidence a house move will be required to determine the priority ranking on the waiting list.

The role of the Headteacher and other school staff in school admissions

These admission arrangements support the guidance given in paragraph 2.1 of the School Admissions Code 2014 which states:

“While parents may express a preference for any state funded school, regardless of whether it is the council area in which they live, admission authorities must not give any guarantees that the preference will be met”.

Decisions to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority, the whole governing body, an admissions committee established by the governing body or the academy trust must make such decisions.

Such principles are applied equally to in year admissions, in that Headteachers or other school officials must not give parents or carers an expectation that their application will be successful, or tell them that their child has been given a place at the school. Conversely a school should not seek to dissuade parents or carers from applying for a school place by telling them that there is not a place available.

Accepting the offer of a place

Following the offer of a place by Water Hall Primary School, the applicant will be required to contact the school within 14 days of the offer letter to confirm their place. If a parent has not responded to the offer of a place within this time limit, the place will be withdrawn.

Right of appeal

In the case where an application is declined due to oversubscription, parents will be informed by the school of their right of an appeal against the decision made. All appeals will be heard by an independent panel, operate within legislation and confirm to the procedures laid down in the School Admission Appeals Code. Full details are available on the school website.

If your application is declined, you will have the right to appeal the decision. Please do so in writing. Your appeal should be addressed to Emma Burrows, details below.

Appellants will be sent notification of their appeal hearing at least 10 school days before the hearing. Appellants will be sent a copy of the school's case at least 7 working days in advance of the hearing. All papers relating the appeal will usually be sent to Appeal Panel members at least 5 working days prior to the appeal hearing.

When submitting their appeal appellants should include any documentation on which they wish to rely on with their appeal.

If an appellant wishes to submit further evidence after this time it must be received at least 3 clear working days prior to the appeal date. Anything received after this date may not be considered at the appeal hearing. The appeal panel must decide whether any material not submitted by the specified deadline is to be considered, taking into account its significance and the effect of a possible need to postpone the hearing.

Decision letters following an appeal will be sent within 5 working days of the appeal hearing wherever possible. Should admission be granted parents/carers should then contact the school for further admission information.

Point of contact:

For further information regarding these arrangements, please contact:

Water Hall Primary School
Fern Grove
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK2 3QF

01908 377833

admissions@waterhallprimary.co.uk