



The Federation of Abbey Schools

Admissions Arrangements
Academic Year 2020/2021



**ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO
THE FEDERATION OF ABBEY SCHOOLS, DARLINGTON
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020**

Introduction

The Federation of Abbey Schools has previously gone through a consultation process on the proposed admission arrangements for the Academy; the admission arrangements for the academic year 2018/19 remain as agreed at that consultation.

The Federation of Abbey Schools added an associated area to their admission criteria. For many years the Blackwell area of the West End of Darlington has been disadvantaged when school places have been allocated on distance from the home to the school. The Academy is the local school for those families, with other schools being much further than is desirable to walk.

The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust has now included the Blackwell area of Darlington as an associated area for the purposes of allocation of pupil places within the process of co-ordinated admissions.

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

Darlington has operated a co-ordinated admission arrangement since 2005. Co-ordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is practical, every child living in a local authority area who has applied in the normal admissions round receives only one offer of a school place on the same day.

Co-ordinated schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided and academy schools to set and apply their own admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria. Admission authorities do not have to determine the same or similar oversubscription criteria but must ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with, and do not undermine, the co-ordinated scheme for their area.

Delegation has been given to the Local Authority to apply the oversubscription criteria and to allocate and refuse places accordingly.

The Federation of Abbey Schools admission criteria complies with this arrangement.

Admissions Oversubscription Criteria - Federation of Abbey Schools

After the admission of children with special educational needs where a school is named on the statement, and where the number of applicants is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below, in the following order:

1. **Looked After Children**
A 'looked after' child is a pupil who is in the care of a LA or provided with accommodation by that authority (For more in depth definitions see Section 22(1), Section 8, Section 14A of the Children's Act 1989 and Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002).
2. **Medical Reasons**
Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to the school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a doctor.
2. **Family Links**
Either (a) Children who have a brother or sister already attending the school and who are expected to be on the roll at the time of admission.

Or (b) In the case of associated schools a family link would exist if a brother or sister would be expected to be on roll of either school at the time of admission.
3. **Associated Schools**
Children who are transferring from Abbey Infant to Abbey Junior school will be given priority over pupils from other schools.
4. **Associated Area for the Federation of Abbey Schools**
The following area has been deemed by the Academy's Governing Body to be an associated area for over-subscription criteria to the Federation of Abbey Schools:-

Pupils living within the area of Blackwell in the Borough of Darlington, please contact the school for a copy of the map.
5. **Distance**
Urban Wards of Darlington Borough Council - Children who live nearest the preferred school measured from the front door of the home address (including flats) to the main school gate, by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the home address of the child. To remain consistent the Authority uses a Geographical Information System to measure all distances. The Authority's priority when measuring a route is to identify the shortest route judged to be safe (safe is lit at regular intervals, paved/tarmaced).

Admission of children outside their normal age group and deferred entry

If a parent seeks a place in a year group outside of their normal age group, in the first instance they should speak to the headteacher of the school. Then complete an application form and attach a covering letter along with any accompanying documentation that details the circumstances behind their request, for example if their child has missed a significant amount of time due to ill health or they believe their child to be gifted and talented. This should be forwarded to the Governing Body c/o the Clerk to the Governors of The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust, the Full Governing Body will meet and consider the request. Once a decision has been made the Admission Authority will write to the parent(s) informing them of the decision and setting out reasons for such.

The School Admissions Code allows parents and carers of summer born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) to request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group (into reception in the September following their 5th birthday).

It is recommended that along with a request, any supporting information or evidence parent/carers may wish to be considered is also submitted, including the written statements of any relevant professionals.

Circumstances which the admission authority will take into account include:

- Your views as parent/carers and the reasons you feel a delayed admission would be positive for the child
- whether your child is summer born
- information about your child's personal, social, emotional development and academic development
- if relevant, medical history and views of a medical professional
- whether your child has previously been educated outside their normal age group
- and in the case of children born prematurely, whether they would naturally have fallen into the lower age group if born at the expected time.

There is no legal requirement for medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, however, failure to provide this may impede the school's ability to agree to deferral. Making a decision to apply for admission outside your child's normal age group will not only affect your child's first year of schooling, but will continue to affect their education. We recommend that before you make a request you contact the school to arrange a visit and have a discussion with the Head Teacher. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Admission of children below compulsory school age

Schools within Darlington Local Authority have a single point of entry in September each year for pupils starting school in Reception. However children may attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age** and parents can defer the date their child is admitted until later in the school year.

*Summer born children relate to those born from 1 April to 31 August

**Children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).

*** During the summer term, the local authority acting in its capacity as an admission authority was subject to an investigation by the Schools' Adjudicator.

The outcome of the decision communicated to the LA during the summer holidays, was that the admission arrangements for the local authority community & maintained schools were not code compliant. It was therefore determined by the adjudicator that changes had to be made for the 2019 admission arrangements within 2 months of the decision. The change of wording is for medical and home address and these have now been change on the LA Admissions website. The amendments are listed below.

Appendix 1

The amended wording for medical is:

Children with exceptional medical factors directly relating to school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a professional practitioner.

If you state a preference for any of the 3 maintained schools and indicate your reason for doing so is 'medical', then you are required to send a supporting letter from a professional practitioner. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why the school in question is the most suitable school and the difficulties it would cause if your child had to travel to another school. Permission from parents must be given to share this information

The amended wording for home address is:

The home address is used for applying the admissions criteria. This means that when you state your school preferences you must give the home address of the child at the time of application, where they mainly reside Monday to Friday. You must not give the address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of your child. For parents who may have more than one property, reference should only be made to the property in which they and the child(ren) mainly reside. If the main address has changed temporarily, for example where a parent resides with extended family during a period of sickness or takes up temporary accommodation due to building works/renovation, then the home address remains that at which the parent was resident before the period of temporary residence began. However, if you have sold your property (exchanged contracts) and have moved into temporary accommodation, you will be required to provide evidence of your situation and a decision will be made based upon the evidence provided. Where there are shared care arrangements, the home address will be where the child lives for the majority of the week Monday to Friday or where a court has determined their home address should be.