

Admissions Policy 2025-2026

This document sets out the admission arrangements for Oxford Spires Academy (the Academy) for the year 2025/2026. The admission arrangements in this policy were determined on 24th November 2023.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how parent(s)/carer(s) can apply** for a place for their child at the Academy
- Set out the Academy's **arrangements for allocating places to the student(s)** who apply
- Explain **how parent(s)/carer(s) can appeal** against a decision not to offer their child a place

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [Academy Admission Appeals Code](#)

As an academy, the Academy is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [Academy Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

The admission authority is Anthem Schools Trust (Anthem). Reference in the codes and elsewhere to admission authorities shall be deemed to be references to the Anthem Community Council acting on behalf of Anthem. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. In respect of admissions, the school will not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief); sex; sexual orientation; age or marital or civil partnership status, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a student. All students and prospective students are treated equitably.

The Academy will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the local authority and will adhere to the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol. Local authorities are required to agree Fair Access Protocols in order to make sure that unplaced students(s), who live in the home local authority, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting student(s) above the published admissions number to schools that are already full. Students allocated under fair access protocols will take precedence over those on a reserve list or awaiting appeal. Notwithstanding these arrangements, the Secretary of State may direct the Academy to admit a named student on application from the local authority. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult the Academy.

How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round parent(s)/carer(s) should use the co-ordinated admission process arranged by their home local authority (regardless of which local authority the

Academy is in). Parent(s)/carer(s) can use this process to express their preference for a minimum of three state-funded Schools, in rank order.

Parent(s)/carer(s) will receive an offer for an Academy place directly from their local authority.

For applications outside of the normal admissions round, please see the section entitled 'In-Year admissions' below.

Consideration of applications

The Academy will consider all applications for places. The Academy has an agreed admission number of 220 (the Published Admission Number – PAN) student(s) for entry in year 7. Where fewer than 220 applications are received, the Academy will offer places to all those who have applied. We reserve the right to check any address and other information provided so we can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly. As an admission authority we have the right to investigate any concerns we may have about your application and to withdraw the offer of a place if we consider there is evidence that you have made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information, for example if a false address was given which denied a place to a student(s) with a stronger claim. If a place is withdrawn, the application will be considered afresh, and you will be advised of your right of appeal if a place is refused.

Before setting a PAN higher than its published admission number, the Academy will inform the local authority and reference this change on the Academy's website. Students will not be admitted above the PAN unless exceptional circumstances apply, and such circumstances shall be reported to the Secretary of State.

Procedures where the Academy is oversubscribed

If the Academy is oversubscribed, after the admission of student(s) with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the Academy is named in the EHCP, priority for admission will be given to those student(s) who meet the criteria set out below, in order:

- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children¹, including those student(s) who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Student(s) with a Sibling attending the Academy at the time of application². In the event of there being more siblings than there are remaining places in a year group, it is possible that a sibling under these circumstances would not be offered a place. Where siblings exceed the remaining places in a

¹ 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) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society. 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). This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

² 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as half, full, step, adoptive or foster brother or sister living predominantly in the same home as the child at the time of application and/or at the time of admission.

year group, places will be allocated by the drawing of lots. Please also see the note on multiple births and siblings in the same year below.

- Student(s) of any member of staff at the Academy, in either of the following circumstances:
 - a) The member of staff has been employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the Academy is made, or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Other student(s) by distance from the Academy, with priority for admission given to student(s) who live nearest to the Academy. Distance will be measured by Oxfordshire County Council in a straight line. The start point of the measurement will be the geographical placement of the address (address point using the Easting/Northing British Co-ordinate system) as available to Oxfordshire Council from information compiled from Royal Mail and/or district or city councils. This placement is accurate to 10 centimetres. The end point of the measurement will be the post office address of the Academy. The calculation of the distance will be made in metres using a Pythagoras calculation. This calculation will be converted into miles by dividing the distance by 1609.344 to achieve a distance in miles accurate to three decimal places. Where a student lives normally during the Academy week with more than one parent(s)/carer(s) at different addresses, the home address accepted for the purposes of Academy admissions will be the one where the student spends the majority of term time. If a parent(s)/carer(s) can show that their child spends an equal amount of time at two addresses during Academy term time with a parent(s)/carer(s), they can choose which address to use on the application. If a parent(s)/carer(s) has more than one home, we will accept the address where the parent(s)/carer(s) and student normally live for the majority of the Academy term time as the home address.

Tie-break

The oversubscription criteria are listed in the order we apply them. If it is necessary to distinguish between more than one applicant in any criteria, the next criteria will be applied until the tie-breaker is used. In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the Academy will use random allocation as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. This process will be independently verified by someone who does not work at the Academy or the local authority.

Multiple births and siblings in the same year

If Siblings³ in the same year group are split by operation of the oversubscription criteria, the Academy is will go above its published admission number, where applicable to accommodate all Siblings unless this would make the class too large and prejudice the education of the other student(s).

³ As defined above.

Student(s) of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)

In order to support the military covenant aimed at removing disadvantage for UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces), and Crown Servants returning from abroad the following arrangements will apply;

- If an application is supported by an official letter declaring a posting and a relocation date then an intention to move to a confirmed address or quartering within the UK will be accepted for a student for the purposes of implementing the oversubscription criteria.
- Where an application is not supported by an official letter declaring a posting and relocation date, or is not being made due to a new posting then the student(s) current address will be used to examine the application against the oversubscription criteria until the child is formally resident in the new address.
- Proof of intended occupation of the residential address such as mortgage statement, exchange of contracts or signed tenancy agreement will be required. For applicants participating in the Future Accommodation Model trial, a letter accepting an address under the scheme will be accepted if a signed tenancy agreement cannot be provided.
- An offer may be withdrawn if a student(s) does not reside at the address listed on the application form if the school is oversubscribed and use of an incorrect address has resulted in a place being denied to another student(s) who would otherwise have been offered the place.
- If a family have provided the required proof of posting, a unit postal address will be accepted for the purposes of operating the oversubscription criteria if parent(s)/carer(s) are unable to provide an address or prefer to use the unit address. This unit will be the base to which the parent(s)/carer(s) has been posted.
- In all cases where an applicant is considered after national offer day of the admitting year and parent(s)/carer(s) can demonstrate that the student(s) is a student(s) of a crown servant returning from abroad or is a student(s) of a serving member of the armed forces, the school will consider whether to offer a place at a school even if the school has reached its official PAN. When making the decision whether to offer over PAN the school will consider the circumstances of each case including:
 - If the applicant would have been offered a place had they applied on time in the admissions round of the year of entry.
 - Whether there is any student(s) on the reserve list with higher priority under the oversubscription criteria.
 - Whether admission of a further student would prejudice the efficient education and efficient use of resources and this prejudice would be excessive.

The School has discretion to admit above the admission number in these circumstances but they are not obliged to do so. If a place is refused, parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed of their right of appeal.

Sixth forms

The PAN for Year 12 is 60. This PAN is the minimum number of places for external students. The entry criteria and courses on offer can be found in the Sixth Form Prospectus and on the Academy website. The entry criteria for sixth form is the same for internal and external applicants.

Where the sixth form is oversubscribed, priority for admission will be given to those students meeting the entry criteria in the following order, after the admission of student(s) with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) where the Academy is named in the EHCP:

- Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children⁴, including those student(s) who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Student(s) with a Sibling attending the Academy at the time of application⁵. In the event of there being more siblings than there are remaining places in a year group, it is possible that a sibling under these circumstances would not be offered a place. Where siblings exceed the remaining places in a year group, places will be allocated by the drawing of lots.
- Student(s) of any member of staff at the Academy, in either of the following circumstances:
 - a) The member of staff has been employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the Academy is made, or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Students with the highest average points score across all GCSE subjects taken by the applicant with priority given to students with the highest average score first.
- Other student(s) by distance from the Academy, with priority for admission given to student(s) who live nearest to the Academy. Distance will be measured by Oxfordshire County Council in a straight line. The start point of the measurement will be the geographical placement of the address (address point using the Easting/Northing British Co-ordinate system) as available to Oxfordshire Council from information compiled from Royal Mail and/or district or city councils. This placement is accurate to 10 centimetres. The end point of the measurement will be the post office address of the Academy. The calculation of the distance will be made in metres using a Pythagoras calculation. This calculation will be converted into miles by dividing the distance by 1609.344 to achieve a distance in miles accurate to three decimal places. The home address is considered as the address where the student lives for the majority of term time. This may be with a parent(s)/carer(s) (as defined in section 576 of the Education Act 1996). Where a student lives normally during the Academy week with more than one parent(s)/carer(s) at different addresses, the home address accepted for the purposes of Academy admissions will be the one where the student(s) spends the majority of term time. If a student can show that they spend an equal amount of time at two

⁴ 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) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society. 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). This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

⁵ 'Sibling' is defined in these arrangements as half, full, step, adoptive or foster brother or sister living predominantly in the same home as the child at the time of application and/or at the time of admission.

addresses during Academy term time with a parent(s)/carer(s), they can choose which address to use on the application. If a student has more than one home, we will accept the address where the student normally lives for the majority of the Academy term time as the home address.

The rules above on tie-break, multiple births and UK service personnel also apply to entry at sixth form. Any meetings held to discuss options or courses will not form part of the decision process as to whether to offer a place. The parent(s)/carer(s) or young person can appeal for a place if the application is refused as per the processes set out in this policy.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parent(s)/carer(s) are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group for example, if the student(s) is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. It is important for parent(s)/carer(s) to note that they will have the opportunity and responsibility to provide whatever evidence they wish to support their request. Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the student(s) concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parent(s)/carer(s)' views
- Information about the student(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
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The Headteacher's views

If applying during the normal admissions round, parent(s)/carer(s) must apply for a place in the student(s) normal age group at the usual time. At the same time, parent(s)/carer(s) may make their application for admission out of the normal age group. Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a student(s) normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parent(s)/carer(s) have made a request for a student(s) to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed of the Academy's decision before April 16 and will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a student(s) should be admitted to. Once informed of the Academy's decision, parent(s)/carer(s) may withdraw their application for the normal age group if their application for deferment is agreed or decide to accept the offer of the normal age range if they are refused. Alternatively, they could refuse this offer and make an in-year application (see below). Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the Academy but it is not in their preferred age group.

Operation of waiting lists

Where in any year the Academy receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This will be maintained by Oxfordshire County Council and it will be open to

any parent(s)/carer(s) to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Student(s) position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to student(s) on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list for admissions will be ranked again every time a student(s) is added, in line with the published oversubscription criteria. For the intake year the list is held until the end of August. After this the School Admissions Code requires that Schools keep the reserve list until the end of the autumn term.

In-year applications

Parent(s)/carer(s) can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to Oxfordshire County Council www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all student(s) whose EHCP names the academy will be admitted. If admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, it may be necessary to refuse a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of the application, the student(s) name may on request be added to the waiting list for the relevant year group. Please see above for how the waiting list is operated.

Further information about in-year applications is available on our school website.

Appeals

If an application for a place at the Academy is unsuccessful (whether made during the normal admissions round or in-year), parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. If parent(s)/carer(s) wish to appeal, they must set out the grounds for the appeal in writing and send it to Oxfordshire County Council:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals. Further details on the school's appeals timetable can be found on our website.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Anthem every year.

Whenever relevant changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the published admission number), the Academy will publicly consult on these changes in accordance with the Admissions Code.