



*"For Learning that Lasts a Lifetime"*

# **St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Community Primary School**

## **Admissions Policy**

**Date: March 2023**

**Reviewed and Ratified By: Governing body on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Review Date: Annually – March 2024**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Helen King, Chair of Governors**

**Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Helen Comfort, Executive Headteacher**

## **Equality**

We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all pupils, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation; age or beliefs as defined within existing equalities legislation (please see 'Single Equality Scheme').

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Our governing body applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced a new framework for school admissions as of September 2000. This was later revised in the Education Act of 2002. Our admissions policy conforms to the regulations that are set out in that Act and are further explained in the statutory School Admissions Code of Practice and the statutory Appeals Code of Practice.
- 1.2 The School Admissions Code ('the Code') has been issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ('SSFA 1998')<sup>1</sup>. The Code has been made following a consultation under Section 85(2) of the SSFA 1998 and after being laid before Parliament for forty days. This Code came into force on **1 September 2021** and applies to admission arrangements determined in 2021 for admission in school year 2021/22 and any future years

### **2 Aims and objectives**

- 2.1 We seek to be an inclusive school, welcoming children from all backgrounds and abilities.
- 2.2 All applications will be treated on merit, and in a sensitive manner.
- 2.3 The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we adopt the procedure set out below to determine whether a child is to be accepted or not. It is our wish for parents to find a place for their child at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to excess demand on the places available.
- 2.4 A child's level of ability is irrelevant to this school's admissions policy, as are any special needs the child may have.

### **3 How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to our school**

- 3.1 Our school is a community school, and it determines the admission arrangements in agreement with the local authority (LA). The Admissions Authority for our school is therefore the LA, which publishes its entry regulations every year. Parents can receive a copy of these regulations directly from the LA.
- 3.2 The LA's annual admissions prospectus informs parents how to apply for a place at the school of their choice. Parents have a right to express their preference, but this does not, in itself, guarantee a place at that particular school. Application should be made online (<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places>) or a form can be obtained from the local Education Department, and should be returned by the date stipulated on that form. The LA will notify parents of the decision as soon as all the applications have been considered.
- 3.3 Children enter school at the start of the academic year in which they become five. Therefore, parents who would like their child to be admitted to this school during the

year their child is five should ensure that they return the necessary application form by the date given on the form.

3.4 The over-subscription criteria is as follows:-

Before the application of oversubscription criteria, children with a statement of special educational need or Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school will be admitted. As a result of this, the published admissions number will be reduced accordingly.

If the number of preferences for the school is more than the number of spaces available, places will be allocated in the following priority order:

**Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.**

– a child under the age of 18 years for whom the local authority provides accommodation by agreement with their parents/carers (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or who ceased to be so because they were adopted or subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

**Current Family Association** - a brother or sister in the same school at the time of entry where the family continue to live at the same address as when the sibling was admitted – or – if they have moved – live within 2 miles of the school, or have moved to a property that is nearer to the school than the previous property as defined by the 'Nearness' criterion' (below).

Where a child is transferring from Year 2 and would not be attending the infant school from the start of the next academic year, but applied for the linked junior school, the sibling link would not be broken for a child applying for the infant school.

In this context brother or sister means children who live as brother and sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters.

**Health and Special Access Reasons** – Medical, health, social and special access reasons will be applied in accordance with the school's legal obligations, in particular those under the Equality Act 2010. Priority will be given to those children whose mental or physical impairment means they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Equally this priority will apply to children whose parents'/guardians' physical or mental health or social needs mean that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Such claims will need to be supported by written evidence from a suitably qualified medical or other practitioner who can demonstrate a special connection between these needs and the particular school.

**Nearness of children's homes to school** – the Local Authority use the distance between the child's permanent home address and the school, measured in a straight line using Ordnance Survey address point data. Distances are measured from a point defined as within the child's home to a point defined as within the school as specified by Ordnance Survey. The same address point on the school site is used for everybody. When the Local Authority apply the distance criterion for an oversubscribed Community

or Voluntary Controlled school, these straight line measurements are used to determine how close each applicant's address is to the school.

Where new build housing development requires a new school or the significant enlargement of an existing school the 'Nearness' criterion will allow for a catchment area (defined by a map) to be created for the relevant school. This will be included in the Statutory Public Notice and admissions determination and will be valid for a period not exceeding three rounds of admissions.

In the event of any of the above criteria being oversubscribed, priority will be given based on distance as described above with those closest being given higher priority. In the unlikely event that two or more children in all other ways have equal eligibility for the last available place at the school, the names will be issued a number and drawn randomly to decide which child should be given the place. If siblings from multiple births (twins, triplets, etc) apply for a school and the school would reach its Published Admission Number (PAN) after admitting one or more, but before admitting all of those siblings, the LA will offer a place to each of the siblings, even if doing so takes the school above its PAN. If the admissions are to Year R, and so result in a breach of infant class size legislation, the additional pupil(s) will be treated as "excepted" for the time they are in an infant class or until the numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit, as defined in the school admission code.

A waiting list will be held in oversubscription criteria order and will be re-ranked, in line with the published oversubscription criteria, every time a child is added

- 3.5 If your child is at a primary or junior school and you want to move them to a St. Margaret'-at-Cliffe Primary School, you need to apply. This is called an in-year admission.

There is no guarantee that we will be able to offer your child a place. You should not remove your child from their current school before you have an offer of a place.

### **How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to our school in-year**

#### **You live in Kent and want to apply for a place in our school**

Complete the in-year application form and send it to the school. You need to fill in a separate form for each child.

#### **You don't live in Kent and want to apply for a place in our school**

Complete the in-year application form and send it to the school. You need to fill in a separate form for each child.

You should also contact your own local authority to keep them informed.

### **Children in care**

For children in care with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) being placed with carers in Kent, it is important the social worker contacts the relevant [Special Educational Needs area team](#) if the child is moving to a different school.

## **Children of members of the UK Armed Forces or Crown Servants**

If you are a member of the UK Armed Forces or a Crown Servant, with a confirmed posting to Kent, you can apply for an in year admission to a Kent school by completing an [In Year Casual Admissions Form \(IYCAF\) \(PDF, 64.0 KB\)](#) and sending it direct to your preferred schools. You must include an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address with your application.

Where a school is able to offer a place, they will honour that place for 3 months. This can mean that a place can be kept open for the next academic year providing your child/children will start within the 3 month period. If the place has not been taken up at the end of the 3 months, the school may offer it to another child. If this happens, the school will inform you that the place is no longer available and you will need to make a new application for a school place. The school may choose to add your child's name to their waiting list if they have one.

### **Offers**

St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School will offer you a place within 5 days if:

- we have all the information we need
- we have a place available
- no other child has a higher priority for the place.

If your child has been permanently excluded from more than 2 schools, we may refuse to offer a place. Please contact KCC Admissions 03000 41 21 21 (9am to 2pm and 4pm to 5pm Monday to Friday) or email [kentinyearadmissions@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentinyearadmissions@kent.gov.uk) for help if this applies to you.

Once a place is formally offered, in the interests of fairness, it cannot be held open for more than 10 school days.

### **If your child is not offered a place**

If you applied for an in year admission, but were not offered a place you can:

- call KCC Admissions on 03000 41 21 21 (9am to 2pm and 4pm to 5pm Monday to Friday) or email [kentinyearadmissions@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentinyearadmissions@kent.gov.uk) to advice on making an appeal
- join the school's waiting list

A waiting list will be held in oversubscription criteria order and will be re-ranked, in line with the published oversubscription criteria, every time a child is added

## **4 Admission appeals**

- 4.1 If we do not offer a child a place at this school, this will be because to do so would prejudice the education of other children by allowing the number of children in the school to increase too much.
- 4.2 If parents wish to appeal against a decision to refuse entry, they can do so by applying to the LA. An independent panel considers all such appeals, and its decision is binding

for all parties concerned. If the appeals panel decides that we should admit a child to whom we had refused a place, then we will accept this decision and continue to do all we can to provide the best education for all the children at our school. (Further details of appeal arrangements are set out in the revised Code of Practice on School Admissions Appeals, which came into force in September 2004.)

## **5 The standard number**

- 5.1 The 'standard number' is the number of children the LA considers the school can accommodate. The standard number for our school is 30. Our school Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 210.

## **6 Class Sizes**

- 6.1 We are required by law to admit no more than 30 children to FS and KS1. In KS2 the preference of the Governors is to have no more than 30 children.

## **7 Entry to Reception Class in September**

- 7.1 Every child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. At St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School, as part of our induction programme, we offer two weeks of morning only attendance, followed by one week of mornings and lunchtimes. By week four, children attend full-time. We have found this approach beneficial to the children and to the parent/carers who are able to meet with the teachers for an extended 1:1 consultation appointment during an afternoon of those first three weeks.

## **8 Deferred entry**

- 8.1 Parents have a right to defer their child entry into Reception year. The only restriction is that children must secure the offered place by starting school on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day), but not beyond the beginning of the final term. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.
- 8.2 This means that children born between the 1 April and 31 August (also known as "summer born") must start school at the beginning of the April term if they wish to keep their offer. Where parents wish for their summer born child to defer entry until the start of Year 1, they must refuse their offered place, which may be offered to a different child, and then reapply through the In Year process. These applications should be made during the last month of Reception Year.

## **9. Summer Born Children and Admission Outside of Expected Year Group**

- 9.1 As detailed above, children born between 1 April and 31 August (summer born children) are not legally required to start school until the beginning of Year 1. While the vast majority of summer born children will start at some point in their expected year group, flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school before they reach compulsory school age and also do not wish for their child to miss Reception year.
- 9.2 The DfE have confirmed that there is no legal barrier to children being admitted out of their normal age group, but also state that parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year. As such parents must gain agreement from the admission authorities of all preferred schools before an application can be made. Admissions authorities and parents must be clear that this agreement is only in relation to a child to applying for a place in a different year group. There is no guarantee that once a parent has

secured agreement from a school or schools to be considered for admission in that year group, that they will actually be offered a place for their child. All offers are made in accordance with a school's oversubscription criteria (see above), which will not prioritise or penalise a child because of their age.

- 9.3 The Headteacher will meet with parents as early as possible to explain how their child will be supported should they start school at the normal time and allay any concerns the parent may have about their child's readiness for school. Teachers are skilled at differentiating the curriculum to meet a diverse range of needs.
- 9.4 Admissions authorities must take into account the child's individual needs and abilities and cannot have a blanket policy to refuse all out of year group applications. While the admissions authority of the school is responsible for the decision, the guidance states that the views of the Headteacher should be an important part of this consideration.
- 9.5 Parents do not have to provide evidence to support their application, however, admissions authorities may struggle to agree where evidence is absent. There should be no expectation on parents, however, to obtain professional evidence that they do not already have. Any evidence should be specific to the child, not research into the performance of summer born children in general.
- 9.6 Parents should be reminded that this process will need to be repeated each time the child changes school. While the guidance prompts schools to be mindful of the age group a child has previously been taught in, they are under no obligation to agree and continue to teach a child out of year.
- 9.7 Once the child has started school, it is for the Headteacher to decide how best to educate them. Any future decision to move a child to a different age group should be based on sound educational reasons in conjunction with the parents.
- 9.8 Parents do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like. However, they may make a complaint about an admission authority's decision not to admit their child outside the normal age group through the authority's complaints procedure.
- 9.9 Kent's scheme details the process for handling out of year applications:
  - Requests for admission outside of the normal age group should be made to the Headteacher as early as possible in the admissions round associated with that child's date of birth. This will allow the school and admissions authority sufficient time to make a decision before the closing date. Parents are not expected to provide evidence to support their request to defer their application, however where provided it must be specific to the child in question. This might include medical or Educational Psychologist reports. There is no legal requirement for this medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, however, failure to provide this may impede a school's ability to agree to deferral. Parents are required to complete an application for the normal point of entry at the same time, in case their request is declined. This application can be cancelled if the school agrees to accept a deferred application for entry into Year R the following year. Deferred applications must be made via paper CAF to the LA, with written confirmation from each named school attached. Deferred applications will be processed in the same way as all applications for the cohort in the following admissions round, and offers will be made in accordance with the School's oversubscription criteria.
  - Parents should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time, in case their request is not agreed. At the same time, parents should approach the

admission authority of the school to request the right to apply outside of the normal age group. The decision of one admission authority is not binding on another, but where one Community or Voluntary Controlled school is in agreement, KCC would expect all other named Community or Voluntary Controlled schools to agree unless they had strong reasons not to.

- Admissions authorities should ensure that parents receive a response to their request in writing before national offer day.
- If their request is agreed, their application for the normal age group should be withdrawn.
- Parents should then make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year. Parents must apply using a paper application sent directly to the LA and include a copy of the agreement from each named school.

9.10 Funding is driven by children who are on role and attending the school, which is initially measured using the October School Census. As no child is legally required to start school in the first term, the School's Funding Forum use the January census to allocate school's additional funding for children that started in the second term. There is currently no mechanism for schools to receive funding for a child that does not start school at the beginning of Term 3.

If a parent chooses to defer their child's entry to school, the child remains entitled to a funded early education place of 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year until they are admitted to school. It must be noted, however, that the school will receive no funding for a child who starts Reception Class after the January census. It is, therefore, the preference of the Governors at St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School that all children attend school, even if only part-time, by the beginning of Term 3 (January).

9.11 Deal Learning Alliance criteria for admission out of year group

In the Deal Learning Alliance we believe a child should be educated in their age appropriate year group. In our professional opinion, children who do not experience the full EYFS are disadvantaged socially and academically when transferring to Key Stage 1. Through our highly skilled approach to differentiation we feel every child's needs can be catered for in their age appropriate year group to ensure strong academic and emotional development.

In principle a decision to be admitted outside their age appropriate year group needs careful consideration and will only take place in exceptional circumstances. In order to assess the suitability for admission out of year group the following criteria will be applied by all primary schools in the Deal Learning Alliance.

It is the responsibility of the parent of the child to provide independent evidence to demonstrate their child will thrive in the year group they are requesting and provide evidence that the child's age appropriate year group is currently not meeting their needs.

We recommend that children are admitted to school in EYFS at one admission point and that staggered admission to school is not the preferred route for schools in the Deal Learning Alliance.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

10.1 This policy will be monitored by the governing body, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by the local Admissions Forum.



10.2 The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our school or in the local area.