

The Firs Lower School
Admissions Policy 2017-2018



The Firs Lower School has 5 year groups, Reception (the 4+ unit), year 1, year 2, year 3 and year 4. The number of places per year group (standard number) is 60.

If the number of places in a particular year group is not sufficient to meet the requests of all parents, then places are offered to children in the following order:

1. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after' (see definitions);
2. Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school (see definition of sibling);
3. Other pupils living in the catchment area (see Appendix A)
4. Other siblings (see definitions)
5. Pupils of members of staff (see definitions)
6. Any other children determined by straight line distance to the school site from the pupil's home address. (see notes/definitions)

Notes

In any situation where there are more children with an equal right to admission than the number of available places, priority will be given to children living the shortest distance, measured in a straight line, between the school and the child's home address. (see definitions)

Overriding priority will be given to the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school, even if it is full. Priority will also be given to the admission of pupils in accordance with the 'In-Year Fair Access Protocol'. (Which will be placed on the school website).

A place will normally be offered at the catchment area school if parents apply for a place at that school during the normal admissions round. However, a place at the catchment area school cannot be guaranteed. If a pupil moves into the catchment area outside the normal admissions round (or after the allocation process has begun) it may be more difficult to offer a place at the catchment area school if this would mean exceeding the admission number at the school. In this case, a place will normally be offered at the next nearest school or academy which caters for pupils of the same age and has places available.

Parents of pupils not offered a place at the school will have the right of appeal to an independent admissions appeal panel. Any child refused a place at the school will be placed on a waiting list which will be prioritised according to the admissions criteria. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be maintained for the whole school year.

In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the School Admissions Team database to allocate the place.

Details regarding the admission of pupils into the 4+unit (the reception class)

The school has a 60 place unit for children who have reached the age of 4 years by the start of the September term. Children are admitted once a year, in one intake in September. All children (regardless of when their birthday is) will be offered a full time place, with an option to attend part time in the morning in the 1st term.

In the interests of continuity for the children, it will be necessary for them to attend either 5 mornings or 5 full time sessions. (If they wish to however, parents will have the opportunity to switch to a full time from a morning place, after the October half term).

The Local Authority co-ordinates the process for admission into the 4+ unit. The online application form is available from the Local Authority website.

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Delayed admission for summer born children

Parents have the right to request their summer born child's admission to Reception Year is in the September following their fifth birthday. (A summer born child is one born between 1st April to 31st August). However parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, a decision will be made by the school in consultation with the governors.

Parents/carers need to make their request in writing, directly to the school. The request should include the parents'/carer's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant. Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional and if applicable, details if the child was born prematurely, including whether they would have been in a lower age group had they been born on their due date.

The school will then consider the request, making their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child in accordance with the School Admissions Code. Once determined, the decision will be communicated by the school to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

If a request is granted, the parent will need to make an application as part of next year's normal admission round and this will be processed within the normal allocation process. A place is never guaranteed at the school and in the case of oversubscription, places are offered in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. In short it would be delaying the application rather than an offer of a place.

Details regarding In-Year Admissions

If parents are thinking of sending their child to The Firs, they should contact the school in the first instance. Requests for admission into the school outside the normal admissions period should be made directly to the Local Authority who co-ordinates the process for In-Year admissions. The In-Year admissions forms can be downloaded from The Central Bedfordshire website and can be completed online. A copy of this can also be found on The Firs Lower School's website.

Definitions

'Looked after' children

A 'looked after' child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Previously 'looked after' children

A previously 'looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order setting the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. 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).

Siblings

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

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Pupils of members of staff

Any child of a member of our full time or part time staff (teaching or non-teaching) who is employed by the school. Temporary staff are not included in this arrangement.

Home Address

A pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the pupil is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Mondays to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address, this will be checked against original official documentation e.g. Council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water), a rental agreement, a child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.