



# Admissions and Appeals Policy 2023/24

Policy Title:	Admissions and appeals policy
Version:	1.0
Approval Date:	08/09/2022
Date Of Next Review:	01/09/2023
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# Darwen Vale High School

## Admissions Policy

This policy sets out the admission arrangements for Darwen Vale High School in 2023/24. It applies to applications to start in Year 7 in September 2023 as well as 'In-year' applications; it also includes details of the oversubscription criteria, waiting lists and the appeals process.

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## Introduction

- i. Thank you for your interest in applying for a place at Darwen Vale High School. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the admission arrangements for a place at the academy including information on timescales, deadlines and contact details for queries.
- ii. It also provides guidance on how applications are administered, the criteria used to prioritise applications (where necessary), waiting lists and the appeals process.
- iii. **DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL is a non-selective secondary school. The academy has an agreed Published Admission Number<sup>1</sup> (PAN) for the following year groups;**

Year group	PAN
Year 7	240
Year 8	215
Year 9	230
Year 10	200
Year 11	160

## Statutory Guidance and Definitions

- i. All information in this policy meets the statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) in the School Admissions Code 2021, (“the Code”) and the School Admissions Appeals Code 2012, (“the Appeals Code”).
- ii. Aldridge Education is a Multi-Academy Trust and is the admissions authority for all academies in the Aldridge Education Trust, including Darwen Vale High School, Aldridge Education, in accordance with its funding agreement, is responsible for the admissions policy of each academy and co-ordinates with the relevant Local Authority for the administration of admissions applications. For Darwen Vale High School the relevant Local Authority is Blackburn with Darwen.
- iii. According to the Code, there are two different routes for applications - ‘**normal round**’ and ‘**in-year**’; each route has a slightly different application process and timescales. Both application routes are detailed separately in this policy.

‘**Normal round**’ is relevant to all applications for a place in Year 7 starting at the beginning of the Autumn term in September.

‘**In-Year**’ is relevant to applications;

a) for all year groups other than Year 7 starting at the beginning of the Autumn term in September.

or

b) for any year group after the start of the Autumn term.



<sup>1</sup> The maximum number of places available for admission in the year group



- iv. **PLEASE NOTE:** This policy is not relevant to the process for naming the academy on a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Needs. There is a **separate process** for selecting or changing the school named on an EHCP or Statement of Educational Needs which is outside of the admissions process. Please contact the child's home Local Authority for further details.

## Application Process

### Normal Round – Secondary (Year 7)

- i. Applications for a place at the academy are administered through the Blackburn with Darwen LA application process. Parents resident in Blackburn with Darwen can apply online at <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/coordinated-school-admissions-arrangements/co-ordinated> parents' resident in other areas must apply through their home local authority.
- ii. The Local Authority's timetable will be used for all normal round applications each year (exact dates within the months may vary from year to year).
- iii. The academy publishes information about the arrangements for admission, including oversubscription criteria, in February for the following September (e.g. in February 2021 for admissions in September 2022).

### Secondary application timetable:

The academy has an agreed PAN of 240 in Year 7

**September / October 2022:** The academy provides opportunities for prospective pupils and their parents/carers to visit the academy.

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2022:** National closing date for Secondary applications. Deadline for the Common Application Form to be completed and submitted to the relevant Local Authority.

**November 2022 – February 2023:** The academy and Local Authority coordinate to process all applications. If more applications are received than places available they will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria published in this policy, see section 4 below. **PLEASE NOTE:** schools are not able to provide any information regarding specific applications during this process.

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2023:** Deadline for the academy to publish its appeals timetable on their website.

**March 2023:** Offers made to parents/carers by the Local Authority.

### Allocation of places:

- a) Where the academy is named on a child's EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs, that pupil will be admitted to the academy.



- b) The academy will consider all applications for places. Where fewer applications are received than places available, the academy will offer places to all those who have applied.
- c) If the number of applications for admission is greater than the PAN (places available), all applications will be considered, and places offered according to the oversubscription criteria in the order set out below (see section 4).
- d) Where an application has been unsuccessful due to a place not being available, applications will be put onto a waiting list which will be maintained until the end of the admission year. The waiting list will be ranked solely according to the oversubscription criteria detailed in this policy (not date of application) and updated each time an unsuccessful application is added. See section 6 below for more details on waiting lists.
- e) Where an application has been unsuccessful parents/carers have the right to appeal the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel. See section 7 below for detailed information on the appeals process.

### **Oversubscription Procedure and Criteria (All applications)**

If the number of applications received for any phase or year group is greater than the number of spaces available, places will be allocated according to the oversubscription criteria and order below.

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order<sup>2</sup> including those who appear to the Trust to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. 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)

- i. Children of staff at the academy who occupy, or have been recruited to, a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Aldridge Education must approve the Principal's assessment process and designation of such posts to confirm the staff members' eligibility under this criterion. Priority will be limited to one place for each form of entry in any year (i.e. 3 places in each 3-form year group).

2 An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. 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).



- ii. Children who, at the time of admission, have a sibling who attends the academy. For this purpose, “sibling” means a whole, half or step-sibling or an adopted child resident at the same address.
- iii. Children of staff in the school who have been employed at the academy for two or more years at the time the application is submitted. Aldridge Education must approve the Principal’s decision to allocate places to staff under this criterion. Priority will be limited to one place for each form of entry in any year (i.e. 3 places in each 3-form year group).
- iv. Distance measurement – Priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school.

The Local Authority measures distance on behalf of Aldridge Education. Blackburn with Darwen LA use Ordinance Survey Data to calculate **straight line distance** between the child’s home and the main entrance to the academy. Where a child resides in a block of flats, the distance will be measured to the main entrance of the building in which the flats are located.

**PLEASE NOTE:** A child’s home will be the address at which the child normally resides, and which has been notified to relevant agencies (e.g. the Local Authority) as being the child’s normal place of residence. Where a child lives normally during the school week with more than one parent at different addresses, the permanent home address for the purposes of school admissions will be the one where the child spends the majority of school nights Monday–Friday.

- v. **Tie breaker:** If Aldridge Education is unable to distinguish between applicants using the published oversubscription criteria, including those who live in blocks of flats within the same building, places will be offered via a random draw which will be supervised by someone independent of the academy.
- vi. In the case of multiple births or siblings in the same year group, where there is only one place available in the academy, all will be considered together as one application.

### **‘In-Year’ Application Process**

- i. The ‘In-Year’ application process is relevant to applications for places in any year group that does not have a PAN (e.g. Years 8 - 11), starting at the beginning of the academic year or for any year group starting at any other point throughout the academic year.
- ii. The Local Authority holds information on which schools in their area have spaces for each year group. Contact Blackburn with Darwen LA via the link below for further information.  
<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/index.php/schools-and-education/school-admissions/coordinated-school-admissions-arrangements/year-co>
- iii. In-year applications to Darwen Vale High School can be submitted at any time and are made through the Local Authority.



The In-Year application form is available from either the BwD 'Fair Access' or 'Place Planning and Admissions' teams.

- iv. Darwen Vale High School will inform the Local Authority of any In-Year applications received, as well as the outcome, so that they can track vacancies across the area.
- v. If an in-year application is refused the child will be added to the waiting list for that year group. A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely according to the oversubscription criteria in this policy. See section 4 for the oversubscription criteria and section 6 for more information on waiting lists.
- vi. If an In-Year application has been refused, the parent/carers has the right to appeal the decision to an Independent Appeals Panel. For detailed information about the appeals process see section 7 of this policy.
- vii. **Fair Access Protocol:** Local Authorities are required to have Fair Access Protocols to make sure that unplaced, vulnerable children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. The school complies with Blackburn with Darwen LA's Fair Access Protocol. Admissions under Fair Access Protocol are discussed between the academy and Local Authority on a case-by-case basis. This may mean admitting children above the PAN.

## Waiting Lists

- i. Any child refused a place at the academy will automatically be put on a waiting list (unless a higher preference school has been offered.) A waiting list will be maintained until the end of the academic year after which it will be cleared.
- ii. The waiting list is maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria only (not application date). This means that names can move down the list if, e.g. someone moves into the area and is higher placed under the oversubscription criteria.
- iii. Parents/carers have the right to request their child is removed from the waiting list at any time. Once removed, the child cannot be reinstated on the waiting list without submitting a new application.
- iv. If a place becomes available it will be allocated to the first child on the waiting list, in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If that offer is declined the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

## Unsuccessful Applications and the Appeals Process

- i. All applicants who have applied for a Secondary place at the academy and been refused have a right to appeal that decision to an Independent Appeal Panel.





- ii. Applicants will be informed in writing of the academy's decision to refuse their application. This letter will include;
  - a) The reason a place was refused (e.g. no available places)
  - b) Information about the waiting list
  - c) Information about the right to appeal
  - d) The deadline for submitting an appeal
  - e) Contact details for making an appeal
- iii. Full details on the appeals process, timetable and an appeals booklet for parents is available on the academy website, see link below.

<http://www.darwenvale.com/admissions>

- iv. the deadline for submitting an appeal will be at least **20 school days<sup>3</sup> from the date of notification that an application was unsuccessful**. Appeals received after this date are subject to different timeframes and exact deadlines will be provided in the letter from the school. This deadline applies to 'normal round' and 'in-year' applications.
- v. Appeals are submitted to Aldridge Education via an online<sup>4</sup> form which is available through the academy website or from the academy. See section 9 for contact details.
- vi. the decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is binding on all parties.

### **Applications Out-of-Chronological Age Group**

- i. Parents/carers may choose to seek a place for their child outside of their chronological age group for a variety of reasons (e.g. the child is summer born, is considered gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health).
- ii. The decision to admit a child out-of-year group is uncommon and will always be made based on the unique circumstances for each specific case and what is best for that individual child. The decision will be made by the Principal of the academy and will take into account parents'/carers' views, expert advice from relevant social, educational and medical professionals, whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group, any evidence that the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely and the long-term impact of the decision on the child.

<sup>3</sup> School days do not include weekends, national holidays or school holidays

<sup>4</sup> Hard copies are available on request from the school. These should be returned to the academy for the attention of the Admissions Officer.



- iii. Applications for a child to be admitted to a year group outside of their chronological age group should be made through the same process set out in this policy for both 'normal round' and 'in-year' applications. However, in addition to the standard application form **further documentation should be provided to support the request for a place out of chronological year group**. This applies regardless of whether it is for a higher or lower year group.
- iv. The Principal may request additional information after the submission of an application for an out-of-year group place, if necessary.
- v. Each application will be considered on the individual circumstances of each case. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision, including the reasons for it.
- vi. Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal if they are refused a place at the academy. However, this right does not apply if they are offered a place at the academy, but it is not in their preferred age group.

### Further Information and Contact Details

- i. For queries regarding this policy, admissions arrangements for the academy and the waiting lists and appeals process, please contact:  
  
Miss R Bridges, Assistant Principal Email: [rebecca.bridges@darwenvale.com](mailto:rebecca.bridges@darwenvale.com) Tel: 01254 223000
- ii. Further information and links to all relevant forms for admissions and appeals are available on the academy website via the link below.  
  
<http://www.darwenvale.com/admissions>  
  
<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions>
- iii. Further information on Blackburn with Darwen LA's Fair Access Protocol – [click here](#)
- iv. The Department for Education website on school admissions – [click here](#)
- v. The Department for Education School Admissions Code 2021 – [Click here](#)
- vi. The Department for Education School Admissions Appeals Code 2012 - [click here](#)