

PARK ACADEMY ADMISSIONS POLICY

This document sets out the admission arrangements for Park Academy for entry in 2021/2022.

1. General Arrangements

1.1 Compliance with the Code of Practice for Admissions

Park Academy will comply with the School Admissions Code to ensure the admissions arrangements are clear, lacking complexity and fair. Park Academy will make sure that all communication is targeted and accessible to all in our community, including the hard to reach, and those requiring information in additional languages.

The academy will not seek to select its students by ability, interview applicants or seek payment from parents and carers for admission. Although Park Academy has a Christian ethos, we will not seek to admit on the basis of faith and will operate an inclusive admissions policy (open to all faiths and to none).

1.2 Reception Admissions

Park Academy will work alongside Merton Council ensuring that parents and carers can benefit from a prospectus and suitable marketing materials at the earliest opportunity. Park Academy will of course ensure that website information is available to all prospective parents and carers www.parkacademy.org

Park Academy will offer full time education to children from the September before the fifth birthday. Parents may request to defer their child's entry to Reception until later in the Reception year, or request to stagger entry from part-time to full time attendance, but not beyond statutory school age. If the parent of a summer born child wishes to defer their child's entry until the start of Year 1, they must re-apply for a school place at that time.

Park Academy will admit **30** students to Reception in 2021/2022.

1.3 In-Year Admissions

Applications for Park Academy outside the normal points of entry to Reception should be made directly to Park Academy.

1.4 General admissions arrangements

We intend to attract local students and all our publicity and promotional material is designed to appeal to parents and carers in the surrounding neighbourhoods of the school. We are determined that no-one will be marginalised because of challenging or difficult circumstances and will put support in place where this is needed to access information and communication with Park Academy.

2. Process of Application

Park Academy is part of the Pan London co-ordinated admissions scheme for primary admissions. Parents must complete their Home Local Authority (LA) Common Application Form (CAF) and return it to their Home Local Authority by the closing date. Merton's CAF is available on-line at www.merton.gov.uk/admissions or from Park Academy. If you wish to apply for a place at Park Academy you must name the school as one of your preferences on the CAF.

The indicative timeline for applications to Park Academy for September is:-

Period	Activity
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 September Pan London co-ordinated admissions application opens• Merton online application system opens• Applications can be made via www.merton.gov.uk/admissions (search for 'school admissions')• Park Academy Prospectus available
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 January is the deadline for applications to be returned to Merton to administer
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STEP Academy trust are notified of applications received
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STEP Academy Trust provide Merton with a list of applicants in criteria order. In the case of oversubscription, STEP Academy Trust will apply the admissions criteria outlined below in section 3.1
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 April offers made to parents/carers• 30 April deadline for acceptances• W/c 27 April distribution of appeal forms to those parents/carers who have requested one
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deadline for appeal forms
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All appeals submitted by the deadline will be heard by an Independent Appeals panel

3. Admissions and Oversubscription Criteria for Park Academy

Park Academy wishes to work in harmony with the locally coordinated procedures throughout the admissions process.

Where the number of applications for admissions is *lower* than the published admission number, all applicants will be admitted. Where the number of applications for admission is *greater* than the published admission number, applications will be considered using oversubscription criteria as detailed in Section 3.1 below.

It is important that all information presented on the CAF is correct and verifiable. STEP Academy Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if it has been made on the basis of misleading or false information presented on the CAF.

3.1 Children with an Education Health and Care Plan

There are separate statutory procedures in place which govern the admission of children with special educational needs (“SEN”) for whom an education health and care plan (“EHC plan”) has been issued by their Local Authority. This means that the parents of children who have an EHC plan should not apply for admission of their child to the Academy under this Admission Policy. If parents have a preference for the Academy to be named as the provider in their child’s EHC plan, the Local Authority needs to be made aware of this so that they can consider whether the Academy is suitable in consultation with the child’s parents and the Academy.

Where a child’s EHC plan names the Academy as the provider, the child will be admitted to the Academy even if this will result in the published admission number (“PAN”) for that year group, or the statutory maximum infant class size, being exceeded. Where admission is to Reception Year in September (i.e. in the normal admission round), the number of places available within the PAN for other children will be reduced.

3.2 Oversubscription Criteria

When Park Academy is oversubscribed for any year group, applications for entry will be prioritised by ranking against the following factors, in order:

- I. Looked after children at the time when preferences are expressed and who are still in public care at the time of their admission to school, and those who have been or previously looked after, (see note 3.2.1), then
- II. Children/families for whom Park Academy accepts that there are exceptional medical, social or welfare reasons which are directly relevant to the school concerned, (See note 3.2.2), then
- III. Applications for siblings (see note 3.2.3), then
- IV. Straight line distance between the child’s home address and Park Academy (see note at 3.2.4), then

Please note children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) naming Park Academy in particular will be admitted before all other applicants. Admission numbers in section 1.2 will be adjusted to take this into account before the remaining places are offered to other applicants.

Where there are more applicants for the available places within categories (i) – (iii), then the straight line distance as described in note 3.2.4 below will be used as the final determining factor, nearer addresses having priority over more distant ones. If oversubscription occurs in category (iv), and home to school distance is equal, rank order will be determined by Park Academy using a random number generator. This process will be independently verified. Where this applies to twins or other multiple births, the school will consider if it can accommodate the additional child(ren) on a case by case basis.

3.2 Notes

3.2.1 Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children

Looked after and previously looked after children will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

A "looked after child" is a child in public care at the date on which the application is made. A "previously looked after child" is a child who was in public care, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order, Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order immediately after being in public care, as well as those children who appear to STEP Academy Trust/Local 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 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.

To be included in this category, the application for admission must be supported by the relevant Local Authority's Children's Services Department. In the case of a previously looked after child, a copy of the adoption or special guardianship order must also accompany the application for admission where a child falls under this criteria because they are subject to such an order. For a child who appears to STEP Academy Trust/Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, parents should provide evidence to support their application under this criteria.

Failure to provide the above noted evidence will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

3.2.2 Professionally Supported Medical Reasons or Exceptional Social Reasons

Applicants wishing to be considered under this criterion must supply professional evidence supporting their case at the time of application. This evidence should be in the form of a supporting letter from a relevant professional, e.g. a doctor's letter/certificate, or a letter from a Social Worker. Providing evidence does not guarantee priority under this criterion; Park Academy will consider if the evidence provided demonstrates that the child must attend Park Academy in particular and cannot reasonably attend an alternative school.

Applicants will not be individually advised if their application has been prioritised under this criterion.

3.2.3 Siblings

Children with a sibling at Park Academy at the date of their admission will be allocated places in this category by reference to the proximity of the child's home address (as defined by this policy) to the Academy, with those living nearer receiving higher priority.

A "sibling" will include a full, half, step, adopted or foster brother or sister, as well as a child of their parent's partner with whom they have been cohabiting for a period of at least one year at the application deadline, provided that in all cases the sibling and the applicant child live at the child's home address (as defined by this policy) and are being brought up as siblings as part of a core family unit. For the avoidance of doubt, a child of a friend or extended family member (for example, a cousin) living at the same address will not be a sibling for the purpose of this policy.

Parents must ensure that they have included full details of the sibling in the Common Application Form to be included in this category. Failure to do so will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

3.2.4 Straight Line Distance

Distances will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. All distances will be calculated using a radial measurement. It should be noted that the distance will be defined from a start point plotted within the centre of the property at which the applicant lives to Park Academy school gate. Where a school has more than one entrance gate used for admissions purposes, the one closest to the applicant's home will be used. The child's home address excludes any business, relative's or childminder's address and must be the applicant's normal place of residence. If there is a genuine equal share custody arrangement between the two parents, the address that will be used will normally be the address of the parent who is claiming Child Benefit for the child, however all available evidence will be considered. The address to be used for the initial allocation of places to Reception will be the child's address at the closing date for application. Changes of address up to dates stated in the scheme may be considered if there are exceptional reasons behind the change, such as if a family has just moved to the area, or has returned from abroad. The address to be used for waiting lists, after the initial allocation, and for in-year admissions will be the child's current address. Any offer is conditional upon the child living at the appropriate address on the relevant date. Parents have a responsibility to notify Park Academy of any change of address.

3.2.5 Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants

The Academy will accept applications and allocate a place for the admission of the children of UK Armed Forces Personnel with a confirmed posting in the area of the Academy, or the children of Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in the area of the Academy, in advance of them arriving. These children do not have to be living at the stated home address at the application deadline, as all other children do.

The application for admission must be supported by an official letter declaring the relocation date. The Academy will use the address at which the child will live when applying our oversubscription criteria, as long as parents provide some evidence of their intended address. We will use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria, where a parent requests this.

4 Waiting lists

Where there are more applicants than places available, waiting lists will operate for each year group according to the oversubscription criteria shown above and without regard to the date the application was received or when a child's name was added to the waiting list. Children with statements of special educational need will take priority over children on a waiting list.

Waiting lists for entry to Reception in September will be maintained until the last day of the Autumn term. Parents wishing to remain on the waiting list after this date must write to Park Academy by 31 December, stating their wish and providing their child's name, date of birth and the name of their current school. After 31 December, parents whose children are not already on the waiting list but who wish them to be so must make an application through our in-year admission process. Waiting lists for other year groups will be reviewed termly.

5 Late applications for admission

Where there are extenuating circumstances for an application being received after the last date for applications, and it is before the governors have established their list of pupils to be admitted, then it will be considered alongside all the others.

Otherwise, applications which are received after the last date will be considered after all the others, and placed on the waiting list in order according to the criteria.

6 Fair Access Protocol

The Academy is committed to taking a fair and reasonable proportion of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as identified in the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol.

7 Appeals

Applicants who are not offered a place at Park Academy will be given a right of appeal, in line with the School Admissions Appeal Code (DfE, 2012). Clerks Associates UK manage the appeals process on behalf of STEP Academy Trust. Parents/carers may find out general information about the appeals process from their website (<http://www.clerksassociates.co.uk>).

Outcome letters will give full details of how to lodge an appeal for Park Academy along with advice on the relevant timescales and deadlines.