

# **The Rutland Learning Trust**

**Providing outstanding education for all pupils – today and tomorrow!**

*World-class education and care that allows every child to achieve their potential, regardless of location, prior attainment or background.*

**By.....**

**Working Together**

**Sustaining Excellence**

**Transforming Learning**

## **Admissions Policy 2020 Part one**



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## **Part One – The Trust**

### **1.1 Admissions Policy Overview**

The Rutland Learning Trust (RLT) is the admission authority for the schools within our Trust. The Rutland Learning Trust is its own admission authority and is responsible for setting the criteria for admission, interpretation and for the administration of admissions to the schools within the Trust. The Department for Education (DfE) Admissions Code requires the admissions into the Early Years Foundation Stage year group, at the beginning of the academic year, be co-ordinated by the local authority; Rutland County Council is the co-ordinating authority for admissions in Rutland.

As the admission authority for all schools in the trust, we need to ensure that the trust's practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places is fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of admission arrangements and understand easily how places for that individual school are allocated. The schools within the Rutland Learning Trust welcome children from all backgrounds and abilities.

Rutland Learning Trust is a mixed, Church of England and Community Multi-Academy Trust. The Rutland Learning Trust Members approve the appointment of Trustees who are accountable for the effective leadership and management of the Trust. The Trustees delegate responsibility to each Local Governing body for managing the admission process within their school. The Trust will then consider and approve arrangements and admissions.

The admission arrangements for our schools reflect their own local communities and their own distinctive and individual school ethos. Admission arrangements are governed by the School Admission's Code, which is published by the Department for Education.

The Admission Code recognises that schools within an admission authority's care may each require amended and different individual policies.

The admission policies for each school must be subject to public consultation at least once every seven years. When planning significant changes, such as altering catchment areas,

introducing new criteria or anything that would affect admissions of children into our schools, we are obliged, and would wish, to consult.

As an academy trust with Church of England schools, we are obliged by the Schools Admissions Code to have regard to advice from the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). We are also obliged to consult with the Diocese before public consultation. The DBE's advice is that Church Schools do not make provision for faith-based criteria to be considered when more applications are received than there are places available. This policy reflects that advice.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

When considering admission of pupils into any of our schools, the following principles apply:

1. all applications are treated equally;
2. no Rutland Learning Trust school selects by ability;
3. admissions will be dealt with as the individual school's admission policy states;
4. subject to infant class size regulations, and planned admission numbers within schools, our schools will prioritise parental preference wherever possible;
5. appeals against refusals to admit a pupil will be dealt with by an independent appeal panel, duly constituted as required by the School Appeal Admissions Code;
6. Rutland Learning Trust schools are inclusive and are committed to ensuring that the needs of every child on roll are met.

## **1.3 Local Authority Obligations**

The Department for Education (DfE) Admissions Code requires that admissions into the Early Years Foundation Group (i.e. children starting at primary school for the first time), at the beginning of an academic year, be co-ordinated by the local authority (LA) for all schools regardless of who is the admission authority. This is in order to provide a better service to parents and carers. This co-ordination involves a common application form and a common timetable as described in the 'co-ordinated schemes'. Rutland, along with all other local authorities, must follow a specified timetable. In-year admissions are covered in para 1.7.

Every local authority must publish a composite booklet that explains the process for starting primary school each year. This is found on Rutland County Council's website entitled

'Starting Primary School' and explains information about the admission process, timetable, appeals process and other useful information. Below is an example of the brochure for 2019.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/74975.pdf>

#### **1.4 The Application Process (normal admission round)**

When a child is due to start primary school for the first time for entry in our Early Years Foundation Group (also known as reception), if they are resident in Rutland applications are made to Rutland County Council using the Rutland County Council Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. Any parent living outside of Rutland needs to apply to their own local authority; that local authority will then ensure that forms are sent to Rutland County Council for the co-ordinated response. For those applying from overseas, for application into our Early Years Foundation Group (reception) for the first time, they must contact Rutland County Council in the first instance. Information about the admissions process and links to Rutland County Council are found on the admissions page of each school and by following this link.

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/schools-education-and-learning/school-admissions/admission-arrangements/>

#### **1.5 School Transport**

Rutland Learning Trust is not responsible for any decisions that relate to school transport, this is a matter for the local authority.

#### **1.6 Starting School**

In Rutland, children begin school at the start of the academic year when they become five. There is one admission at the beginning of the Autumn term. However, there may be individual children who begin earlier or later in the academic year, see section 1.17 in this policy. Admission of summer-born children is addressed later in the policy in section 1.17.

### **1.7 Changing School (in year admission)**

Within Rutland the responsibility to co-ordinate all admission applications outside the normal admissions rounds has been passed from the local authority to individual schools or academies. These admissions are known as 'in-year admissions' and refer to a child who is not starting primary school for the first time (normal admissions rounds), but who has changed from one primary school to another.

An application must be submitted to the school of choice. The school will then send a response in writing, to advise whether they are able to offer a school place.

In year admission applications will be considered and accepted in advance. A place will only be determined up to a maximum of 3 months before the intended start date. **THIS ONLY APPLIES TO CROWN SERVANTS AND IS FOR IN YEAR ADMISSIONS.** Applications into our Early Years Foundation Group (reception), follow the normal admission round as stated in para 1.4 above.

### **1.8 How does the process work?**

By law, every school must have a mechanism to deal with a situation when there are more applications than places. This involves setting priority criteria.

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school as part of that plan are automatically admitted. These children are not included in the priority criteria; the school offers them a place as this is required by law.

The number of places available in a school is indicated by its planned admission number (PAN). When there are more applications than places, the priority criteria are applied in an objective and fair way. Initially a list is provided by Rutland County Council for Early Years Foundation Group. This is then confirmed by the Local Governing Body (LGB) at each school, where authority is delegated to the LGB by the Trust.

### **1.9 What is the Planned Admission Number?**

The PAN is the number of children the school can accommodate on admission to Reception (also known as Early Years Foundation Group). This is set by law and is the number that the school considers it can teach, in Reception, in an effective manner. Additionally, the Infant Class Size Regulations require that in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 no class shall have more than 30 pupils to each qualified teacher. This may mean that in smaller schools, combinations of year groups are also affected by Infant Class Size Regulations; where there are mixed year groups the combined size of the class must not exceed 30 pupils per qualified teacher.

### **1.10 Fair Access Protocols**

Every school is obliged to take part in local fair access protocols. Fair access protocols exist for children who have no school place and who are at risk from missing education due to several factors. Fair access protocols work by a group of schools discussing who can best meet needs of pupils who fall into this category. The fair access protocol procedure takes precedence over the waiting list.

Hard to Place children who fall under the Rutland County Council Fair Access Protocol are:

- Children from the criminal justice system or Pupil Referral Units who need to be reintegrated into mainstream education
- Children who have been out of education for two months or more;
- Children of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Children who are homeless;
- Children with unsupportive family backgrounds for whom a place has not been sought;
- Children who are carers;
- Children with special educational needs, disabilities or medical conditions (but without an Education, Health and Care Plan)

### **1.11 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).**

- The Rutland Learning Trust will not refuse an application for admission to a Rutland Learning Trust school because it is believed that the school cannot cater for the child's special educational needs and/or disabilities

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but no Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are dealt with through the normal admissions policy. Schools cannot refuse to admit a pupil because he/she does not have an EHCP or is being assessed for one.
- *The Trust Board is required by section 324 of the Education Act 1996 and Children and Families Act 2014 s. 33 to admit to a school a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school. This is not an oversubscription criterion. Schools must admit children with EHCPs which name the school whether there are places available in the school or not, unless it would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. Efficient education means providing for each child or young person a suitable, appropriate education in terms of their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. SEN Code of Practice 2015, para 9.79*

### **1.12 Withdrawing Offers**

The Rutland Learning Trust can withdraw offers of places in certain circumstances. An offer of a place will be withdrawn when a parent has not responded to an offer within a reasonable period of time, usually 21 days from the date of that offer. The offer can also be withdrawn if the basis of the offer was either a fraudulent or misleading application.

### **1.13 Late Applications**

The Rutland Learning Trust, working with Rutland County Council, may accept late applications for first-time admission. All applications received by the closing date will be treated equally. However, if you submit your application after the closing date it will be processed as a late application and this could result in you not receiving an offer at your preferred school. There have to be particular reasons why an application is late, and this is not subject to any appeal at this point. An Independent Appeal Panel may take a different view at a later stage in the process.

Examples of reasons for a late application are:

- family returning from abroad;
- lone parent has been ill for some time;
- family moving into the area from another area;

- other exceptional circumstances.

Whilst every case is treated on its own merits, evidence to explain why the application is late will be required in every instance. An application that is accepted as being late, but with justifiable reason, will be included in the first cycle of allocations and the parents will be notified on the national offer day.

Other late applications for a named academy after the specified date will be dealt with after the offer day and will be considered against the oversubscription criteria.

### **1.14 Waiting Lists**

Each school will operate a waiting list. The list is made up of children whose parent/carers have applied for a place at the school and been unsuccessful. The list will be maintained until the end of that academic year. When a place becomes available the next child on the list will be offered the space. If that family does not require the space, it will pass to the next child and so on.

After the waiting list has been disbanded, places will be allocated on application and if a space is available, following the standard in-year admission procedures.

### **1.15 Multiple Births**

In the unusual event of there being one space available within the infant class size limit, children of multiple births are permitted exceptions to the class size limit in these circumstances.

### **1.16 Infant Class Size Limits, Multiple Birth Children and Permitted Exceptions**

In compliance with the relevant regulations, an infant child (i.e. up to and including Year 2) who moves into a school's area once initial allocation decisions have been made, will not necessarily be offered a place in the school if the relevant class will already contain 30 children *and* if an alternative school with space available in the relevant year group within 2 miles of the home address is identified. If there are no places available in nearby schools, the child will be an excepted pupil in the catchment school, allowing the class to exceed 30 pupils.

### **1.17 Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry**

Upon notification of a school place being offered, a child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents can request that the date the child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not

beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made.

To defer a place at first time admission, parents are asked to inform the school where the child has been allocated school place.

If a child does not attend school by the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made, parents are required to make a new application.

### **1.18 Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

For early entry, parents are to contact Rutland County Council in the first instance.

Parents of a summer-born child, that is, those children born from 1st April to 31<sup>st</sup> August, may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group, for example, to Reception rather than Year 1.

To request a delayed entry parents are required to make an application for their child's admission to their normal age group at the usual time in accordance with this policy and at the same time to submit a request to the admission authority for admission out of the

normal age group. Further information about the process will be provided to parents upon their request for admission outside of normal age group or by contacting the School. \*\*

Decisions will be made by the admissions authority on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will take into account parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, where relevant their medical history and any views of a medical professional, whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group and whether they may have fallen in to a lower age group if the child was not born prematurely. The views of the Headteacher of the school concerned must be taken in to account. Decisions made by the admissions authority will be clearly set out.

When informing a parent of the decision on which year group the child should be admitted to, the reason(s) will be given.

Where the admitting authority agrees to the parent's request for their child to be admitted to a year out of their normal age group, it will be necessary for the parent(s) to apply again for a place at the appropriate time, and as a consequence the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (the age group to which pupils are normally admitted to the school). The local authority (and admission authority if it is not the local authority) will process the application as part of the main admissions round unless the parental request is made too late for this to be possible and on the basis of determined admission arrangements only including the priority criteria when this applies.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another. Upon transfer, it will be a matter for that admission authority. Decisions will be made by the admission authority regarding the parental request for admission out of normal age group in time for parents to make an informed decision about whether their child will start school before compulsory school age. An application will not be given a lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group.

Parents' statutory right to appeal against or refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not their preferred age group.

### **1.19 Children of UK Services Personnel and other Crown Servants**

Such children must be allocated a place in advance, dependent on an official government letter declaring a relocation date and intended address, if the applicant would meet the criteria on relocation. Also see para

A unit postal address must be accepted, or if appropriate a “quartering area” address in the absence of a new home postal address.

Once the application has been accepted, the usual admission process will be followed. Places will be offered using the priority criteria, and all applications will be dealt with using the mandatory timeframe for first time admissions. In year admissions will be based on the start date, but the posting address will be used as part of the priority criteria. A place will only be determined up to a maximum of 3 months before the intended start date. Contact will be made with the family/carer before the child is due to start at the school.

Places should be released as soon as possible if they are not required

### **1.20 Appeals**

For first time admissions, the local authority will confirm whether a place has been awarded each year in April prior to the start of the academic year in which the child will start at the school.

For in-year admissions (up to 3 months in advance for Crown Servants only), the school will confirm whether a place can be offered, within ten school days of receiving the application. If an application for a school place is unsuccessful, then parents have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Part Two of this policy contains more information for parents about how to appeal for a place at that school.

\*\* [DfE Code of Conduct para 2.17](#)