



Admissions Policy

2025 – 2026

Audience:	Parents REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
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Other related policies:	
Policy owner:	Calum Marriott, PMO
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Introduction to The Palmer Academy & REAch2

The Palmer Academy (the School) is a primary academy located at 70 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PP and is part of REAch2 Academy Trust (the Trust).

The Palmer Academy is a two-form entry school for children aged 3–11 serving the children and families of Whitley, Reading and the surrounding area. We are part of the REAch2 Reading Cluster which also includes Civitas Academy, Ranikhet Academy and Green Park Village Academy.

At The Palmer Academy we are committed to inspiring the futures of the children we serve through a creative, inclusive and relevant curriculum which enables and encourages them to question the world around them and be curious learners. This results in our children understanding that 'enquiring minds' result in 'inspiring futures'.

We nurture and support our children and equip them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to become confident, determined and respectful young adults who have exciting and ambitious aspirations for their futures.

Palmer children will achieve academic success through a curriculum and ethos which teaches them essential skills and traits for life, such as tenacity, resilience and determination. They leave our school well prepared for the next stages of their education and life in the modern world, with a rich understanding of the subjects they have been taught.

We provide a range of opportunities for children to move learning from the short-term to their long-term memory, resulting in a deep and connected understanding of the subjects taught and the world around them. By the time learners leave The Palmer Academy, they have had many opportunities to learn and practise a range of skills, knowledge and values which prepare them to be citizens of the world.

We respect and embrace all cultures, ethnicities, races, values and beliefs within our community, and celebrate the positive contribution and impact they have on the school. Working together in partnership leads to our children making connections between what we are learning in school and how it relates to the community and world around them.

More information about the School is available on its website: www.thepalmeracademy.com

The Trust is the admission authority for all schools within the REAch2 family. The arrangements, set by the Trust are in accordance with the [School Admissions Code](#) and the [school admission appeals code](#). The Trust's aim is to ensure all of its academies have simple, consistent admission arrangements that focus on serving the local community and reflect the Trust's vision and values.

The Trust has developed this policy in full compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Trust recognises and adheres to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, especially in relation to children with protected characteristics.

More information about the Trust is available on its website: www.reach2.org



Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

Definitions & Interpretations

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

EHC Plan – An education, health and care (EHC) plan for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC Plans are prepared under the Children and Families Act 2014. They identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

In-Year Admission – An in-year admission application is one that is made outside of the normal admissions round, for example when a family moves house part way through a school year or is for admission into a year group other than Reception.

Oversubscribed – Having more applications than available places.

PAN – Stands for “published admission number” and is the number of pupils the school will admit in to Reception.

Parent – Means a natural or adoptive parent of the child, as well as a person who is not the natural or adoptive parent of the child, but who has care of the child, or parental responsibility for the child. This is the legal definition of a ‘parent’ in education law.

Statutory Maximum infant class size – The requirement in law that infant classes (i.e. classes in Reception year, year 1 and year 2 class) with a single school teacher are not permitted to contain more than 30 pupils, except in certain circumstances. Some children are deemed to be ‘excepted pupils’ as listed in the [School Admissions Code](#)

Home address – The address at which the child resides on a permanent basis or is ‘ordinarily resident’. This is generally, the address of the Parent. In some cases, children may be ‘ordinarily resident’ for the majority of the school week, including overnight, with another relative or carer, such as a grandparent. This may also be the case where the child resides between two parents at different addresses following the breakdown of the parental relationship. Where this is the case, the application will be processed on the basis of the address where the child resides for the majority of the school week and proof of residence and address arrangement will be required with the application. The child must be living with the parent, relative or carer for the majority of the school week. Arrangements where parents can leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be considered childcare arrangements, and the child will be deemed to not be ‘ordinarily resident’ with that person. In all cases, we expect the adult with whom the child is ‘ordinarily resident’ receives the child benefit for the child (where eligible).

The exceptions to this rule are the children of UK Armed Forces service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in the area, for whom an application for admission may be made in advance of their move where it is accompanied by an official letter that confirms the intended relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address for the child.

Summer born children – Children born between 1 April and 31 August.

Policy In Detail

The published admission number (PAN) for The Palmer Academy is 60 pupils.

The School will accordingly admit this number of pupils if there are sufficient applications. Where fewer applications than this are received, the Trust will offer places at the School to all those who have applied.

Applications in the 'normal round' (that is the main cycle of applications for Reception places from the beginning of the school year) are administered on behalf of the Trust by Brighter Futures for Children (Reading Borough Council) in accordance with the local coordinated scheme. [School admissions – Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Oversubscription criteria

When the School is oversubscribed (that is, there are more applications than places available), after the admission of any pupils with an EHC Plan that names the School, priority for admission will be given to those children based on the criteria set out below, in the order shown:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Children with one or more siblings in the School
3. Children of School staff fulfilling a skills shortage role
4. Other children, with priority for admission given to those whose home address (as defined by this policy) is the shortest distance from the School. Children in this criteria will be ranked in order of distance.

Definitions relating to the criteria

1. 'Looked after children' are any children who are (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.

'Previously looked after children' are any children that ceased to be looked after because they were adopted, became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. This includes children who appear to the Trust to have been in state care outside of England but ceased to be so because they were adopted.

Children will be regarded by the Trust as having been in state care outside England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Applicants under this criterion will also need to fill in a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) evidencing state care outside of England. The SIF is available from the school website or school office.

2. 'Siblings' – For applications made in the normal admission round a sibling means a brother or sister, legally adopted brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, foster brother or sister, or the child of a parent's co-habiting partner; living in the same family unit in the same family household and address who attends the School at the date of application in any year group excluding the final year. Biological and legally adopted siblings who attend the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year will also be treated as siblings irrespective of place of residence. Children residing in the same household as part of an extended family, such as cousins, will not be treated as siblings. For in-year applications a sibling is a brother, sister,

legally adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit in the same family household and address as a child who attends or has been offered a place at the preferred school at the time of application and determination and with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will be attending at the time of admission.

3. This criterion only applies in relation to staff, whether teaching or non-teaching, with a permanent contract to work predominantly at the School (not Trust employees in the REAch2 cluster or central teams). The application of this criterion will be subject to confirmation by an independent Trust non-executive that, on the evidence available, the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skills shortage. Staff must contact the School Headteacher when applying for a place under this criterion. The Headteacher will provide a letter to the Trust and Local Authority Admissions Team confirming the staff members' permanent employment. For the purposes of this criterion, 'children of School staff' is taken to include a son, daughter or step-son/daughter, or child who is adopted or fostered or for whom a special guardianship order is in place, in all cases providing they are living at the same address as the parent who is employed at the School
4. "Distance" is defined/measured as the straight-line distance from the home to the school, using the Ordnance Survey data points of the home and the school, using computerised software of Reading Borough Council. Every address has a unique data point which is determined by the property's Easting and Northing. This point can be anywhere on the property. The distance created, using this software, is calculated to 3 decimal places". 'Home address' is defined as the "child's single permanent home address where they live with their parent(s) or carer(s). If a child does not live with a parent or legal carer i.e. a single parent family where the parent is ill and the child lives with grandparents for the majority of the week, a full explanation will need to be supplied together with supporting evidence from a professional supporting the family/ child". Note – these definitions are used by the Local Authority in relation to admissions to schools that they maintain – REAch2 schools adopt the same definition to avoid any confusion and keep arrangements as simple as possible for local parents and carers. The school and REAch2 as admissions authority reserve the right to carry out additional checks on the accuracy of the home address provided.

Tie Breaker

Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category '4' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the School is the same. This process will be independently verified. If a tie-break is required in earlier categories to decide who has priority for admission between two children, distance from the school will be used to decide as measured above.

Where multiple birth siblings (twins and triplets etc.) from the same family are tied for the final place, we will admit them all, as permitted by the infant class size rules and exceed our PAN.

Deadline for Applications

Applications for admission into Reception as part of the normal admissions round must be submitted by 15th January. Applications received by the Local Authority after this date may be considered as late applications.

Children with an EHC Plan

Children with an education health and care plan (EHC plan) are admitted to the School under separate statutory procedures managed by the child's Local Authority, and not under this policy.

Where a child with an EHC plan which names the School will be admitted in the 'normal admission round', they will be allocated places in Reception Year before other applications are processed, which will reduce the number of available places within the PAN. At all other times, the child will be admitted even where this means exceeding the PAN.

Deferred entry for Reception places

Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child takes up the place, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Children reach compulsory school age on 31 August, 31 December or 31 March – whichever of those three dates follows (or falls on) the child's 5th birthday.

Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the summer term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Admission of children outside their normal age group, including for 'summer-born' children

Parents of summer born children who are not yet of compulsory school age may request to delay their child's admission until the September after they turn 5. Those parents should apply for a place within the normal admissions round and follow the process below.

In all cases where parents want their child to be educated outside of their chronological age group, an application should be made in writing to the school office at the same time as the application for a place. This should explain why the parents wish for their child to be educated outside of their chronological age group and enclosing any evidence that supports it. Parents of summer born children who are not yet of compulsory school age should specify whether they wish the child to start school in Reception class or join their normal age group peers in Year 1. The views of the headteacher will also be considered.

Parents will be notified of the decision on their application for admission outside of normal age group in writing once it has been made. This decision will be based on the circumstances of the case and what is in the best interests of the child. This decision is separate to the decision on whether a place is granted.

We recommend that parents contact the school to discuss admission within the admission round of the child's chronological age group. This enables the school to assess the best interests of the child and discuss how the curriculum may be tailored to meet their needs within the chronological age group.

Children at the School's Nursery

Parents should note that children who attend the School's nursery will not automatically transfer to Reception Year at the School. An application for admission to Reception Year must be made in the normal way.

Waiting Lists

Where the school receives more applications for Reception places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until 31st August, after which parents must re-apply for a place in Year 1. The waiting list will be maintained by Reading Borough Council and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria (not by date in which the child's name was added). Where places become vacant, they will be

allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be re-ordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves the waiting list.

Appeals

Parents have a statutory right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel against the refusal of a place at the School for their child. Admission appeal panel hearings are conducted strictly in accordance with procedure and criteria set out in the School Admission Appeals Code 2022, which is accessible on the Department for Education's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code>

Appellants should contact Reading Local Authority for information on how to appeal. The appeals process is run in accordance with the statutory processes and timescales set out in the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Details of the appeals procedure can be found here:

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/admissions/appeals/>

In-year Admissions

Parents or Carers interested in transferring a child in-year should contact Brighter Futures for Children Admissions Team for further information. Brighter Futures for Children co-ordinates admission for entry to Primary, Junior and Secondary schools as required by the School Admissions Code, on behalf of Reading Borough Council. Applications can be submitted on their online In Year application form. You can list up to 4 schools, in order of preference.

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/admissions/in-year/>

Fair Access Protocol

The Palmer Academy participates in Brighter Futures for Children fair access protocol. For a copy of Brighter Futures for Children fair access protocol, please visit [Fair-Access-Protocol-September-2021-FINAL.pdf \(brighterfuturesforchildren.org\)](#)

Withdrawing Places

In certain circumstances the Trust may decide to withdraw a place offered if one of the following circumstances occurs:

- Where a parent has not responded to the offer of a place, even after chasing;
- Where fraudulent or intentionally misleading information is used as part of the application; or
- Where the offer has been made in error.