

# The Bliss Charity School



*The Bliss Charity School aims to provide a caring, secure and enriching experience; each child is encouraged to develop strong personal, academic, physical and creative skills for lifelong learning.*

## Admissions Policy (2023-2024)

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## **1. Aims**

This policy aims to:

- Explain **how to apply** for a place at the school.
- Set out the school's **arrangements for allocating places to the pupils** who apply.
- Explain **how to appeal** against a decision not to offer your child a place.

## **2. Legislation and statutory requirements**

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department of Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

## **3. How to apply for a place in the normal admissions round**

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents/carers can apply for a place at The Bliss Charity School. Normal point of entry (Reception), using the Common Application Form (CAF) provided by West Northamptonshire Council.

Parents/carers will receive an offer for a school place directly from West Northamptonshire Council on National Offer Day (16<sup>th</sup> April or the next working day).

To apply for a place through West Northamptonshire Council, please visit <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions>

## **4. Allocation of places**

### **4.1 Admission number**

The Bliss Charity School has an agreed Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 children for entry in Reception.

Places will first be allocated to children who have an Education, Health Care (EHC) Plan that names the school as offering the appropriate provision.

### **4.2 Oversubscription admission criteria**

When there are more applications for places than there are places available, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Children in public care or previously in public care but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order.
2. Children with specific medical and or social needs, supported by written evidence from an appropriate professional person.
3. Children living in Upper Heyford and Nether Heyford. The school reserves the right to request further information from WNC and other agencies to verify the accuracy and permanence of any home address stated in the application.

4. Children with an older sibling continuing at the school at the planned start date of the younger child. The school reserves the right to request further information from WNC and other agencies to verify the accuracy and permanence of any home address stated in the application.
5. Other children.

If the admission number is exceeded within any criterion, priority will be given to those who live closest to the school. Distances are measured on a straight line basis from the address point of the child's home address to the address point of the school.

#### 4.3 Tie-breaker

If two or more applications cannot otherwise be separated and there is only one place available, a random allocation process will be used to determine who should be allocated the place.

### 5. Definitions

**Looked after children** are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions.

**Previously looked after children** are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

The Governors will admit pupils on **medical** or **social** grounds, where professionals have clearly identified that the school will best meet the needs of the pupils. Documentary evidence from appropriate professionals within the Health or Social Care services should be provided to the school no later than 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022. In each case there must be a clear connection between the child's need and The Bliss Charity School, and an explanation of the difficulties that would be caused if the child were to attend another school. This information will be considered by the School's own admission team and will be treated confidentially.

A **sibling** is defined as a child's brother or sister. A sibling must be living at the same permanent address and as part of the same family unit (one or two parents plus children) to qualify under this criterion.

For School Admissions purposes, the term sibling includes:

- half-brothers and half-sisters
- step-brothers and step-sisters
- adopted children
- children in foster care
- children living in the same family unit, even if they are not biological brothers and sisters – for example when the parents are not married/in a civil relationship.

Cousins are not regarded as siblings.

In the case of twins or other siblings from a multiple birth, if the last child to be admitted is from a multiple birth group, the applications will be considered together as one application, meaning we will offer places to all children in the group, even if it means exceeding the Published Admission Number. In the case of siblings (see definition above) in the same year group, where there is only one place remaining, these too will be considered as one application.

The **defined area** (also known as linked or designated area/village) for The Bliss Charity School is Upper Heyford and Nether Heyford.

The **child's home address** is defined as the address at which the child normally resides with their parent/carer at the time of application. If a child lives with parents who are separated, the home address will be treated as the place where the child sleeps for most of the school week (i.e. Sunday night – Thursday night inclusive). If the child spends equal amounts of time at two addresses, the parents must agree which address they wish to be the child's main address before we can process the application.

When we refer to a child's home address, we mean the permanent residence of the child. This address must be the child's only or main residence that is either:

- Owned by the child's parent, parents or carer/guardian.
- Leased to or rented by the child's parent, parents or carer/guardian under a lease or written rental agreement of not less than six months' duration. The property leased should be that in which the family lives.

If a parent is living at a different address when their child's place is required, and they would like the new address to be considered as their child's place of residence when the application is considered, then written evidence confirming the move will be required before considering any application for a place.

The school will expect to see either a letter from the parent's solicitors confirming exchange of contracts (in the case of the purchase) or written confirmation from their landlord that a tenancy has been granted and in either case that the move will be completed on or before the date the place is required. An official document such as the electoral roll may also be used to check addresses.

The Governing Body at the Bliss Charity School is the **Admissions Authority**.

## **6. Fraudulent or misleading applications**

The Bliss Charity School, as the Admissions Authority (or the LA processing an application on behalf of the Admission Authority), has the right to investigate any concerns we may have about an application and to withdraw the offer of a place if it is considered that there is evidence that an applicant has made a fraudulent claim or provided misleading information.

## **7. Conflicting applications**

If we receive more than one application for the same child (made by separated parents) and where the home address and / or the preferences do not match, **neither application will be processed** until such time that the parents can agree on both the address and the preferences. If no agreement can be

made, parents are recommended to seek legal advice. If an agreement cannot be reached before the closing date, this may affect the chances of your child being allocated a place at the school.

## **8. Late applications**

Late applications are any common application forms (for the normal point of entry) received by the local authority after its statutory closing date of 15<sup>th</sup> January. Late applicants will not receive an offer of a school place by the local authority on National Offer Day (16<sup>th</sup> April or the next working day).

Late applications will be processed in the subsequent rounds of allocations between May and July (for more details, refer to the local authority's composite prospectus on the West Northamptonshire Council website).

## **9. Children below compulsory school age**

Where children below compulsory school age are offered a place at the school, they will be entitled to attend the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents/carers may defer their child's entry to the allocated school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age, and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made when the place will cease to be available for the child.

## **10. Requests for admission outside the normal age group**

### **10.1 Requests for admission outside the normal age group (summer born)**

Whilst all children are entitled to a full time school place in the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and most parents are happy for their child to start school at this point, parents/carers of summer born children (those born between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August) who do not reach compulsory school age until a full year after they would normally start school, may wish to delay their child's start to school until the September following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If parents wish to delay their summer born child's school start until the September following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, there are 2 options:

1. Parents can make an in-year application for a place for the September following their child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The child would normally start school in **Year 1** (their correct chronological age group) as other children in the child's age group already attending school will be moving from Reception to Year 1 at this point. It is important to remember that some schools are likely to be full and they may be unable to offer a place.
2. If parents do not want their child to miss their Reception year, they may request that their child is admitted out of their normal age group, i.e. into **Reception** instead of Year 1. Please note, this is a 'request' and parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group. The school's admission authority is responsible for making the decision about which year group a child should be admitted to.

Parents/carers of summer born children who could start school in September 2022, but wish to delay their child's school start and apply for a Reception place to start in September 2023, should still make their application for a Reception place for their child's normal year of entry before the primary application deadline **on 15<sup>th</sup> January**. If a delay is agreed, this application can be withdrawn.

Parent/carers should also, if possible, make their request for admission out of the normal age group to their preferred schools by the same date – **15<sup>th</sup> January**. This is to enable sufficient time

for requests to be processed prior to National Offer Day (16<sup>th</sup> April or the next working day). Requests will however still be considered after this date.

Parents/carers wanting to request that they be able to apply for a Reception place at The Bliss Charity School for the September following their child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, should make their request in writing to the Headteacher of The Bliss Charity School in the first instance.

In their request, parents/carers should provide some information about their child to explain why they think that their child should be educated out of their normal age group. It is important for parents/carers to provide any additional evidence to support their request as this information will help the admission authority to make their decision, e.g. parents/carers may be able to provide a report from the child's Early Years setting or evidence from a health or social care professional.

The request will then be considered by our Admission Authority, who will then make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The School Admissions Code requires admission authorities to consider a number of factors:

- the parent's/carer's views;
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the Headteacher's views.

#### *What happens next?*

Parents/carers will be informed of the Admission Authority's decision on the year group the child should be admitted to when they start school (i.e. Reception or Year 1) and will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

#### If the request is approved:

If the request to be admitted outside normal age group is approved by the Admission Authority of the school, parents/carers will need to forward this approval to School Admissions at West Northamptonshire Council so an application can be accepted in the normal admission round for the September following the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parents/carers will then need to make an application for a place in Reception for the normal round of admissions in the following academic year.

***Please note*** – *This does not mean a child has been, or will be, offered a place in the Reception year at their chosen school. If, in this following normal admissions round, the school is oversubscribed, all applications (including delayed applications) for the school will be ranked in accordance with the school's oversubscription admission criteria.*

#### If the request is rejected:

If the request to be admitted outside normal age group is **rejected** by the Admission Authority of the school, parents/carers have to decide whether to accept a Reception place in the normal year of entry or delay their child's start until the September after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and apply for a Year 1 place.

If parents/carers are unhappy with the Admission Authority's decision to refuse their child a place out of their normal age group, complaints should be made directly to the Admission Authority. Parents/carers whose requests for delayed entry into Reception are refused, have no statutory right to appeal this decision as the purpose of the appeals process is to consider whether a child should be admitted to a particular school, not the year group into which they should be admitted.

### 10.2 Requests for admission outside the normal age group (not summer born)

Parents/carers may seek a place for their child out of their normal age group and should make their request to delay their application in writing to the Headteacher of The Bliss Charity School in the first instance.

The Admission Authority of the school will consider the request and make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of:

- the parents/carers views;
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group;
- whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the Headteacher views;
- the views of teachers and nursery/pre-school staff.

The Admission Authority of the school MUST set out clearly for parents the reasons for their decision about the year group a child should be admitted to. Parents/carers do not have a right to appeal if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

## **11. In-year admissions**

An in-year admission refers to an application for a school place made during the school year or an application for admission to a school made at the start of the school year for any year group other than the normal year of entry.

If the school's published admission number has been reached in a child's year group, we will not be able to offer a place at the school. Parents/carers can ask for their child's name to be added to the waiting lists (see below for more information).

Applications for in-year admissions should be made online to the local authority on West Northamptonshire Council's website.

## **12. Waiting lists**

Waiting lists are held for all year groups by The Bliss Charity School.

Following an unsuccessful application, parents/carers can request that their child's name be placed on the waiting list.

Waiting lists will be cleared at the end of each school term. If you wish your child's name to remain on the waiting list for the remainder of the academic year, you will need to inform The Bliss Charity

School, in writing, by the start of each subsequent term (i.e. during the Christmas and Easter breaks) to renew your interest (this should be by email to [office@bliss.northants.sch.uk](mailto:office@bliss.northants.sch.uk)).

When a place becomes available it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 4.2 of this policy. Priority will **not** be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest and children being allocated places under the Fair Access Protocol will be given priority. A new application will be required for a new academic year.

### 13. Appeals

If a parent/carer's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, they will be informed why admission was refused and have the right of appeal against the decision not to offer their child a place at the school. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should set out their grounds for appeal in writing, along with any supporting evidence.

- *Email:* [office@bliss.northants.sch.uk](mailto:office@bliss.northants.sch.uk) or [head@bliss.northants.sch.uk](mailto:head@bliss.northants.sch.uk).
- *Address:* The Bliss Charity School  
The Green  
Nether Heyford  
Northamptonshire  
NN7 3LE

### 14. Admissions policy review

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Body annually.

Consultation: When changes are proposed to the school's admission arrangements, the governing body **must** consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.

Determination: All Admission Authorities **must** determine (i.e. formally agree) admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. Admission Authorities **must** determine admission arrangements by **28<sup>th</sup> February** in the determination year.

Signature: ..... (Chair of Governors)

Print Name: .....

Date: .....

Signature: ..... (Headteacher)

Print Name: .....

Date: .....