



The Pyramid Schools Trust

Admissions Policy 2025 - 2026

Harlington and Sundon Lower schools are due to join the Trust from 1 February 2024, if there is a delay in the merger then the policy will not include these schools

Edition 4: 6/12/2023

Document Control		
Edition	Issued	Changes from previous
1	25/10/2020	None – new policy. Approved by the Board of Trustees
2	28/03/2022	Amendment to age of admission for Westoning Lower School. Amendment to oversubscription criteria. Amendment to definition of a Previously Looked After Child. Approved by the Board of Trustees.
3	21/02/2023	None – renewal. Approved by Board of Trustees
4	6/12/2023	Addition of Parish of Hexton to Ramsey Manor Lower School catchment Addition that Westoning Nursery children do not automatically get a place in the school Addition of Harlington Lower and Sundon Lower schools Approved by the Board of Trustees

Statement of intent

At The Pyramid Schools Trust (PST), we welcome all pupils, and places at the schools in the Trust are offered in an open and fair way. Our admissions process is delivered in line with the Equality Act 2010, the School Admissions Code, the School Admission Appeals Code, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school, and is called the 'agreed admissions number'. Our published admissions numbers (PAN) for each school are:

Harlington Upper School	270
Arnold Academy	180
Parkfields Middle School	113
Harlington Lower School	30
Ramsey Manor Lower School	60
Sundon Lower School	15
Westoning Lower School	30

The Pyramid Schools Trust is the admission authority for each school, and the Local Authority coordinates the admission arrangements for each school.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2012) 'School Admission Appeals Code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Data Protection Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The admission authority is responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the Trust schools.
- Outlining the schools' admissions arrangements and publishing them on the Trust and school websites.
- Clearly communicating any reasons for rejecting the admission of a pupil, as well as the parent's right to appeal and the appeal process.
- Implementing any advice or recommendations given by the Schools Adjudicator without undue delay.
- Determining the admission arrangements on an annual basis and publicly consulting stakeholders on any proposed changes to the admission arrangements.
- Setting clear, fair and effective oversubscription criteria which do not discriminate against any pupil.
- Communicating oversubscription criteria clearly to parents.
- Notifying the LA of any in-year admissions and their outcomes.

2.2. The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:

- Acting in line with the relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to admissions.
- Receiving concerns and objections regarding the admission of pupils and making recommendations to the admission authority as a result of these concerns and objections.
- Approving variations to determined admissions arrangements where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.

3. Admissions

Determining a PAN

3.1. The number of places available is determined by the capacity of the school.

3.2. The PAN for new pupils at each school is as follows:

School	Initial Year Group	PAN
Harlington Upper	9	270
Harlington Upper	12	150
Arnold Academy	5	180
Parkfields Middle	5	113
Harlington Lower School	Reception	30
Ramsey Manor Lower	Reception	60
Sundon Lower School	Reception	15
Westoning Lower	Reception	30

3.3. The admission authority will notify the LA of their intention to increase any school's PAN and reference the changes on the Trust and school's website.

3.4. If the admission authority can accept more pupils than the PAN, it will notify the LA in good time so that the LA can deliver their coordination responsibilities effectively

Oversubscription criteria

3.5. In the event of there being an oversubscription of applicants to the school, the following oversubscription criteria for each relevant age group will be applied:

Ramsey Manor Lower School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

- 1 All looked after or previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 2 Children of current PST employees
- 3 Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school
- 4 Children living in catchment area
- 5 Children living in the Parish of Hexton
- 6 Very exceptional medical grounds
- 7 Other siblings
- 8 Any other children

Harlington, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

- 1 All looked after or previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 2 Children of current PST employees
- 3 Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school
- 4 Children living in catchment area
- 5 Very exceptional medical grounds
- 6 Other siblings
- 7 Any other children

Arnold Academy and Parkfields Middle School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

- 1 All looked after or previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 2 Children of current PST employees
- 3 Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
- 4 Children living in catchment area (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
- 5 Very exceptional medical grounds (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
- 6 Other siblings (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools, followed by those attending Harlington cluster feeder schools)
- 7 Children attending PST lower schools
- 8 Children attending Harlington cluster feeder schools within the Arnold or Parkfields pyramid
- 9 Any other children

PST Feeder Schools:

Harlington, Ramsey, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

Harlington Cluster Feeder Schools:

Toddington St George Cof E School, Pulloxhill and Greenfield Academy, Eversholt Lower, Academy, Silsoe VC Lower School, Harlington and Sundon Academy, Chalton Lower School.

PST Lower Schools:

Harlington, Ramsey, Sundon and Westoning Lower Schools

The Parkfields Pyramid:

Parkfields Middle, Chalton Lower, Toddington St Georges, Eversholt Lower and Harlington Lower

The Arnold Pyramid:

Arnold Academy, Ramsey Manor Lower, Westoning Lower, Silsoe Lower, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Lows, Sundon Lower

Harlington Upper School

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will be admitted before the following oversubscription criteria applies:

- 1 All looked after or previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 2 Children of current PST employees
- 3 Children living in catchment area with siblings at the school (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
- 4 Children living in catchment area (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
- 5 Very exceptional medical grounds (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
- 6 Other siblings (priority given to those currently attending feeder PST schools)
- 7 Children attending PST feeder middle schools
- 8 Children attending Robert Bloomfield Middle School
- 9 Any other children

PST Feeder Schools: Arnold Academy and Parkfields Middle School

- 3.6 Pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are required to be admitted to the school which is named on their plan, even if the school is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.
- 3.7. If there is a 'tie-breaker' between oversubscribed pupils, the school will follow a fair, clear and effective procedure by measuring the distance the pupil lives from the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closest to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the entrance of the relevant school.
- 3.8. When formulating their admission arrangements, the admission authority will not carry out the following:
 - Place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements
 - Take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a feeder school
 - Give priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in their application
 - Give priority to children based on any practical or financial support their parents give to the school or associated parties (including any affiliated religious organisation)
 - Give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial or educational status of parents applying – apart from where these factors determine a child's pupil premium eligibility, and for children whose parents work at school
 - Take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other children in the family
 - Discriminate against any protected characteristic
 - Give priority based on a child's or their parents' past or present hobbies or activities
 - Name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools
 - Interview children or parents
 - Request financial contributions as part of the admissions process
 - Request photographs of children – apart from for proof of identity when sitting selection tests

Catchment areas

- 3.9. Details of the catchment area schools for addresses in Central Bedfordshire can be found at <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions>
- 3.10. The point within the school grounds from which a school will measure any distance or radii is the entrance to the school reception.
- 3.11. The Trust schools will accept pupils from outside the catchment area – oversubscription criteria will apply where applicable.

Home address

- 3.12. A child's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the child is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday) including nights. If there is any query on the home address, this will be checked against original official documentation, eg council tax bill, a recent utility bill, a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

Looked after and previously looked after children

- 3.13. A 'looked after' child is a child who is a) in the care of the local authority, or b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
- 3.14. A 'previously looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order, or regarded as having been in a state care in a place outside of 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.

Siblings

- 3.15. For the purpose of this policy, "sibling" is defined as any brother or sister related by blood or marriage and any fostered or adopted siblings. In every case, the child should be living at the same address.
- 3.16. Where oversubscribed, the Trust will give priority to children whose siblings are currently at the relevant school.

Children of Staff

- 3.17. For the purpose of this policy, "children of staff" refers to any children of staff who have been employed by the Trust for two or more years at the time at which the application was made, or was recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage.

Very exceptional medical grounds

- 3.18. 'Very exceptional medical grounds' refers to cases where there are exceptional medical reasons which make it essential that a child should attend a particular school and where the preferred school is the only school locally that could meet the child's needs. A medical report from the child's doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to the school in question and the difficulties which would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The Trust Board reserves the right to seek further information in order to determine whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the preferred school on medical grounds. Admission on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent/carer, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.

Equal opportunities

- 3.19. The Trust will not establish admissions criteria that exclude individuals with a particular protected characteristic.
- 3.20. The admissions criteria will not exclude a greater proportion of pupils with particular protected characteristics, unless the Trust can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 3.21. The admissions criteria will not discriminate against disabled applicants, unless the Trust can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Open evenings

- 3.22. Each school will offer open events and school visits to all potential applicants, irrespective of any protected characteristics. Where necessary, the school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants or disabled parents.

Consultation and determination

- 3.23. The admission authority will consult on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.
- 3.24. Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.
- 3.25. The admission authority will consult on admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if no changes have been made in that time.
- 3.26. The admission authority will consult with the following:
- Parents of all pupils
 - Stakeholders
 - Other admission authorities within the relevant area
 - The local governors boards of the schools and the LA
- 3.27. The admission authority will publish a copy of the full proposed admission arrangements and the contact details of the individual responsible for admissions liaison on the Trust website.
- 3.28. A copy of the proposed admission arrangements will be made available upon request.
- 3.29. Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year on an annual basis, even when no changes to the arrangements have been made.
- 3.30. Finalised admission arrangements will be published on the Trust and individual schools' websites.
- 3.31. A copy of the finalised admission arrangements will be sent to the LA for entry by 15 March in the determination year.
- 3.32. Any objections to the admission arrangements will be directed to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

Applications and offers

- 3.33. Parents will be provided with a common application form (CAF) where they will note their three preferred schools, along with a brief explanation, in rank order – the schools do not have to be located in the LA area where the parents live.
- 3.34. Parents will provide LAs with the following information within the CAF:
- Their name and their child's name and date of birth
 - Theirs and their child's address and proof of residence
- 3.35. The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA – this can be submitted online.
- 3.36. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met.
- 3.37. The admission authority will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications where necessary.
- 3.38. The admission authority will not request any of the following:
- Any personal details, including information on criminal convictions or financial status
 - The first language of the parent or child
 - Details about the parents' or child's disability, medical or SEND requirements
 - Any parental agreement to follow the ethos of the school in a practical way
 - For the child to complete any part of the form or for both parents to provide signatures
- 3.39. Once a place has been offered, the admission authority may ask for the child's short birth certificate as proof of birth date.
- 3.40. For PLAC and LAC, the admission authority will request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, and a letter from the LA confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the order being made.

Sixth Form

- 3.41. Applications to the sixth form at Harlington Upper School can be made using the CAF; however, pupils already on roll who are transferring into Year 12 are not obliged to use it.
- 3.42. The entry requirements for the sixth form are the same for all pupils, irrelevant of their previous school, without reference to ability or aptitude. However, acceptance on to individual courses of study will be dependant on students meeting specific course entry requirements, as outlined in the Sixth Form Prospectus, and on the viability of the course.
- 3.43. Where oversubscribed, priority will be given to LAC and PLAC who meet the academic criteria, followed by students in catchment and then students with siblings at the school. Where a tie break is necessary, this will follow the same criteria as for all other school admissions, as detailed in 3.7 above.

Westoning Lower School Nursery

- 3.44. Applications to Westoning Nursery can be made to the school at any time, and application forms will be held in the Nursery until the child is eligible to start (when the child is around 2 years, 9 months of age). On acceptance of a place, parents are required to complete a set of admissions forms.
- 3.45. Criteria for admission to the Nursery are as follows:
Looked after children, or children who were previously looked after
 - year olds receiving nursery education funding in catchment
 - year olds receiving nursery education funding in catchment
 - year olds in catchment
 - year olds in catchment
 - year olds out of catchment
 - 2 year olds out of catchment
- 3.46. A successful application for admission to Westoning Nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a Reception place in accordance with the rest of this policy.

Sundon Lower School Nursery

- 3.46. A successful application for admission to Sundon Nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a Reception place in accordance with the rest of this policy.
- 3.47. Admission to Sundon Lower School Nursery Unit is operated by the Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools. An application form may be obtained from the school office and it should be completed and returned to the school no later than the last day of March prior to the year of admission. Admission may be at the beginning of any term subject to place availability.
- 3.48. During the term that they are three children will be offered a fee paying part or full time place subject to a place being available. The term after their third birthday children will be offered a free part timeplace subject to a place being available.
- 3.49. Inclusion Statement

As an inclusive school, children who experience difficulties accessing the school and curriculum will be treated as fairly as other applications for admissions.

3.50 Allocation of Places

Where the number of requests for places exceeds the Admission Number, the places will be allocated (in the rank order shown) to determine how the places will be allocated:

- All “looked after” children or children who were previously ‘looked after’ (see definition)
- Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school (see definition)
- Other children living in the catchment area
- Other children with siblings at the school (see definition)
- Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child’s home address
- Within each of these criteria the oldest children will be given priority.

Overriding priority will be given by the Academy Trust to the admission of children who have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHC) that names the school.

Offer of places

- 3.51 All offers for places at Harlington Lower School, Ramsey Manor Lower School, Sundon Lower school or Westoning Lower School will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April or the next working day.
- 3.52 All offers for places at Harlington Upper School, Arnold Academy or Parkfields Middle School will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 1 March or the next working day.
- 3.53 An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 20 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application.
- 3.54 If any application is found to be fraudulent after a child has started at the school in the first term of the new academic year, the school may withdraw the place. If the fraudulent application is found after this time, the pupil will not be removed.
- 3.55. The admission authority will maintain a waiting list for oversubscribed schools. Pupils on the waiting list will be prioritised according to the Trust’s admissions criteria and not on the basis of the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. If a place becomes available, the local authority will contact the parent/carer of the child at the top of the list. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be maintained for the academic year.
- 3.56 The admission authority will make clear in the admissions arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group for the admissions round.
- 3.57 The headteacher will assist the admission authority with deciding on which year group a child will enter. Once a decision has been reached, the child’s parents will be informed in writing along with an explanation of how the decision was reached and any reasons why.
- 3.58 Pupils not of usual school age will not be given less of a priority where the school is over subscribed.
- 3.59 Applications for children coming from overseas will be treated in accordance with EU law or Home Office rules.
- 3.60 For children of UK service professionals, the following procedure will be adhered to:
- A place will be allocated to the child in advance of the family arriving in the area named in the application form.
 - The application must be accompanied with an official letter confirming the relocation date and the service unit’s postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria.
 - The application will not be refused on the grounds of the child not currently living in the area, nor will places be uniquely reserved.
- 3.61 The arrangements for service children will be in line with the government’s commitment to removing disadvantage for service children.

4. Admissions appeals

- 4.1. When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, a letter will be sent which includes the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal.
- 4.2. Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Appeals are made to an appeals panel which is independent of the Trust and the local authority Admissions team, and further information on the appeals process can be obtained from the local authority.

Complaints

- 4.3. Appellants do not have the right to more than one appeal in respect of the school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the admission authority has accepted a second application from the appellant due to a material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission.
- 4.4. Appellants can apply for a place at the school for a different academic year.
- 4.5. If appellants have an issue with the appeal process, they can complain to the Secretary of State.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board on an annual basis.
- 5.2. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.