



# ADMISSIONS POLICY

2026 - 2027

**The Downs Primary School & Nursery**  
Part of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community

# **The Downs Primary School & Nursery Admissions Policy 2026 - 2027**

**The Trustees of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community (PCLC) are the admissions authority for all PCLC schools.**

The procedure for children starting at The Downs Primary School & Nursery is explained in the booklet '**Primary Education in Essex**' which is available through Essex County Council to all parents and carers of children resident in Essex who are due to start school in the next academic year.

## **1 Foundation Stage**

At The Downs Primary School & Nursery all children who will have their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday between September 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> (i.e. during the next academic year) are expected to start school in the Autumn Term (in September) on a phased introduction.

All applications must be made in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme operated by the Local Authority (LA). For children resident in Essex this is detailed in the Primary Education in Essex booklet.

Our published admission number is 60.

The admissions arrangements are as follows:-

- A. Parents must complete an Application Form, either on paper or online, and send it to Planning and Admissions at Essex County Council by the published closing date. The Trust will rank all applications in accordance with the admission criteria in section C below, and inform Planning and Admissions of the rankings. Planning and Admissions will allocate places and parents will be offered a place on the published offer date.
- B. All applications must be made by the published closing date detailed in the Primary Education in Essex booklet which is available from Essex County Council. Late applications for children resident in Essex will be dealt with as detailed in this booklet. Children resident outside of Essex should refer to the process for handling late applications published by their home LA.
- C. At The Downs Primary School & Nursery we can admit 60 children in each academic year. If more than 60 applications are received, the Trust will rank places and Planning and Admissions will allocate places using the following criteria in the order given:
  1. Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children
  2. Children with a sibling attending the school at the time of application;
  3. Children who attend the nursery at The Downs Primary School and Nursery;
  4. Children living in the priority admission area;
  5. Remaining applications.

### **Looked After Children**

A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order will be given first priority in oversubscription criteria ahead of all other applicants in

accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This also includes 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. A looked after child is a child who is (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 (as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Exceptional medical circumstances, supported by medical evidence specifying why the child should attend this school rather than any other, may override the above criteria.

There is no guarantee of a place for children living in the school's priority admissions area which is as follows (see Appendix 1):

*Broadfields, Harlow, Essex*  
*1 – 102 The Dashes, Harlow, Essex*  
*The Downs, Harlow, Essex*  
*The Hides, Harlow, Essex*  
*Home Close, Harlow, Essex*  
*Hughes Tower, Harlow, Essex*  
*Greenhills, Harlow, Essex*  
*Dads Wood, Harlow, Essex*  
*College Place, Harlow, Essex*  
*All town centre addresses (The High, Harlow, Essex)*

In the event of oversubscription within any of the above criteria, priority will be determined by straight line distance from home to school; those living closest are given highest priority. In the unlikely event two applicants with identical distance are competing for a single space lots will be drawn. All distances are calculated by the Local Authority and the school using a Geographical Information System and parents are able to check our priority admission area by using the Catchment Area Finder on the Essex Admission website.

A waiting list will be held until the end of the Autumn Term.

During the Summer Term letters are sent to all parents who have been offered a place, inviting them to take advantage of the offer of a place and explaining our induction arrangements which will include a meeting for parents.

### **Sibling definition**

A relevant sibling is a child who has a brother, sister, adopted brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister living in the same family unit, in the same family household and address, who attends the preferred school in any year group excluding the final year. Biological 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.

### **Timing of Admissions**

As required by law, we provide for the full time admission of all children offered a place in the reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday.

Compulsory school age is reached at the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday and the law does not require a child to start school before this point. Therefore parents can choose that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in the school year.

### **Part-time Provision**

Parents can also request that their child attends part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age – the arrangements for this will be agreed in consultation with the school.

Therefore:

- Children turning five during the Autumn term may defer or attend part-time until the beginning of the Spring Term
- Children turning five during the Spring term may defer or attend part-time until the beginning of the Summer Term.
- Children turning five during the Summer term may defer or attend part-time until the beginning of the Summer term during which they will become compulsory school age.

Parents are not able to defer beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted.

It is expected that the children of parents who have chosen to defer or attend part-time will begin full time school at the beginning of a term.

Where entry is deferred we will hold the place for that child and not offer it to another child.

**For details regarding delayed admission to Reception for summer born children to a year group different from that determined by their date of birth, please refer to appendix 2.**

## **2 Admissions other than new intake**

### **2.1 Mid-year applications**

If your child is already at primary school and you wish to transfer him/her to The Downs Primary School and Nursery, you should complete our Mid-Year Primary School Application Form and additional information form, these can be found on our website. Parents requesting admission to The Downs Primary School and Nursery are encouraged to visit the school and meet the Headteacher prior to application.

Once you have completed the forms and sent it to [admissions@downsschool.com](mailto:admissions@downsschool.com), we will email you and Essex County Council within 10 - 15 school days to notify you of the outcome. As we can only admit 60 pupils per year group, if your application is successful, we ask that you notify us within 10 working days of receiving the emailed letter if you wish to accept the place. This will allow us to offer places to other families applying or to those on our waiting list

After you have accepted the place, the school will contact you to organise a visit and a meeting with a relevant member of school staff. At this meeting a start date is organised, further information will be collected by the school and induction arrangements will be clarified.

## **2.2 Admission of pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Having received an offer of a place, the family will be expected to meet with a member of school leadership team to agree an appropriate start date. This will depend on the individual circumstances of the child and whether there is a need to organise additional adult support for the child prior to starting.

## **2.3 Admissions out of year group**

For information on requests for pupils' admission into a year group different from that determined by date of birth, please refer to Appendix 2.

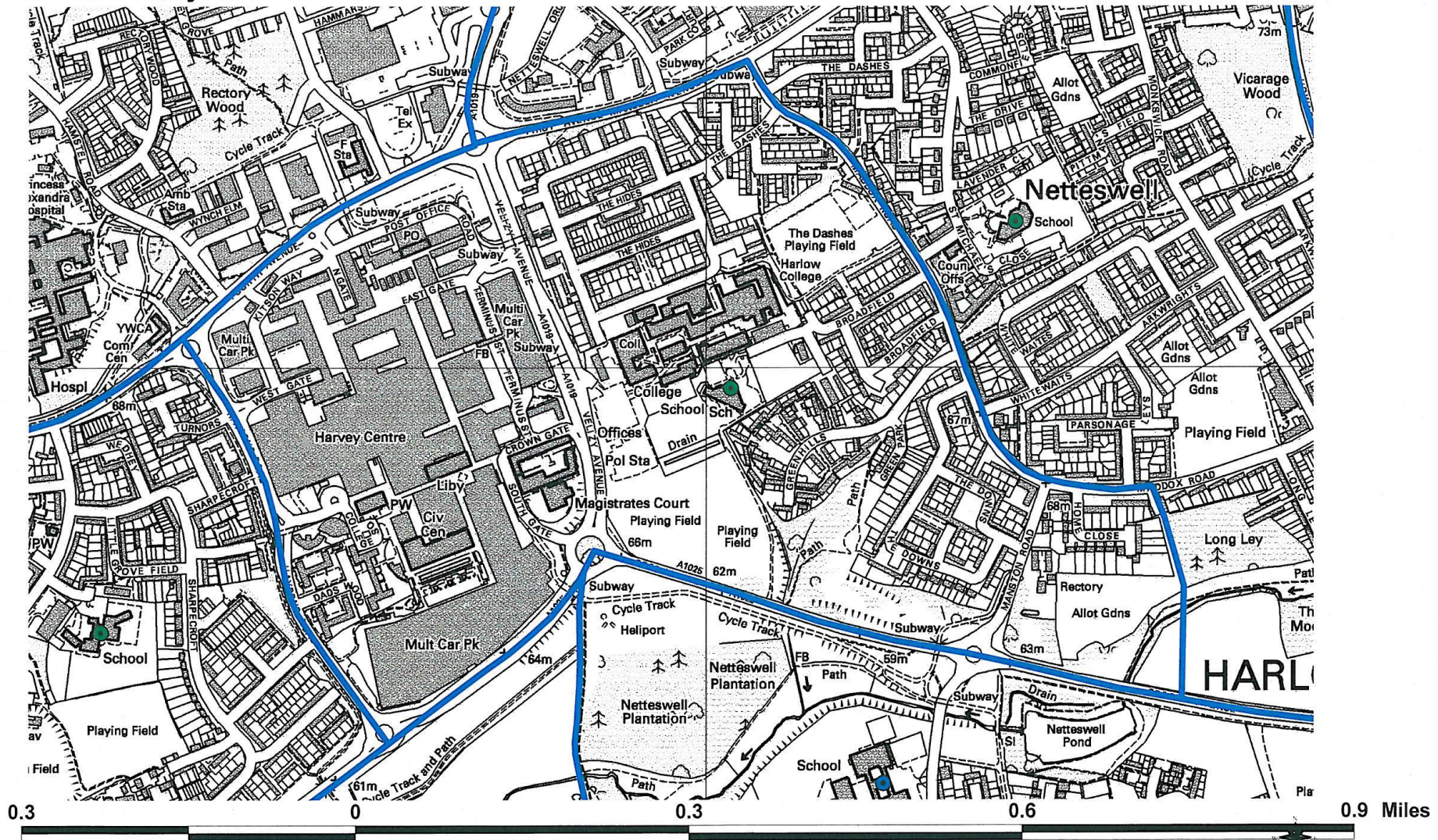
## **3 Appeals**

### **New intake**

If a child has not been offered a place at their preferred school their parents have the right to appeal via an Independent Appeals process. Detailed information about how to appeal can be found on the Essex County Council website.

**This policy was approved by the Trust Board on \_\_\_\_\_ in agreement with the Local Governing Body and will be reviewed annually.**

Appendix 1 The Downs Primary School and Nursery Priority Area  
**Essex County Council**



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## **PCLC Admissions Policy - Appendix 2**

**This appendix sets out the policy for responding to parental requests for children and young people's admission to PCLC schools, into a year group different from that determined by their date of birth. This includes delayed admission to reception for summer born children**

The process is as follows:

1. On receipt of such a request, by telephone or in writing, the admissions team will confirm to the parent(s)/carer(s) that their request is to a year group different to that determined by a child's date of birth and advise them to discuss this with the principal or headteacher(s) of the schools (up to a maximum of 3 schools) they are interested in applying to in the first instance.
2. Admissions will also contact the principal/headteacher and advise/remind them of the procedure for dealing with 'out of year' group admission requests.
3. If, after discussion with the principal/headteacher, the parents/carers still wish to pursue an 'out of year' admission, they will be asked to complete and submit an application form together with supporting evidence.
4. The application form will ask for basic information about the child as well as:
  - The nature of the request
  - Clear reasons for the request
  - The child's educational history
  - Indication of the child/young person's wishes (opportunity for them to record their view directly where practical/age appropriate)
6. In addition they will be asked to provide specific information/documentation which may include:
  - School or other educational reports (from the previous school or Early Years Setting where this is available)
  - Existing professional reports and assessments e.g. educational psychology
  - reports from LA
  - Health information
  - Exam courses being followed
7. Parents/carers will be informed of the date that the Trustees of the PCLC will meet within 15 school days of receipt of their written request (application form and supporting evidence).
7. Parents/carers will be informed of the decision of the Trustees in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.
8. In the meantime, if the child is already attending a school, he/she should continue to attend the current school.

### **The decision making process**

When requests for admission to a year group different to that determined by a child's date of birth are received, a Trustees' meeting will be convened to consider the written application and supporting information/evidence provided by the parent(s). A member of the Admissions Team will minute the meeting and inform the parent/carer of the outcome.

On occasion there may be insufficient evidence for the Trustees to reach a decision. In this instance the Trustees may request additional information or a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) which may include the child or young person.

### **Criteria for agreement to 'out of year' admissions**

The Trustees will consider evidence relating to all aspects of the child's development and needs in coming to a decision.

For requests for change of year group where a child is already in school, issues to be considered will include:

- Whether there is clear evidence that the child has previously been educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth and that this has had positive benefits.
- Whether there is clear, documented evidence that to place the child in his/her normal age group would be detrimental to his/her educational progress or likely exam performance.
- Whether there is clear evidence that it is in the interests of the child's social and emotional development to be educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth.

For requests for delayed admission for summer born children the Trustees will consider the following:

- the needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class;
- in the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;
- whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;
- relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children.

### **Right of appeal following the decision**

There is no right of appeal if a parent has been offered a place in the school but it is not in the year group they would like. However, parents/carers can make a



complaint through the PCLC's complaints procedure. If a parent/carer is unhappy with the way the PCLC has handled their complaint, the parent/carer may then refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman <http://www.lgo.org.uk>