



Admissions Policy November 2024

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Fern academy Trust caters for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11. The Academy Trust have the following admission numbers:

Marlbrook - 630 pupils
St Martins - 420 pupils
Wellington - 63 pupils

The Board of Trustees, as the admission authority, determines the academies admission policy and arrangements and is responsible for taking decisions on applications for admission. The Academy Trust follows the Local Authority criteria and works with them in order to ensure admissions are co-ordinated within the County.

Oversubscription Criteria

Should the number of applications for admission exceed the admission number the Trustees/Governors will apply the following criteria (in the rank shown) to decide the order in which places will be allocated. This will also apply to waiting lists. The Local Authority will keep a waiting list on behalf of the academy for the normal-round of admissions, up until the end of the Autumn Term.

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Educational, Health & Care Plan which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

Priority 1 – Children who are looked after and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be due to being adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.

Priority 2 – Children living within **defined catchment area*** of the school;

Priority 3 – Sibling connection – children who have an **older sibling**** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the younger child is due to start;

Priority 4 – Exceptional circumstances – Children with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school only is necessary for the wellbeing of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source. Application on such grounds will not be considered by the Director of Wellbeing's advisory panel unless this supporting information is attached to application forms received by 15th January 2025 (primary Schools).

Priority 5 - *** Distance is measure by the shortest available walking route (using road and/or made up footpath) using the nearest network node from the property address point to the nearest network node at the main school entrance gate.

General Notes

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after children who either currently are or were in the 'looked after' system it will be catchment area children second, brothers and sisters third, exceptional circumstances fourth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top two categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out of area brothers and sisters, priorities will be decided first by reference to exceptional circumstances, then according to distance.

Following the allocation of the top category there may be an occasion when it is not possible to offer places for all children living in the catchment area. In this situation the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with brothers and sisters who would be at the school in September 2023, next to pupils with exceptional circumstances, and finally according to the distance of the school.

*Living within the defined catchment area is defined as "a child residing with his/her Parent(s)/or carer(s) at his/her normal and genuine place of residence for the majority of the time".

**A sibling connection refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or a child of the parents'/carer's partner, and in every case the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

***Distance will be measured by the shortest available walking route using a road and/or made up footpath from the front door of the child's address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised digital map measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

The Trustees/Governors will normally offer a place at the catchment area academy if parents apply for a place at the academy during the normal admission round. However, a place at the catchment area academy cannot be guaranteed. If a pupil moves into the catchment area outside the normal admissions round (or after the allocation procedure has begun) it may be more difficult to offer a place at the catchment area academy if this would mean exceeding the admission number at the academy. In this case the Local Authority will normally offer a place at the nearest maintained school which caters for children of the same age and has places available.

Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full. Children identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.

Admissions above the published admission number may also occur where the academy is admitting a twin or children from multiple births provided the admission would not cause a breach of Infant class size limits.

In Year Admissions

Requests for admissions to the academy into other year groups should be made on the In Year Application form and in accordance with the Local Authority's coordinated scheme for In-Year admissions. The form is available from the Academy or Local Authority and can also be downloaded from the Local Authority website.

The outcome of in-year application will be notified in writing within 10 school days.

Admissions Appeals

Any parent (except, temporarily, the parents of a child who has been permanently excluded from two schools), who is refused an academy place for which they have applied, has the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. The panel is independent of the Academy Trust and the Local Authority Admissions Team. Further details regarding the law on admissions and appeals can be obtained from the Local Authority Admissions Team. Should the appeal panel find in favour of the parent, the decision is binding on the Academy. The panel will consist of people who have experience in education and are acquainted with the area.

Waiting List (For Reception places only)

In the event of more applications than available places a waiting list will be maintained. These and late application will go onto this list in a position determined by the criteria. If a place becomes available in the academy it will be offered in accordance with the waiting list priority. Parents are requested to inform the Academy Trust if they wish their child's name to remain on the waiting list.

The waiting list will be maintained for one term in the academic year of admission. Those wishing to stay on the waiting list will need to reapply in December of that first term.

The Fair Access Protocol encourages the local authority and schools to work together in partnership to improve behaviour, tackle persistent absence and help support behaviour and attendance partnerships. This protocol has been updated to take account of new Regulations and incorporates guiding principles against which to place children who may have difficulty securing a school place outside the normal admissions round.

Nursery setting within the Multi-Academy Trust

Marlbrook also has a teacher-led nursery provision. The admission criteria for this Early Years setting is as follows:

- Availability of places, taking into account the staff: child ratios and the age of the child.
- The nursery's ability to provide the facilities necessary for the welfare of the child, including appropriate staffing arrangements.
- A child requiring a full-time place may have preference over one requiring a part-time place.
- Any extenuating circumstances affecting the child's welfare or the welfare of his/her family.

Wellington has a Nursery provision that is managed by the Board of Trustees.

We operate an inclusion and equality policy and ensure that all children have access to nursery places and services irrespective of their gender, race disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation of parents.

Prior to a child attending nursery, parents must complete and sign a registration form. These forms provide the nursery with personal details relating to the child. For example, name, date of birth, address, emergency contact details, parental responsibilities, dietary requirements, fees and session, contact details for parents, doctor's contact details, health visitor contact details, allergies, parental consent and vaccinations etc.