

THE DUSTON SCHOOL

Admissions Policy: Primary Phase 2026

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DUSTON
SCHOOL

www.thedustonschool.org



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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 for Education (DfE):

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

The school is required to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

As an academy, the school is required by its funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#).

3. Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form provided by their home local authority.

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

a) In the care of a local authority, or

b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)

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

a) were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders), or

b) became subject to a child arrangements order (as defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014), or

c) became subject to a special guardianship order (see Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians)).

This includes 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 child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

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.

4. How to apply

For applications in the normal admissions round you should use the application form provided by your home local authority (regardless of which local authority the schools are in). You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order.

You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority on National Offer Day (16th April or the next working day).

5. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group and should put their request in writing to the school.

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In accordance with the School Admissions Code, this will include taking account of:

- Parents' views
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
- Where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional
- Whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group
- Whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely
- The headteacher's views

The admission authority will inform the parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to in writing.

Where the admission authority agrees to a parent's request for their child to be admitted out of their normal age group and as a consequence the child will be admitted to a relevant age group (i.e. Reception) the LA and admission authority will process an application as part of the normal admission round and on the basis of the oversubscription criteria. They will not be given lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted out of their normal age group.

Parents 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.

6. Allocation of places

6.1 Admission number

The school has an agreed admission number of 60 pupils for entry in Reception.

6.2 Oversubscription criteria

All children whose Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) names the school will be admitted before any other places are allocated.

If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants will be offered a place.

In the event that the school receives more applications than the number of places it has available, places will be given to those children who meet any of the criteria set out below, in order until all places are filled.

1. Looked after and all previously looked after children
2. Children of a member of staff as defined below;

Children of a member of staff defined in accordance to the School Admissions Code 1.39 Admission authorities may give priority in their oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- a) Where the member of staff has been employed directly by The Duston School Education Trust for two or more years at the time at which the application for the admission to the school is made, and/or
 - b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
3. Priority will next be given to children with siblings at the school at the time of application. Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and are living as a family unit with one or both parents. Priority will not be given to children with siblings who are former pupils of the school.

For the sibling link to apply, a brother or sister must live at the same address when the application is made. If siblings live between two addresses, applicants must provide proof to show that the main address is the same for both children.

4. All other pupils.

6.3 Tie break

In the case of 2 or more applications that cannot be separated by the oversubscription criteria outlined above, the school will use the distance between the school and a child's home as a tie breaker to decide between applicants. Priority will be given to children who live closest to the school. Distance will be measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the address point of the school using a geographical information system. Each address has a unique address point established by the most valuable elements from the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NPLG), Ordnance Survey Master Map, Royal Mail Postal Address File and The Valuation Office Agency. The address point for a property does not change.

A child's home address will be considered to be where he/she is resident for the majority of nights in a normal school week. 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.

Where the distance between 2 children's homes and the school is the same, random allocation will be used to decide between them. This process will be verified by the presiding Chair of Governors or a party delegated by the Chair of Governors from the General Board of Governors. The arrangements will be supervised by a person independent of the school.

6.4 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 may defer their child's entry to the 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 the offer was made for.

Where the parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

7. In-year admissions

You can apply for a place for your child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) names the school will be admitted.

Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for and we can meet your child's educational needs, then your child will always be offered a place.

If there are no spaces available at the time of your application, your child's name will be added to a waiting list for the relevant year group. When a space becomes available it will be filled by one of the pupils on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed in section 6.2 of this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

Applications for in-year admissions should be made directly to The Duston School at <https://thedustonschool.ap-plicaa.com/inyear2025>.

8. Waiting List

Under the coordinated scheme The Duston School will maintain a waiting list until the end of the Autumn Term. The school will continue to maintain a waiting list for subsequent terms. Applications for inclusion on a waiting list must be made on the school's appropriate form and they will be ranked according to our oversubscription criteria as described above. We have to admit any student who is the subject of a 'direction' by the LA or allocated to us according to the local Fair Access protocol and any such students take precedence over the waiting list.

We also maintain waiting lists for all 'full' year groups. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

9. Appeals

If your child's application for a place at the school is unsuccessful, you will be informed why admission was refused and given information about the process for hearing appeals. Information on how to appeal is available on the West Northamptonshire Council website. To appeal for a school place or for information on the appeals process please visit [Appeal a school place | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/appeal-a-school-place)

You can find details of the school's appeals timetable on the following webpage; www.thedustonschool.org

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing board every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes.

11. Requests for admission to Reception outside the normal age group (Summer Born)

Whilst all children are entitled to a full time school place in the September following their 4th birthday and most parents are happy for their child to start school at this point, parent(s)/carer(s) of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 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 5th birthday.

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

1. Parents can make an in-year application for a place for the September following their child's 5th 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 children are 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 2023, but wish to delay their child's school start and apply for a Reception place to start in September 2024 should still make their application for a Reception place for their child's normal year of entry before the primary application deadline. 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. This is to enable sufficient time for requests to be processed prior to National Offer 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 Duston School Primary for the September following their child's 5th birthday, should write to the 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, the governing body, 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 Head teacher'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 WNC so an application can be accepted in the normal admission round for the September following the child's 5th birthday. Parent(s)/carer(s) 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 5th 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.