

# West Northamptonshire Council Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2023

## Section 1

### Timetable for Primary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2023 intake

Date	Event
9 September 2022	Online applications open and information to parents/carers
12 December 2022	Generic reminder letter to be sent via schools to parents/carers of Year 2 children at Infant school, advising them of the need to apply for a Junior school place. Email also sent to schools to remind parents/carers of the need to apply
15 January 2023	<b>Closing date for applications</b> (statutory). Late applications, i.e. those received after midnight on 15 January 2023, will not be processed until additional rounds of allocations (see below)
10 February 2023	West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) sends applications to other LAs and Own Admission Authority (OAA) schools
15 February 2023	SEN must have informed the School Admissions Team about any pupils with an EHC Plan, and details of the named school (statutory)
28 February 2023	Own Admission Authority schools send ranked lists to WNC
17 March 2023	WNC applies agreed Scheme for West Northamptonshire schools, informing other LAs of offers to be made to their residents
14 April 2023	Primary schools informed by WNC of the final results via S2S, which may include offers made to pupils living in other LAs
17 April 2023	<b>National Offer Day</b> - offers made to parents/carers by WNC
By 19 April 2023	Schools emailed and final allocation lists (ATFs) uploaded onto the S2S secure site
2 May 2023	School Admissions begins to share late applications with OAA schools and other LAs
10 May 2023	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in first round of reallocations
16 May 2023	The deadline by which all school admission appeal forms must be submitted
10 June 2023	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in second round of reallocations
28 June 2023	Cut-off date for consideration for inclusion in third round of reallocations
18 July 2023	Appeals lodged by the deadline of 16 May 2023 will be heard by this date
17 May 2023 16 June 2023 4 July 2023	Additional rounds of allocations will start on each of these dates
14 July 2023	Where no previous application has been submitted, places at Junior schools are allocated to children living in the West Northamptonshire Council area who are currently in infant schools. Letters sent to parents/carers to advise them of the places offered
1 August 2023	Co-ordination of in-year application process commences

## Section 2

### Elements of the Scheme

#### 2.1 Regulations

The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations<sup>1</sup> (2008) require all local authorities (LAs) to have a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools in its area (excluding special schools). The purpose of a co-ordinated scheme is to establish mechanisms for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that every parent of a child living within the LA who has applied for a school place in the normal admission round, receives an offer of a single school place on the same day – National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day). All schools must comply with the agreed scheme.

#### 2.2 Applying for a place in a Primary, Infant or Junior school

The normal point of entry to Primary or Infant school is Reception. The normal point of entry to Junior school is Year 3. The local authority co-ordinates the process of allocating places at these schools in these year groups.

#### 2.3 Application forms

The Common Application Form (CAF)(paper or online) must allow parents to apply for a Reception place at any Primary or Infant school (or Year 3 at Junior school) and to give reasons for their preferences. If parents apply directly to a school, the governing body/academy trust must inform the local authority. All applications are co-ordinated by the local authority (WNC) up to and including 31 July.

#### 2.4 Residence in another local authority

Parents resident in one local authority who wish to apply for a Reception place at a Primary or Infant school, or Year 3 at a Junior school maintained by a different local authority, must apply using the Common Application Form (online or paper) for the local authority in which they live (i.e. their home local authority).

#### 2.5 Exchange of information

Local authorities and admission authorities in the area must exchange information on applications received and potential offers to be made by the dates specified in the scheme (see Section 1). A maintaining local authority must inform the home local authority if it intends to offer a place at one of its schools to an applicant living in a different local authority area. Local authorities should exchange information on applications across their borders and seek to eliminate multiple offers across local authority borders wherever possible. The exchange of data must, where possible, be carried out using secure data protection systems.

#### 2.6 Information for Parents

Please note that throughout this scheme, the term “parent” refers to both individual parents as well as those with parental responsibility for the child, e.g. carers.

Parents who live within the West Northamptonshire Council area are encouraged to apply online.

---

The benefits of using the online process are as follows:

1. Parents are less likely to make errors as the system guides them through the whole process;
2. Parents are able to change preferences up until midnight on the closing date;
3. On National Offer Day, parents will be able to log on to the system to find out which school has been allocated (a letter naming the allocated school will be posted on National Offer Day to all parents who applied using the paper application form);
4. Parents will receive an email with details of the school offered;
5. Parents will be helping to reduce paper usage.

The 'Applying for a Primary School Place in West Northamptonshire 2023-24' composite prospectus will be available in PDF format on the School Admissions pages of WNC's website from September 2022. Paper copies of the composite prospectus can be obtained by request from:

School Admissions  
West Northamptonshire Council  
One Angel Square  
Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

The prospectus contains information about:

- How to apply online
- Primary, Infant and Junior schools in each area of West Northamptonshire
- How to complete a common application form
- The Published Admission Number (PAN) for each school
- Each school's oversubscription criteria
- Whether individual schools were oversubscribed in September 2022
- Key dates for the application and allocation process
- Children with special educational needs
- Home-to-school transport
- The process for late applications
- Contact details for the WNC School Admissions Team

## **2.7 Parents living in the West Northamptonshire Council area wanting to complete a paper application form**

Requests for paper application forms and composite prospectuses (for those who do not have access to the internet) should be made to the WNC School Admissions Team.

## **2.8 The Common Application Form (CAF)**

Parents are encouraged to apply online wherever possible. It is the responsibility of all those making an application to ensure that they: a) submit the application on time and receive a submission confirmation email every time a change is made to the application or the application is checked or b) request confirmation of a paper application by emailing the School Admissions Team. It is **not** the responsibility of the School Admissions Team to send reminders to parents.

The application form (either online or paper) will ask the parent to provide:

- A list of up to three preferred schools in rank order (if the applicant is resident in a neighbouring authority where more than 3 preferences can be expressed, any preferences for West Northamptonshire Schools will be treated in line with the child's home local authority)
- Details of siblings (if relevant) who attend the preferred school/s
- Details of the child for whom the application is being made (address, date of birth, any relevant medical information or special social circumstances)
- Confirmation that the child has an EHC Plan (if applicable)

- Reasons for their preferences
- The name of their child's current school
- Details about the person completing the application (name, address, relationship to the child, contact details)

Parents who are using the paper application form will be required to return the completed application form to the School Admissions Team at West Northamptonshire Council by midnight on **15 January 2023**. Applications received after this date will be considered as late applications and will not be processed until after the on-time applications have been dealt with, i.e. after National Offer Day. It is strongly recommended that parents use recorded delivery and obtain a receipt when posting their application forms. West Northamptonshire Council does not accept responsibility for applications received after the closing date due to parents using insufficient postage.

If applying online, parents can submit any additional paperwork (e.g. proof of a house move or evidence of a medical / social need) electronically, or post to the School Admissions Team at West Northamptonshire Council, clearly stating the following: name of child, date of birth and the name(s) of the school (s) the parent is applying for. If a house move takes place after the closing date, the school allocation will be based on the address we hold at the closing date.

## **2.9 Supplementary Information Forms (SIFs)**

If additional information is required by the admission authority of a Foundation, Voluntary Aided or Free school or Academy in order to apply its oversubscription criteria, this will be detailed in their admission arrangements and in the specific section about that school in the LA's composite prospectus. Links to Supplementary information forms (SIFs) for schools which require them will be available on the WNC website from September 2022. Alternatively, contact details for each school are included in the LA's prospectus so parents may contact schools directly to obtain a SIF. **Supplementary Information Forms must be returned to the preferred school by 15 January 2023 unless otherwise stated in the schools' admission arrangements.**

## **2.10 Applications for Foundation, Voluntary Aided or Free Schools and Academies**

The School Admissions Team will ensure that parents' preferences are logged on the School Admissions database. The School Admissions Team will send a list of all applications received, including any additional information, to the relevant Foundation, Free and Voluntary Aided schools, Academies or UTCs.

Applications will be sent to Free, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools and Academies by the date shown on the scheme timetable in Section 1 and schools will be asked to rank applicants as described in 2.13. Any parent who has not submitted a common application form to the LA will not be considered in the ranking lists with on-time applicants. The LA will check all OAA lists to ensure that this procedure is followed.

## **2.11 Applications for schools outside the LA and for West Northamptonshire schools from families living in other LAs**

Applications from residents in the West Northamptonshire Council area for schools in other LAs will be logged on the Admissions database and information relating to those preferences and any additional information will be electronically forwarded to the relevant maintaining local authority by the date shown on the scheme timetable in Section 1.

Similarly, the School Admissions Team will receive applications forwarded from other LAs for schools in West Northamptonshire. These will be recorded and passed on to Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free schools or Academies as appropriate. If the application is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, the School Admissions Team will process applications along with all other applications for WNC schools.

## **2.12 Multiple Applications**

If more than one application is made for a child prior to the closing date, only the latest dated application form will be processed. Any previously submitted application forms will not be processed.

If an offer of a school place has already been made by the LA and the applicant has chosen to submit further applications, the latest-dated application will take priority over any previous applications.

If it is possible to offer a place at one of the preferences on the latest-dated application, an offer will be made and the previous offer will be withdrawn without further reference to the applicant.

Applicants must place any requests to withdraw applications in writing to the School Admissions Team (by letter or email) prior to the reallocation round.

Where there may be multiple applications from parents who are separated, parents will need to refer to section 2.23 of this scheme for further guidance.

### **2.13 How the co-ordination process produces the offer of a single school place**

All schools have a Published Admissions Number (PAN). This is the number of places available at the normal point of entry. Admission authorities (Local Authorities, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free schools and Academies) must consider all the applications they receive and, if there are more applications than places available, they must apply their oversubscription criteria to all applicants. This process can be carried out by the School Admissions Team on behalf of Own Admission Authority schools as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA). Any school wishing to use this service should inform the School Admissions team by 1 August in the year prior to the year of admission. School Admissions will always confirm any offer made with the school in question.

The local authority must allocate a place at the highest preference school where the child can be offered a place.

- If a child qualifies for a place at all 3 preference schools, the LA will offer a place at the school that is ranked highest on the CAF. The child's name will then be removed from the ranked list(s) at the lower preference schools where they qualified for a place so that other children may be offered a place at these schools
- If a child can be offered a place at only one of their preference schools, they will be offered a place at that school regardless of the preference order on the common application form
- If a child cannot be offered a place within the PAN of any of their preferred schools, the LA will offer a place at the nearest school with a place available (i.e. the nearest school which has not reached their PAN and therefore has a place/places available at the time)
- If a child is offered a place at a school which wasn't their first preference, they can request to be added to the waiting list for any of the schools which was a higher preference than the school offered.
- Parents have the right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied, unless a higher preference has been allocated. Information about how to make an appeal is published on the local authority's website.

All OAA schools are responsible for returning a ranked list of all applicants to the local authority by the date stated in the scheme timetable. Some schools will be oversubscribed, others undersubscribed. The surplus places at undersubscribed schools will be allocated to children who were unable to obtain places at their preferred schools.

The local authority will publish details of how places at all schools were allocated on its website.

Schools using random allocation as a tie-breaker, or as part of their oversubscription criteria, must send lists which include the names of all applicants in ranked order to the School Admissions Team. The ranked list must include all children in the individual bands and not just those ranked up to the school's PAN. This procedure will enable the School Admissions Team to identify why a place has been refused.

All schools which are their own admission authority must return the ranked allocation lists to the School Admissions Team by the date shown in the scheme timetable in Section 1.

For local authority schools (Community and Voluntary Controlled schools), the School Admissions Team will be responsible for applying the oversubscription criteria if the number of applications exceeds the Published Admission Number (PAN) of the school.

If a child is eligible for a place at more than one school, the applicant's order of preference will be considered and the highest preference will be offered.

Where it is not possible to offer a place at any of the preferred schools, a place will be allocated at the school closest to the home address where places are available at the time of allocation. Some children in this situation will be eligible for assistance with transport costs. Parents will be referred to the school travel assistance pages of WNC's website.

A single place will be identified for each child by the end of this co-ordination process. When schools have more applications than places available, places will only be allocated up to the limit of the school's PAN. In the case of Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free schools and Academies, the admission authorities of these schools **must** notify their local authority of their intention to increase the school's PAN and reference to the change should be made on the school's website. Where further capacity is required to provide every child with a school place, the local authority will consult relevant schools to reach an agreement.

## **2.14 Protocol for children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans**

Reviews of EHC Plans, discussions with parents about preference and placement enquiry procedures, will all be undertaken by the EHC team at WNC. Placement decisions will be made by the date shown on the scheme timetable in Section 1. The admission of children with EHC plans, where the school is named in the plan, will take priority over all other children.

The EHC Team will inform parents of the school allocated for their child on or around or around the date shown on the scheme timetable in Section 1. There may be circumstances where pupils have not been informed of the school allocated by this date. In these cases, schools may be required to admit children over PAN.

The offer of a school place will be made by the EHC Team who will also amend the EHC plan accordingly.

## **2.15 Notification of offers to all schools or other Local Authorities**

As part of the co-ordination process, other LAs will be informed electronically by the date shown on the scheme timetable in Section 1 of any offers of school places that WNC is able to make to their residents. All schools, including Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies, will be informed of the final offers, which may include offers made to pupils living in other LAs by the date shown in the scheme timetable in Section 1. Schools **must not** communicate with parents until *after* the offer from WNC has been sent.

## **2.16 Late applications**

Every effort will be made to encourage parents to complete application forms by the closing date of **15 January 2023**. If an application form is received *after 15 January 2023*, it will not be possible to consider it until all the on-time applications have been processed. Late applicants will not receive an offer of a school place on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day). Late applications will be considered from the relevant reallocation date published in the 'Applying for a Primary School Place in West Northamptonshire 2023-24' composite prospectus and in the scheme timetable in Section 1.

In the co-ordinated scheme in West Northamptonshire, parents/carers will not be allowed to have more than three live primary or secondary preferences at any point in time, prior to the offer date. Parents will not be allowed to change the order or schools listed as preferences after the closing date. After this date, changes to preferences must be made on a late application form and will be processed in the further rounds of allocation (see Section 1).

For Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free schools and Academies, WNC will forward any late applications directly to the schools for their consideration (by the agreed timelines). If places are not available at the

preferred school, the School Admissions Team must be informed by the school so that a place can be offered at an alternative school with places available. If the alternative school is its own admission authority, details of the applicant will be sent to the school before an allocation is made by the local authority.

NB: The co-ordinated process in West Northamptonshire continues up to and including 31 July of each year. From 1 August, the in-year process commences.

## **2.17 Right to appeal**

Parents have the right to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. When an admission authority informs a parent of a decision to refuse a place, it **must** include 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. Parents **must** be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they **must** set out their grounds for appeal in writing. Admission authorities **must not** limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.

The admission authority **must** establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal the school is required to admit the child.

## **2.18 Waiting lists**

Parents who have been refused a place at a school (this could either be after National Offer Day, after an unsuccessful appeal or after making a late application) may wish to place their child's name on a waiting list. Parents must contact the School Admissions Team in order to request that their child's name is added to the waiting list. Following Primary National Offer Day, there will be no distinction drawn on school waiting lists between on time and late applications: all applications will be ranked in accordance with schools' oversubscription criteria.

For OAA schools (i.e. Academies, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free schools), parents need to contact the individual schools directly to ask for information on the waiting list policy for the school.

If a place becomes available, the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied to the waiting list to determine who should be allocated the available place. Any places that become available after the initial allocation will be reallocated in rounds of reallocation (see Section 1) by the School Admissions Team. The local authority continues to co-ordinate the allocation of places at all schools up to and including 31 July. This requires all schools which are their own admission authority to ensure clear and up-to-date communications with the School Admissions Team regarding the ranking lists for each round of allocations. No allocation will be made by the School Admission Team without prior agreement with the individual admission authority.

For every over-subscribed Community and Voluntary Controlled school, the School Admissions Team will retain a waiting list until the end of the 2023 Autumn term (31 December). Following this date, waiting lists will be ended. If parents still wish their child's name to remain on the new waiting lists which will be established for the following term, they will need to request this in writing (via email) to the WNC School Admissions Team. Waiting lists will be restarted every term, so if a parent wishes to remain on a waiting list for a whole academic year, they would make a request in writing to the School Admissions Team at the start of January and following the Easter break (March/April).

## **2.19 Applying for a place in a Junior School**

The normal point of entry to Junior Schools is Year 3 and the LA co-ordinates the process of allocating places to these schools in this year group.

Parents of children who are in Year 2 at an Infant school and who want them to attend a Year 3 in a Junior in September 2023 need to apply for places in Junior schools using the Common Application Form.

Parents of children in Year 2 at an Infant school should not apply for a place in Year 3 at a Primary school on the Common Application Form as this form is only used for applications at the normal point of entry to a

school. Year 3 is **not** the normal point of entry for a Primary school, any applications for a place in Year 3 in a Primary school for September 2023 should be made on an in-year application form in accordance with the LA's In-year process.

In-year applications applications for a Year 3 place at a Primary school should be made from June 2023.

## **2.20 National Offer Day**

The School Admissions Team will notify all on-time applicants of their school offer on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day) by email (for all online applicants) or by post (a first class letter will be sent to all applicants who submitted a paper application). The communication will include information about how to find out how school places have been allocated in the West Northamptonshire Council area and, if necessary, information about how to appeal. In addition, breakdowns of how places were allocated in accordance with each school's oversubscription criteria will be published on the WNCwebsite. Links to this page will be provided on all offer emails and letters.

The School Admissions Team will assume that the place has been accepted unless communication from the parent is received to advise to the contrary.

## **2.21 Rejection of a school place**

Parents will be required to notify the relevant admission authority and the School Admissions Team in writing (by email or letter) if they **do not** propose to accept the school place offered. These places will then be reallocated following the process as set out above in 2.13. Places will not be removed until the School Admissions Team has been advised by the parent that they have secured an alternative school place for their child.

Schools which are their own admissions authority must inform the School Admissions Team as soon as a place is rejected so that the School Admissions Team has an accurate picture of the available school places prior to the reallocation dates.

## **2.22 Definition of a sibling and sibling link for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools**

Some schools give priority to children whose brother(s) or sister(s) are already on roll at a preferred school (this is called a sibling link). A sibling is defined as a child's brother or sister. WNC's definition of 'sibling' for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools states that 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 for a sibling link and 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.

The sibling link will only be valid if the sibling will be attending when the child applying starts school. This means that it will not count as a sibling link if a child wants a place in a Primary school, but their brother is in Year 6 and will therefore have left the school when the child applying starts at the school.

Some admission authorities have different definitions of a sibling and sibling link. Parents are advised to check the information in the LA's composite prospectus or in the school's admission arrangements available on their website to see what their definition is.

## **2.23 Parents who do not live together**



WNC's definition of a child's address states that when parents live separately and the child spends time with each parent, 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.

Other admission authorities may have different definitions of a child's home address. Parents are advised to check the school's individual admission arrangements on their website or in the LA's composite prospectus.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned.

The LA can only process one application. Where more than one adult shares parental responsibility and if the adults live at different addresses, it is important that an agreement be reached on which schools to apply for, prior to making the application.

If multiple applications are received for the same child with conflicting address and/or preferences, or the School Admissions Team is made aware of a dispute between two parents, all applications will be placed on hold and will **not** be processed until:

- a new single application is made, signed by all parties; or
- written agreement is provided from both parents indicating which application they have agreed on; or
- a court order is provided confirming which parent's application carries precedence.

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 a child being allocated a place at their preferred school/s.

Further information on parental responsibility can be found on the [DfE website](#)

## **2.24 Children who are part of a multiple birth group**

Under paragraph 2.16 (g) of The School Admissions Code (2021), infant class size restrictions may be exceeded where a child who is part of a multiple birth group is allocated as the 30<sup>th</sup> pupil. For Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, the admission number will be exceeded to accommodate the other children from this birth group. These children will remain as 'excepted pupils' for the time they are in an infant class (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) or until class numbers fall back to the current infant class limit. Own admission schools may have another policy in place.

## **2.25 Random allocation**

Random allocation, when used as a tie-breaker within an oversubscription criterion for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, will be observed by an independent person (not employed by the local authority or with a connection to the school). This is to ensure that the process is administered correctly.

If a place is allocated from the waiting list after the initial round of allocations, and the tie-breaker is used, a new round of random allocation will be performed but not observed.

## **2.26 Definition of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children ('Children in Care')**

The highest priority in the oversubscription criteria for all schools must be given to 'looked after children' and 'previously looked after children'. 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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

'Previously looked after children' are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order). This includes children who appear, to the admission authority, to have been in state care outside England prior to adoption.

## **2.27 Summer born children**

Children born between 1 April and 31 August (inclusive) are known as summer born children. These children do not reach Compulsory School Age (CSA) until a full year after they would normally have started school in Reception, the point at which other children in the age range are beginning Year 1.

If a parent has made the decision that they feel it is not in their child's best interests to start school before s/he reaches CSA, they may be happy for their child to enter straight into Year 1 to join his/her peers. In this case they would need to apply for a Year 1 place at their preferred schools at the end of the academic year in which the rest of their child's normal year group are finishing Reception.

If a parent feels it would be in their child's best interests to enter Reception at this point however, the School Admissions Code (2021) allows parents/carers of summer born children to request that they are admitted outside their normal age group, into Reception rather than 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. Each school's admission authority is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to.

Paragraph 2.19 of the School Admissions Code (2021) requires that, in any circumstance where a parent/carer requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority of the preferred school must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will require the admission authority to take account of the child's individual needs and abilities and to consider whether these can best be met in Reception or Year 1. It will also involve taking account of the potential impact on the child of being admitted to Year 1 without first having completed the Reception year. The views of the head teacher will be an important part of this consideration.

Parents/carers of summer born children who could start school in September 2023, but wish to delay applying for a Reception place to start in September 2024, should make their application for a Reception place for their child's normal year of entry before the deadline **on 15 January 2023**. They should also make their request for admission to their preferred schools out of the normal age group by the same date: **15 January 2023**. This is to enable sufficient time for requests to be processed prior to National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day). Requests will still be considered after this date however.

If an admission authority agrees to the parent's request, their application for the normal age group will be withdrawn before a place is offered for their normal year of entry and they must make a new application for that school as part of the main admissions round the following year. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents/carers should therefore consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference school.

**Please note:** The admission authority for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools is WNC, whereas the admission authority for Academies, Voluntary Aided (VA), Foundation and Free Schools, is either the Governing Body (VA and Foundation Schools) or the Academy Trust (Academies and Free Schools).

If parents have more than one preferred school, they must make the request to delay their child's Reception application to each of the schools. They should then only apply for a place in Reception the following year at schools whose admission authorities have agreed to the delay.

The following steps will be required depending on the type of school they are applying for.

A. If the preferred school is a Community or Voluntary Controlled school:

1. Parents/carers make a formal written request (with reasons for the request) to School Admissions at WNC (as this is the admission authority for these schools);
2. Parents/carers can supply School Admissions with supporting information from a professional and/or Early Years practitioner, if available, at the point of request;
3. School Admissions will consult with the Head teacher of the preferred school and take into consideration any evidence supplied in order to make a decision.

B. If the preferred school is an Academy, Voluntary Aided, Foundation or Free school (or your preferred school is a Community or Voluntary Controlled school outside Northamptonshire):

1. Parents/carers make a formal written request (with reasons for the request) to the preferred school;
2. Parents/carers can supply the school with supporting information from a professional and/or Early Years practitioner, if available, at the point of request;
3. The preferred school will then approach their admission authority with the reasons and evidence supplied by the parents/carers so that a decision can be made (by the admission authority) in consultation with the Head teacher of the school;
4. Following their decision, the admission authority should then inform the parents/carers of their decision in writing, giving detailed reasons if the request is refused.
5. If they agree to the request, the request and written confirmation from the admission authority of the preferred school that they are in agreement with the parents/carers request to delay their application to Reception for a year, must be sent to School Admissions at WNC by either the parent or the school so the Admissions database can be adjusted to accept a Reception application for the following year.

What happens next?

A. If the admission authority of a school agrees to the parents/carers request to delay applying for a Reception place for a year:

- School Admissions will write to the parents/carers confirming that an application for **that school** can be made in the following year. A copy of the letter sent by School Admissions to the parents/carers will also be sent to the Head teacher of the school(s) concerned;
- If parents/carers have made an application for Reception in the normal year of entry, this application will be withdrawn and a place will not be offered on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day);
- Parents/carers will then need to submit an application for the schools whose admission authorities have agreed to the delay for Reception the following year;
- Parents/carers should only apply a full year later for a Reception place at schools whose admission authorities have agreed to a delayed application for their child;
- The new application will be processed as part of the normal admissions round in the following year, according to the oversubscription criteria of each school stated as a preference;
- While a school may agree to a delayed application, there is no guarantee that the child will be allocated a place at that school in the following admissions round as other children may have a higher priority within the school's oversubscription criteria. No additional priority will be given to an applicant applying under the summer born policy, nor will they be penalised;
- If it is not possible to offer a place at one of the preferred schools, the Local Authority will make every effort to allocate a Reception place (rather than a Year 1 place) at an alternative school. However, because WNC is not the admissions authority for all schools, a school approached as an alternative school would have to agree to the delayed entry;
- If the Local Authority is unable to offer a place at one of your preferred schools, it **may** not be possible to offer a place in Reception at another school (if they do not agree to a delayed application). In this case, the child would be offered a place at a school in Year 1 at the nearest school to their home address with a place available.

B. If the admission authority of a school rejects the parents/carers request to delay applying for a Reception place for a year:

- Parents/carers will receive a letter from the admission authority of the preferred school providing reasons for refusal.
- Assuming an application for a Reception place for the normal year of entry was submitted on time (by 15 January 2023), parents/carers will receive an offer of a school place on National Offer Day (16 April or the next working day).
- Parents/carers then need to decide if they will accept the place offered for their normal year of entry on National Offer Day, or decline that place and apply for Year 1 place for the following September when their child is compulsory school age. If a parent/carer chooses to decline the place, they must put this in writing to the School Admissions Team (information about how to do this will be included in the offer email);
- Parents/carers who have not applied for a Reception place in their normal year of entry will need to apply as soon as possible if they decide that they would prefer their child to start in Reception rather than waiting until they reach Compulsory School Age and start school in Year 1. Applications received after the deadline on 15 January 2023 will be classed as late applications (see our website for more information on late applications).

## **2.28 Summer born children continuing at current nursery setting**

Parents/carers have the option for their child to stay in an Early Years setting. Children can attend an Early Years setting until the end of the Funding Block (Term) in which they turn 5. In order to ensure that the Early Years setting can secure the funded place for your child/children for September 2023, parents/carers must notify their Early Years setting before the end of the Spring Funding Block (Term) 31 March of the year in which they would normally be starting school. The Early Years setting can then take into account the number of children at the setting when allocating places for September 2023. If parents/carers do not notify their Early Years setting until after nursery allocations have been released, nursery schools and classes will be under no obligation to offer a place above their normal intake number. Children can, of course, be considered for a place through the normal waiting list process.

## **2.29 Admission of children out of their normal year group (out of cohort)**

West Northamptonshire Council's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group where possible, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

Parents/carers may however seek a place for their child out of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. They must put their request in writing to the School Admissions Team (for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools) and directly to the school for schools who are their own admission authority, at the time of application.

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 views of the Head teacher of the school concerned.

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.

Schools for which the local authority is not the admission authority may have a different process. Please check individual schools' admission arrangements directly with the schools or on their websites to ensure you are following the correct procedure.

Please see further information in the School Admissions Code (2021) about the admission of children outside their normal age group.

### **2.30 Sharing information with schools**

When sharing information regarding the co-ordinated scheme with schools, the local authority (WNC) will:

- Supply information about what is required in the co-ordination process;
- Provide useful tips to schools;
- Be clear about the dates when information should/must be returned to the LA.

If schools already have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the School Admissions Team, the team will carry out the agreed work and will share with the school the outcome of applications made to the school by sending out lists of successful applicants.

Schools wishing to establish a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the co-ordination process should contact the School Admissions Team as soon as possible to discuss their requirements.

### **2.31 Relevant Area**

The relevant area for schools in West Northamptonshire is the area comprising West Northamptonshire and all adjoining local authorities.