



## **BEDFORD FREE SCHOOL**

### **Admissions Policy 2024 - 2025**

#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure Bedford Free School as part of Advantage Schools complies with all the relevant provisions of the statutory School Admissions Code, as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with the law on admissions as it applies to maintained schools.

#### **2. Vision and Values**

2.1 Bedford Free School is a part of Advantage Schools. We believe that given the right circumstances, all children are capable of extraordinary things. Bedford Free School's values of Honesty, Respect and High Expectations underpins the outlook for the whole school community.

#### **3. Policy**

3.1 Bedford Free School is a publicly funded, co-educational secondary school.

3.2 For the 2024 intake, applications for entry into Years 7 will be invited. The admission number will be 100 pupils.

3.3 Bedford Free School welcomes applications from potential pupils of all levels of prior attainment.

3.4 Responsibility for the admission of pupils rests with Advantage Schools and the Trust Board.

3.5 All applications for places at the school will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

#### **4. Admission Arrangements**

##### **4.1 Applications**

4.1.1 All applications for places at Bedford Free School will be made in accordance with the Local Authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements and will be made on the common application form provided and administered by the Local Authority. Completed applications need to be returned to the Local Authority's Admissions Service by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

- 4.1.2 Offers will be made on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. On this date the Admissions service will send letters/emails to parents living in Bedford Borough notifying them of the outcome of their applications.
- 4.1.3 By 15 March 2024 parents are to notify the School Admissions Service of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

#### 4.2 Appeal Procedure

- 4.2.1 Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful will be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with the statutory provisions in force at the time.
- 4.2.2 The Appeal Panel will be independent of Advantage Schools.
- 4.2.3 The determination of the Appeal Panel will be binding on all parties.
- 4.2.4 The school will prepare guidance for parents about how the appeals process will work and provide parents with a named contact who can answer any enquiries parents may have about the process.
- 4.2.5 Full details of the procedure will be sent to parents with the decision letter on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- 4.2.6 In addition to the right to appeal, unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the reserve list. The order of the reserve list will be determined in accordance with the over-subscription criteria.
- 4.2.7 The reserve list will be maintained until the end of the autumn term 2024.
- 4.2.8 Vacancies arising between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 will in the first instance be offered to applicants on the reserve list.
- 4.2.9 On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 applications on the reserve list will be placed on the waiting list.

#### 4.3 Over-subscription Criteria

- 4.3.1 Where numbers of applications for each year group are fewer than the number of published year group places, all applications for that year group will be accepted.
- 4.3.2 Where numbers of applications for any year group exceed the number of published year group places, after the admission of pupils with an EHCP which names the school, applications will be considered in the following order of priority:
- Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order,<sup>1</sup> and children

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<sup>1</sup> A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in England, or is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions.

who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.<sup>2</sup>

- Children who have siblings in the school.
  - Previous siblings.
  - Children of staff employed at Bedford Free School in either or both of the following circumstances:
    - a) where the member of staff has been employed at Bedford Free School for two or more years at the time at which the application for 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.
  - Children who are on-roll at Elstow School or Queen's Park Academy.
  - Any other children.
- 4.3.3 Within each of the over-subscription categories, priority will be given to those who live nearest the school, as measured by the straight-line distance.
- 4.3.4 The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the front door of the school regardless of distance of travel.
- 4.3.5 Where a pupil lives for part of each week at different addresses, the home address shall be that address at which the pupil spends the majority of the school week.
- 4.3.6 'Sibling' is a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner and in every case the child should be living at the same address.
- 4.3.7 In order to qualify under the "children who have siblings in the school" criteria, the sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.
- 4.3.8 In order to qualify under the "previous sibling" criteria, a child must have had a sibling in the school in one of the previous 3 academic years prior to the year of proposed admission.
- 4.3.9 Where applications are received from twins, triplets or same-year siblings the following procedure will be followed: if one child is selected for a place within a year group, the twin/triplet/same year sibling will be ranked immediately below children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 4.3.10 In a similar fashion, where there are applications from siblings for places in different year groups, if one child is selected for a place in a year group, then their sibling(s) will be ranked immediately below children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

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<sup>2</sup> A child is regarded as having been in 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.

- 4.3.11 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).
- 4.3.12 A previously 'looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

#### 4.4 Other Admissions

- 4.4.1 Bedford Free School will admit any pupil with an EHCP where the EHCP names Bedford Free School and for whom the school has agreed to be named in the EHCP.
- 4.4.2 Applications that arise outside the normal annual admission round will be considered at any time during the year. Information and application forms may be obtained from the School Admissions Team at the Local Authority.
- 4.4.3 Where there is more than one application for a vacant place, the offer of a place will be determined in accordance with the following criteria, in order of priority:
- Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) in which Bedford Free School is named on the EHCP and Bedford Free School has agreed to be named on the EHCP.
  - Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order.<sup>3</sup>
  - Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.<sup>4</sup>
  - Children who have siblings in the school at the time they are admitted to the school.
  - Children of staff employed at Bedford Free School in either or both of the following circumstances:
    - where the member of staff has been employed to work at Bedford Free School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or

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<sup>3</sup> A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in England, or is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England in the exercise of their social services functions.

<sup>4</sup> A child is regarded as having been in 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.

- the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- Children who are on-roll at Elstow School.
- Any other children.

#### 4.5 Waiting Lists

- 4.5.1 Bedford Free School will operate a waiting list for each entry group.
- 4.5.2 Where in any year Bedford Free School receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate for a term.
- 4.5.3 The waiting list will be maintained by Advantage Schools.
- 4.5.4 Any child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.
- 4.5.5 Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

### 5. Related Documents

- 5.1 Appeals Procedure.

### 6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 6.1 The CEO of Advantage Schools is responsible for ensuring that Bedford Free School adheres to this policy and that this policy is periodically reviewed.
- 6.2 This policy will be reviewed annually.