



## **TOWNLANDS C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY**

### **Admissions Policy Autumn 2026**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that places at Townlands Primary Academy are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. We are guided by our vision 'A journey of learning in the light of God's love'. Townlands is part of the Church of England Diocese of Leicester's family of schools. Recognising its historic foundation, the academy will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the churches at parish and diocesan level.

Townlands Primary Academy is its own admission authority and will consult as required and publish their admission policy and arrangements. We are responsible for setting the criteria for admissions.

#### **Aims**

The Academy aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from the daily Christian act of worship and from Religious Education.

Recognising its historic foundation, the academy will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the churches at parish and diocesan level.

When considering the admission of pupils into Townlands we treat all applications fairly and equally, we do not select by ability. Townlands is an inclusive school.

Townlands admission policy must be subject to public consultation at least once every seven years. When planning significant changes, such as altering catchment areas, introducing new criteria or anything that would affect admissions of children into Townlands, we are obliged and would wish to consult.

Townlands has due regard to advice from the Diocese Board of Education (DBE) and will consult with the Diocese before public consultation.

Townlands Primary Academy Admissions Policy will:

- Offer clarity regarding legal requirements and statutory guidance
- Seek to encourage partnership and avoid conflict at a local and an authority level
- Maintain parental rights and ease the process of admission for parents and children
- Have one consistent first-time admissions date to mainstream education

The Academy Admissions Code and the Academy Admissions Appeals Code can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-admissions-code>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-admissions-appeals-code>

Townlands Primary Academy serves the catchment area shown on the map detailed on the back page of this policy.

### **How the Admissions Process works**

By law every school must have a means to deal with a situation where there are more applications than places, this involves setting a priority criteria. Children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school as part of that plan are automatically admitted, these children are not included in the priority criteria, the school offers them a place by law. The number of places available in a school is indicated by its planned admissions number (PAN). When there are more applications than places the schools over subscription criteria are applied in an objective and fair way. See section below 'priority criteria for autumn admissions and mid-term applications during the academic year'.

### **Starting School**

In Leicestershire, children begin school in the September following their fourth birthday. Upon notification of a school place being offered, a child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents can request that the date the child is admitted to the School is deferred until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made.

To defer a place at first time admission, parents are asked to inform the School. If a child does not attend school by the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the original application was made, parents are required to make a new application.

### **Planned Admission Number**

The planned admissions number (PAN) is the number of children the school can accommodate on admission to Reception. This is set by law and will indicate the number of places available within the year(s) of entry. This information will explain how places will be allocated until the PAN is reached. Once the admission number for each year group has been reached, whether at first time admission or on a midterm application, all subsequent applications will be refused and the right of appeal will be offered. Additionally, the Infant Class Size Regulations require that in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 no class shall have more than 30 pupils to each teacher. This may mean that combinations of year groups are also affected by Infant Class Size regulations, for example where there are mixed year groups where the combined size of the class must not exceed 30.

Our planned first-time admission number (PAN) for 2026/2027 is 30 pupils.

### **The Application Process**

Parents/carers apply for a place at our school using the Leicestershire co-ordinated admissions scheme. Leicestershire, along with all other Local Authorities, must follow a specified timetable. Children entering the Foundation Year Group for the first time, are dealt with in a common and universal basis.

### **Admissions Timeline Primary:**

- 15 January Closing date for applications to the Local Authority (LA)
- 28 February Publication of appeals timetable on LA website
- 16 April (or next working day) National offer day for First Time Admission and Infant-Junior Transfers
- April to August Appeals process and outcomes
- August New intake starts at school

The Local Authority is required to co-ordinate admissions for all residents in Leicestershire. To this purpose it must have an approved scheme for co-ordination and Townlands Primary Academy will participate in full with the scheme.

Applications for places for children living within and outside the designated catchment area are welcomed. Entitlement to a place in the academy is dependent on the parents applying at the appropriate time and (for infant submissions) on compliance with infant class size regulations.

Applications for places for the reception class need to be registered by completing the on-line Local Authority common application form (available from [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/admissions)).

All requests received by 15th January (national closing date) will be considered first and in accordance with the approved priority criteria. All applications received after the closing date will be considered after those that have been received on time.

Confirmation of places will be notified to parents by the Local Authority.

Townlands may, however, refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

If a parent who has applied by the closing date given by the Local Authority later changes their mind and wishes to defer their child's entry to Reception, they should discuss this and other options with the Head teacher. Requests to defer will not be agreed if the only reason is that a place has not been offered at one of the preferred schools.

These applications for admission outside normal age group will be considered alongside all other applications in accordance with the Local Authority co-ordinated admissions scheme. If a place has been deferred, the parent/carer will need to subsequently re-apply within the timescales for the following year as deferral will not guarantee a place the subsequent year. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at the academy for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they have been offered a place at the academy but it is not in their preferred age group.

### **Deferring First-Time Admission**

1. When a child's parents are notified of the allocation of a primary academy place, they can defer the child's admission. The academy will agree to deferment to later in the academy year (no later than the start of the Summer Term) or until the child reaches compulsory academy age in that year, or attend part-time until the child reaches compulsory academy age. The parent would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday, nor beyond the academic year for which the original application was accepted. The place at the academy will be held open for the child and not made available to another child. For summer born children if the place is not taken up by the summer half- term then a fresh application must be submitted usually for entry into Year 1, as the admissions application is only valid for the academic year in which you applied. The place may be withdrawn if not taken up after deferment.
2. Exceptionally, parents of summer born children that is those children born from 1st April to 31st August can request delayed admission that is they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group - to reception rather than Year 1 following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. If such a parent requests admission to Reception not Year 1 all relevant factors will be considered in assessing the request, parents would be expected to provide evidence to show that admission to Reception was in the child's best interests and will be taken into consideration. Parents seeking to delay their child's admission into the academy should contact the academy as the Admissions authority in the autumn term in the year prior to the normal entry in the following September in order for the

academy to make the decision. Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case. This will take into account parents' views, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development. The views of the head teacher of the academy will be taken into account. Decisions made by the Admissions Authority will be clearly set out. Where the Admissions Authority agree to a child being admitted to a year out of their normal age group and as a consequence of that decision the child would be admitted to the age group which pupils are normally admitted to the academy, an application will need to be made in the usual way by the closing date the following year and will be processed as part of the main admission round. Parents' statutory right to appeal against or refusal of a place at an academy for which they have applied does not apply if they are offered a place at the academy but it is not their preferred age group.

### **Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan**

- Townlands does not allow the refusal of admission because it is believed that the academy cannot cater for the child's special educational needs as specified on the EHCP.
- Pupils with special educational needs but no EHCP are dealt with through normal admissions policy, and the academy cannot refuse to admit a pupil because he/she does not have an EHCP or is being assessed for an EHCP.
- All Governing Bodies are required by section 324 of the Education Act 1996 to admit to the academy a child with an EHCP that names the academy. This is not an oversubscription criterion and the academy must admit EHCP children whether they have places or not.

### **In-Year (mid-term) Transfers (all year groups)**

- Admissions are only accepted providing there is a space in the age appropriate year group:
- All mid-term transfer requests (in-catchment included) will be coordinated through Leicestershire's Academy Admissions Service for approval before admission takes place.
- Before applying parents are encouraged to arrange to visit the academy after which the parent should complete the Local Authority's online Common Application Form.
- The Council will aim to notify the parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days and must notify in writing within 15 school days.
- Where the mid-term application is made through the Local Authority the decision letter will either offer the place or it may, however, refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources. A letter will also explain to the parent their right to appeal, and how they should do this.
- Pupils who have an EHCP will be admitted regardless of numbers or priority criteria where Townlands is named as the priority school on the child's EHCP.

### **Priority criteria for autumn admissions and mid-term applications during the academic year**

Townlands Primary Academy's admission number at the point of entry is 30, where more than 30 applications for Townlands are received for any one-year group, combinations of the above criteria will be used to rank the 30 places. Anyone refused will have the right to appeal. Combinations of the above criteria are used in priority order.

If there are too many requests, priority will be given to children, whose parents applied on time, in the following order: -

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1st</b> | Children who are looked after and those children who were previously looked after children. (Note i)                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>2nd</b> | Pupils who live in the catchment area at the time of application and admission.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>3rd</b> | Pupils who will have an older brother or sister attending <b>Townlands Primary Academy</b> at the same time who live in the same house. This will <u>not</u> apply to mid-term admissions in year groups where the admission number has been reached. (Note ii) |
| <b>4th</b> | Pupils who have a serious medical condition or exceptional social or domestic needs that make it essential they attend the academy requested. (Professional documentation confirming the situation must be submitted with the application). (Note iii)          |
| <b>5th</b> | Pupils living nearest to the academy measured in a straight-line distance home to school front gate. (Note iv)                                                                                                                                                  |

Townlands Primary Academy will need to ask for proof of the following when applying, the priority criteria

- Address
- Child's date of birth
- Copy of an adoption, residence or special guardianship order and letter from the LA that last looked after the child confirming that he or she was looked after immediately prior to that order being made.

#### **Additional Notes:**

##### **Note (i)**

Children who are looked after and those children who were previously looked after children. The School Admissions Code 2021 states that all admission authorities must give highest priority to this group of children and provides the following definitions:

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 arrangement order or special guardianship order).

Further references to previously looked after children means such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and 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 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.
- Children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. 24

- Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. 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)

#### Note (ii)

The term sibling relates to:

- brothers and/or sisters who share the same parent(s)
- a half-brother, half-sister or legally adopted child living at the same address
- a child looked after by a local authority placed in a foster family with other school age children
- a stepchild or children who are not related but live as a family unit, where parents both live at the same address as the child.

#### Note (iii)

If medical criterion is used, when making an application parents should send evidence from an independent professional person who knows about the child and supports the application to the school. It must clearly show why the school is the most suitable and any difficulties if alternate schools were offered. An independent professional person, for example a health professional, social worker, teacher/early years professional or support worker or such other appropriate person. The evidence must be supplied and must be submitted with the application for a school place.

The following list are the areas that are considered exceptional: -

(a) Children with a serious medical condition - showing that the needs of the child can only be met at the specific school and why other schools would not be able to meet this need, or a child has an exceptional illness or disability (for example, limited mobility) which means that, the child can only reasonably attend one school.

(b) Children subject to Child Protection Plans and Child in Need Plans and the child can only reasonably attend one school.

(c) Parents suffering domestic violence (This is dependent on documentary evidence by a lead professional for example a health professional, social worker, teacher/early years professional or support worker or such other appropriate person)

The Academy will make the decision during the processing period in consideration with relevant professional documentation.

#### Note (iv)

Measurement of distance of up to three decimal places will be in a straight line from the centre point of the home property to the school's main designated front gate, using a computerised geo-coded mapping system. Where there is equal distance then lots will be drawn. The drawing of lots will be undertaken by an independent person, not an employee or governor of the school.

#### **Tiebreaker**

If having applied the priority criteria, two or more applications have identical ranking lots will be drawn. The drawing of lots will be undertaken by an independent person, not an employee or governor of the school.

## **Waiting List**

If the Academy has more applications than there are places available for children due to start in first time admissions in 2026 - 2027, a waiting list will be maintained until December 31st. The position on the list will be determined by applying the published priority criteria and not by date of receipt. Each name added will require the list to be re-ranked. The existence of a waiting list does not remove the right of appeal against any refusal of a place from any unsuccessful applicant.

Names will only be removed from the list if a written request is received, or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined. The waiting list will shut down on 31 December 2026 in accordance with statutory requirements. Looked after children and previously looked after children as defined within this policy, children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority or who are allocated to an academy in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over any child on the waiting list.

## **Second application**

Ordinarily parents may only make one application for any particular school per academic year. In exceptional circumstances, and at its sole discretion, the Council may allow a further application to be made where there has been a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, the child or the school.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of what may be considered to be exceptional:-

- change of address i.e. where the change of address is into the catchment of the school;
- new significant and material evidence has come to light in personal circumstances;
- a significant change in medical circumstances (apart from medical attention for distress or anxiety as a result of unsuccessful applications / appeals);
- there has been a significant and or material change in the circumstances of the school i.e. significant extensions / new build, an increase their PAN, increase in the number of teaching staff.

In such instances parents must provide written details of the significant and material change together with any evidence of that change. Where the significant and material change is accepted by the Admitting Authority a second application will be permitted and must be made in the usual way and will be processed in the normal manner and, where necessary, in accordance with the priority criteria.

## **Residence**

The child's place of residence is taken to be the parental home.

In determining an application for a school place, the Council on behalf of the Academy may request evidence of an address or of a move into a catchment area or arriving in the UK.

a) Such evidence may include but not be limited to:

- Opening Council Tax Bill;
- Signed and dated copy tenancy agreement;
- Copy of a letter of completion of house purchase from a solicitor.

b) In addition to the above the following may also be asked for:

- Copy of child benefit letter;
- Copy of current driving licence;
- Copy of registration at GP practice or hospital consultant.

c) Where a family has moved in with relatives or friends (including new to UK):

- A declaration from Parents and householder / homeowner / relative / friend confirming the applicant family now reside at the address;
- A copy of most current council Tax bill from occupier;
- Stamped passport or visa;
- Boarding passes.

Where the Council does not consider it has been provided with satisfactory proof of address, the application will not be processed until the Council is satisfied that adequate proof has been obtained.

### **Split Residence**

Where a child lives for part of the week with one parent and for part of the week with the other parent, the address recognised by the Academy for the purposes of an application for a school place is the one where the child lives that is the address where the child permanently spends at least three 'school' nights (that is, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday) will be taken to be the place of residence.

Where the weekly residence arrangement varies, and a child stays with both parents, on average, for the same amount of time during the school week over a four-week period, and one parent lives in another school catchment, the parents will be required to choose one address for the purposes completing a school application. If those with parental responsibility are unable to agree on the preferences, it may be necessary for parents to obtain further legal advice. Leicestershire County Council on behalf of the academy will continue to process an application unless legal documentation is provided that states an application cannot be processed or a pending court hearing. In cases where multiple applications are received for the same child, LCC on behalf of the academy will establish where the child lives for the majority of the time. Where parents cannot agree a single address, parents will be required to seek a Court Order to determine which address is to be used. Where any claimed residence arrangement is found to be false, and the child is yet to start at the allocated school, the place will be withdrawn as it will be considered obtaining the school place on fraudulent and / or misleading grounds. In such circumstances the application will be considered afresh and determined at that time based on the correct information.

### **School Transport**

Townlands is not responsible for any decisions that relate to school transport, this is a matter for the Local Authority.

### **UK Service Personnel or Crown Servants**

For children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area or crown servants returning from overseas to live in the area, the Council will use the address at which the child will live when applying the oversubscription criteria, as long as the parent provides some evidence of their intended address. A unit or quartering address will be used as the child's home address where a parent requests this and evidence, such as an official letter declaring the relocation, is received. For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from overseas, the admission authority will:

i) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area (as long as one is available), provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. This must be an official government letter issued by a government department e.g. FCDO, UKVi, DIT. We will not refuse to process an application or refuse a place solely because the family do not yet have an intended address, or do not yet live in the area.

ii) use the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address. For example, we will use a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address where a parent requests this.

### **Appeals process**

If an application for a school place is refused, a refusal letter is issued, which will set out the reason for refusal and the right to appeal. Parents have a right to appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

The decision of an Independent Appeal Panel is binding on parents and the admitting authority.

To appeal please go to the Leicestershire County Council website :–

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-admissions/appeal-a-school-place-and-check-waiting-lists-online>

**Infant class size regulations:**

Education (Infant Class Sizes) England Regulations 1998

Infant Classes (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) must not exceed 30 children per teacher, unless an exception applies.

The exceptions, are:

- a) children admitted outside the normal admissions round with Education, Health and Care Plans specifying a school;
- b) looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) children admitted after an Independent Appeals Panel upholds an appeal;
- e) children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

**Full consultation review 2031 or earlier if changes required.**

TOWNLANDS PRIMARY ACADEMY CATCHMENT MAP

