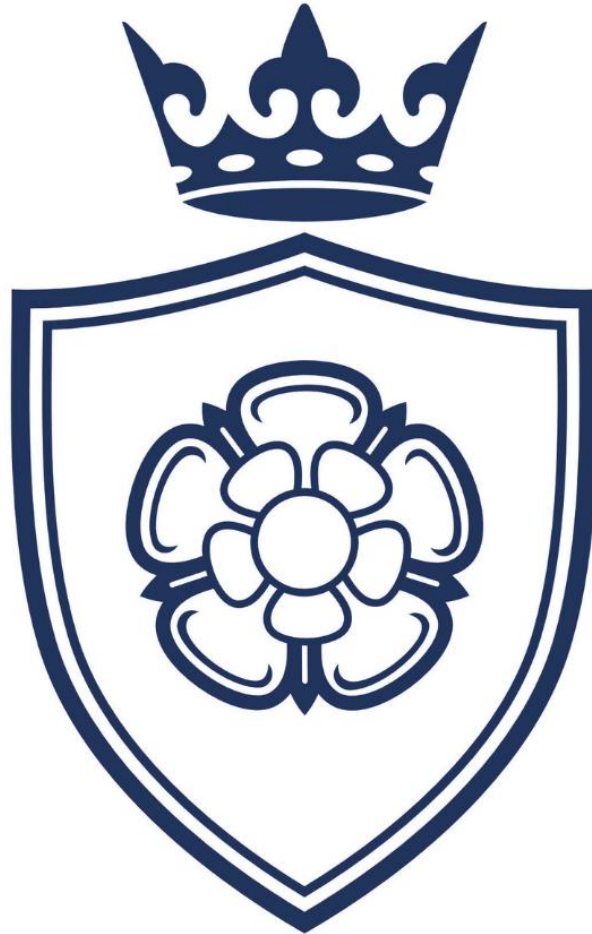




Mercia
Northridge School



Admission Policy

Author	Headteacher
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every year. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

Admission Policy

Academic Year 2026-27

Policy Aims

- 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 a pupil a place

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

As an Academy, Mercia Northridge School is its own Admission authority. However, Mercia Northridge School has chosen to retain the Local Authority's admission arrangements since it became an Academy. Applications for admission are handled by the Local Authority Secondary Admissions Team. They can be contacted at 5th Floor West, Moorfoot Buildings, Sheffield, S1 4PL. Their telephone details are as follows: 0114 273 5766/2735790. Email: ed-admissions@sheffield.gov.uk.

Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admission Appeals Code

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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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:

- In the care of a local authority, or
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

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

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

How to apply

Mercia Northridge School operates within the statutory Admission Code of Practice. The admission arrangements set out in this document include the oversubscription criteria and other detailed information that explain how the school manages this function. The Academy is the "Admission Authority" and is responsible for setting and applying its own admission arrangements.

The admission arrangements that are set out below are those determined by Mercia Learning Trust for admission to Mercia Northridge School. Mercia Learning Trust is fully supportive of the wider admission arrangements operated by Sheffield Local Authority and these arrangements continue the operation of a defined catchment area and feeder primary schools that have been operated historically for admission to the school.

Sheffield Local Authority co-ordinates the allocation process for the normal year of entry (Year 7) for all Sheffield residents and applies the criteria on behalf of Mercia Learning Trust by agreement.

Sheffield Local Authority is also responsible for coordinating “in-year” applications on behalf of the Learning Trust.

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.

Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents are entitled to request a place for their child outside of their normal age group. 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

Wherever possible, requests for admission outside a child’s normal age group will be processed as part of the main admissions round. They will be considered on the basis of the admission arrangements laid out in this policy, including the oversubscription criteria. Applications will not be treated as a lower priority if parents have made a request for a child to be admitted outside the normal age group.

Parents will always be informed of the reasons for any decision on the year group a child should be admitted to. 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.

Mercia Northridge School Admissions Arrangements

Mercia Northridge School is a medium size comprehensive school located in the north of Sheffield. Mercia Northridge School is a member of Mercia Learning Trust. Mercia Northridge School operates within the statutory Admission Code of Practice. The admission arrangements set out in this document include the oversubscription criteria and other detailed information that explain how the school manages this function.

The Mercia Learning Trust is the “Admission Authority” and is responsible for setting and applying its own admission arrangements. The admission arrangements that are set out below are those determined by the Academy Trust for admission to Mercia Northridge School, Mercia Learning Trust.

Trust is fully supportive of the wider admission arrangements operated by Sheffield Local Authority and these arrangements continue the operation of a defined catchment area and feeder primary schools that have been operated historically for admission to the school. Sheffield Local Authority co-ordinates the allocation process for the normal year of entry (Year 7) for all Sheffield residents and applies the criteria on behalf of Mercia Northridge School and Mercia Learning Trust by agreement.

Sheffield Local Authority is also responsible for co-ordinating “in-year” applications on behalf of the Trust.

Special Educational Needs

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs (now re-named the Education and Health Care Plan) that names their school. This is not an oversubscription criterion; schools are required to admit a child in these circumstances whether they have places or not. Mercia Northridge School complies fully with this requirement.

Oversubscription Criteria

In the event of oversubscription, the following categories will be prioritised for places at Mercia Northridge School, operated on the school’s behalf by Sheffield Local Authority.

All children whose education, health and care (EHC) plan, 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.

Highest priority will be given to looked after children and all previously looked after children who apply for a place at the school.

Priority One Children in Public Care (Looked After)

All Admission Authorities MUST prioritise the admission of "Relevant Looked After Children" within their admission criteria. A "Relevant Looked After Child" is defined as:

"a child who is looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989(b) and who (a) is looked after at the time an application for admission to a school is made and (b) in relation to whom the local authority has confirmed that the child will still be looked after at the time when the child will be admitted to the school. Highest priority must also be given to children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care (i.e. in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society) outside of England but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted only. Paragraph 1.7 of the Code expands the definition of previously looked after children to include those children who were in state care outside of England, but who were then adopted. State care is further defined as being in the care of public authorities, religious authorities or other organisations that act in the public benefit and could encompass a wide range of institutions."

The Admission Code of Practice extend this category to also include children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order.

Priority Two Catchment area with Sibling

Children who normally reside with a parent or person with parental responsibility in the defined catchment area and who will have a brother or sister at Mercia Northridge School on the day of admission will be considered next.

The catchment area of Mercia Northridge School can be found on the map on this link and by searching home post codes.

School catchment areas (sheffield.gov.uk)

The definition of a sibling for these purposes is given below. This means that all catchment/sibling applications are prioritised before catchment applicants irrespective of distance. The normal distance tiebreaker will apply within each category.

A sibling is a child who permanently or usually lives at the same address as:

1. a brother and/or sister
2. a stepbrother and/or stepsister (to include half-brother/sister)

and in both cases will be attending Mercia Northridge School at the point of entry.

Priority Three Catchment Area

Children who normally reside with a parent or person with parental responsibility in the defined catchment area but will not have a sibling at Mercia Northridge School at the point of admission will be considered next.

Priority Four Siblings

A non-catchment sibling is a child who permanently or usually lives at the same address as:

3. a brother and/or sister
4. a stepbrother and/or stepsister (to include half-brother/sister)

and in both cases will be attending Mercia Northridge School at the point of entry.

Priority Five Contributory Feeder School

Applicants for a Year 7 place at Mercia Northridge School whose children attend a designated feeder primary school but do not fit into any of the above categories 1, 2, 3 or 4 above will be considered next.

Mercia Northridge School's designated feeder primary schools are: Hillsborough, Meynell, Parson Cross and Southey Green Primary Schools.

Parents are advised In the Sheffield Guide for Parents " that If they choose to send their children to a non-catchment primary school, they have a lower priority for entry to the linked secondary school and that there is no guarantee of a place there.

Priority Six All other applicants

Any applicant who does not fall into one of the above categories will be considered next.

Tie Breakers

For any admission category that is oversubscribed there are two stages of further consideration.

A. Exceptional medical, social or special educational needs

Where exceptional medical, social or special educational needs are demonstrated and supported by a professional, an application may be prioritised by the Admission Committee (AC) but only within its admission category. It is the parent's responsibility to provide supporting evidence.

The applicant must supply sufficient supporting evidence from relevant professionals at the time of the original application, for the Academy to consider whether an individual case constitutes exceptional circumstances to be prioritised. In any event, the evidence must support the view that the child must attend the school applied for and that they could not have their needs met at any other school.

Applications will only be submitted to the Admission Committee for further consideration if they are accompanied by supporting evidence.

Further information about the Admission Committee can be found in the Local Authority Composite Prospectus, "Admission Guides for Parents"

Apply for a school place ([sheffield.gov.uk](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk))

B. Distance

In circumstances where exceptional circumstances are not demonstrated, the final tie-breaker will be the distance from the home address to the school building. This is a straight-line measurement from the house to a specific point at the school building.

Where the remaining place could be made for a number of children living equidistant from the school the determination of the single offered will be made by random allocation.

The random allocation will:

- Be independently supervised by a representative of the Legal and Governance Service of Sheffield LA
- Take place on a date and time notified in advance to the participating parents so that they can attend as witnesses

More details can be found on the Local Authority website at

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/education/information-for-parentscarers/pupil-admissions.html>

Admission Appeals

We operate a catchment, area-based admissions policy. Sometimes, children are refused admission to a school and placed on a waiting list. This is because there were more applications received than places available. In this instance, we use our admissions policy to prioritise places.

If your application for a place at Mercia Northridge School is refused, you will have the right to appeal against the decision to an independent appeal panel. The Local Authority will provide you with further information on the process and how to appeal when you receive your decision. Information about the appeal procedure can be found at

Oversubscribed schools and appeals (sheffield.gov.uk)

Admissions outside the normal admissions round

Children in public care for whom an application is received outside the normal admission round will be considered for priority admission in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol.

All other applications will be considered against the above oversubscription criteria. Children of Services personnel will be considered under the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol where an application is received outside the normal admission round.

Challenging behaviour

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. We may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code (paragraph 3.8.108) apply, i.e. where section 87 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is engaged.

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, only in such a case that we have good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour that may adversely affect the provision we can offer. In this case, we will refer these pupils to the Local Authority for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol. A decision to refuse a child entry under the Fair Access Panel for challenging behaviour is based on the following definition. The 2021 Code now defines "challenging behaviour" at footnote 76 as "where it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency, or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil's/other pupils' education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment."

Equal Preference

The statutory Admission Code of Practice made the practice of offering places on a "First Preference First basis unlawful. All Admission Authorities in Sheffield must operate an Equal Preference system when determining the final school offer. This means that each of the three preferences will be considered as equal preferences and oversubscription criteria applied to each preference irrespective of ranking. The ranking of the preferences is relevant only where the applicant is eligible for more than one school. In this case a place will be offered at the highest ranked school for which the child is eligible.

Oversubscribed schools will refuse further admission on the grounds that the admission of extra pupils would prejudice the provision of efficient education. Places refused on prejudice will only apply to secondary school places and key stage 2 primary school year groups. Details of schools last year that were oversubscribed under prejudice are available in the Oversubscribed secondary schools and Oversubscribed junior schools' documents.

Fair Access Protocol

We participate in Sheffield's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

In-year admissions

Mercia Northridge School participates in the Local Authority's coordinated Admission Scheme for in-year admissions. If a parent of a child on our roll wishes to apply for a transfer to another school, they must obtain a transfer form from the school for completion of Section 2. The application must then be sent to the Local Authority which will process the application on the parent's behalf. The Local Authority will confirm the outcome of the application in writing within 10 school days, but they must be notified in writing within 15 school days.

Local authorities must, on request, provide information to prospective parents about the places still available in all schools within their area. To enable them to do this, the admission authorities for all schools in the area must provide the local authority with details of the number of places available at their schools whenever this information is requested, to assist a parent seeking a school place. Such details should be provided no later than two school days following receipt of a request from the local authority.

If the application is refused, the Local Authority will advise on the statutory appeal procedure. Details of the Co-ordinated Admission Scheme and how in-year applications are managed can be seen at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/apply-school-place.html> Parents can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admissions round. As is the case in the normal admissions round, all children whose EHC plans name the school will be admitted. Likewise, if there are spaces available in the year group you are applying for, your child will be offered a place, subject to challenging behaviour as described above.

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 this policy. Priority will not be given to children on the basis that they have been on the waiting list the longest.

If parents wish to change their child's school to Mercia Northridge School at any time after the normal age group admission, the following must be completed. Parents should contact their home school's Headteacher and request a transfer form. This must be signed by the headteacher and sent to the local authority. The home school would normally assist families with the completion of this form if it is required.

Applications for in-year admissions should be sent to the following address: ed_admissions@sheffield.gov.uk 0114 273 5790 Where a place is refused, the reason for the refusal must be included, along with full details of the statutory right of appeal. As soon as reasonably practicable, but in any event within 2 school days, the LA must also be notified of the application and outcome. Where a place is offered, the child should be admitted as soon as possible.

Appeals

Appeals for entry to Year 7 will be administrated by the Local Authority on behalf of Mercia Northridge School and in line with the statutory Appeal Code of Practice. Appeals will be heard at the Sheffield Town Hall. Parents will be advised of the exact closing date for appeals applications and appeal procedures when they receive notification of the outcome of their application. Appeal Application Forms can be obtained from the Local Authority or downloaded from their website. You will be notified of the date and time of your appeal in writing by the City Council. Schedules will be determined after the closing date for receiving appeals. Year 7 appeals for those submitted on time are normally concluded before the Spring Bank half term at the end of May or in the first two weeks of June. Please note that the appeal panel is independent of the Academy and the Local Authority and its decision is legally binding on both the Academy and on parents.

Waiting Lists - A waiting list will be maintained until 31 December for transfer to Mercia Northridge School (Y7). Parents may remain on the waiting list beyond December if they wish and would be required to contact the admission team.

Key Dates - Open Evenings will be announced on our school website and via social media.

Closing date for Applications- 31 October

National Allocation Day- 1 March

Transition

Mercia Northridge School has close links with our family of primary feeder schools. Pupils in Year 6 have many opportunities to work with our staff in school before the main transition days in July prior to starting at Mercia Northridge School in September. Year 7 pupils soon settle into their school routine because of their familiarity with the school and key staff.

We understand the transition from primary to secondary school can be an anxious time for pupils, they often worry about being with their friends and meeting older pupils. We have worked with our family of primary feeder schools to put pupils in groups of two or three, based upon who will best support their learning at Mercia Northridge School. We will endeavour to ensure that pupils are with at least one person they know from primary school.

A Head of Year will have pastoral oversight for the year group, with an Assistant Headteacher having an overall view of the transition period.

Admissions Team contact details

Any enquiries should be referred to the Local Authority's Admissions Team:

Telephone: 0114 273 5766/2735790.

Email: ed-admissions@sheffield.gov.uk

Local Authority Admissions Team: Inclusion and Learning Service, Floor 5, North Wing, Moorfoot,
Sheffield S1 4PL

Apply for a school place | Sheffield City Council

Children new to Sheffield

If you are new to Sheffield and would like a school place, please call the Pupil Admissions Team on 01142735790 or email ed-admissions@sheffield.gov.uk

