



PENCOMBE C.E. SCHOOL

Admissions Policy For the year 2025/26

In God's hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire

"What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on the earth. Yet, when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

Mark 4: 30-34

Date Approved by Governing Body	Summer 2024
Reviewer	Mrs Orton & Mrs Goodman
Next Review Due	Summer 2025

Introduction

This document sets out the admission arrangements of Pencombe CofE Primary School. For the purposes of this policy, the Governing Body is the admission authority.

Ethos Statement

At Pencombe school we aim to help pupil develop: lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and discuss rationally, the ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills. We aim to encourage a positive work ethic in order that all children may reach their true potential physically, academically, socially and spiritually – to achieve a fullness of life through positive and realistic goals.

It is the intention of the staff at Pencombe school to lay a foundation of basic skills in all areas or the curriculum in order for the children to progress with ease to the next stage of learning and in preparation of adult life.

We aim to provide children in our school with an understanding of religious and moral values, and an understanding of the physical world and its people; combined with a sense of value of its resources, in order that the children can relate to themselves and their immediate environment to the wider world.

It is our intention to develop and maintain friendly and positive links between school, home and community, thus enabling parents and others to understand the aims and methods of our school and the importance of their role within it.

Admissions Process

Every school has a limit set for admissions during the year in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988. This is called the planned admissions number (PAN). For Pencombe CE Primary School a limit of 8 places has been set for the Reception group (aged 4-5). There is one intake in the September of each year.

As a Voluntary Aided school the governors can, in very exceptional circumstances, choose to admit more than the planned admission limit, but they must be able to ensure that doing so does not adversely affect the education of the children in the school.

Pencombe CofE Primary School has mixed-year classes therefore year groups do not have fixed limits but are based on class sizes. (For example, if the number admitted one year is very low, and groups need to be balanced, then the number admitted may rise).

How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to our school

The Local Authority publishes a composite admissions prospectus each year, which gives information about how parents can apply for a place in the school of their choice. Parents have a right to express a preference for the school of their choice and they should do so on the application form. Expressing a preference does not, in itself, guarantee a place at this school. All applications for places must be made online through the Local Authority at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reception-class-admissions.

Process

1. Applications for admission to the school should be made using the Local Authority Common Application Form by the national closing date of 15th January.
2. The Local Authority will inform parents of the offer of a place on behalf of the Governing Body on the national offer date 16th April or the next working day.
3. Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Educational, Health & Care Plan which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority, set out below.

Oversubscription Criteria

Priority 1 - The first oversubscription criterion must always be Looked After, Previously Looked After and Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Children. As this is a legal requirement, it automatically appears as the first of the school's oversubscription criteria.

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.

A "Previously Looked After Child" is a child who was looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order immediately following having been looked after.

An "Internationally Adopted Previously Looked After Child is a child who appears (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.

Priority 2 - Children living within the **defined catchment area*** of the school. Copies of catchment area maps, if required are available from the LA, or can be viewed in schools. To find the catchment school for a postcode please visit <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/find-school>

Priority 3 - Sibling connection - Children who have a sibling** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the child is due to start. Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, a half brother or sister, a legally adopted brother or sister or half-brother or sister, a stepbrother or sister, or other child living in the same household who, in any of these cases, will be living with them at the same address at the date of their entry to the school.

Priority 4 - Exceptional circumstances - Children with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school only is necessary for the wellbeing of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source.

Priority 5 - Distance*** - Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route. Proximity to the school with those living closest to the school having priority calculated by: *** Distance will be measured by the shortest available walking route using a road and/or made up footpath from the front door of the child's address (including flats) to the main entrance of the school, using the Local authority's

computerised digital map measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The child's home address will be determined by: A child residing with his/her Parent(s)/or carer(s) at his/her normal and genuine place of residence for the majority of the time".

Tie-breaker

Proximity to the school. This will be measured by the shortest walking distance by road or maintained footpath or other public rights of way from the pupil's home to the main entrance point of the school using a GIS computerised mapping system. In the event that two or more children live at the same distance from the school (as can happen with families living in blocks of flats), random allocation, where supervised drawing of lots by an independent responsible person of good standing will be used to decide which child(ren) will be allocated the remaining place(s) (in accordance with 1.34 and 1.35 of the School Admissions Code).

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after children who either currently are or were in the 'looked after' system it will be catchment area children second, siblings third, ****exceptional circumstances fourth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top three categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out of area siblings, priorities will be decided first by reference to exceptional circumstances, then according to distance, with those living nearest to the school using the distance calculations outlined below *** taking priority

Following the allocation of the top two categories there may be an occasion when it is not possible to offer places for all children living in the catchment area. In this situation the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with siblings who would still be at the school in September 2023, next to pupils with exceptional circumstances, and finally according to distance from the school.

In case where distance is not the final deciding factor i.e. two applications are at exactly the same distance then the final tie breaker will be a lottery undertaken by an individual independent of the Children's Wellbeing directorate.

Late applications

Applications received after the closing date and before the [Admissions Authority] admission meeting will be placed last in the criteria in which they fall unless the [Admissions Authority] is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which reasonably prevented the application from being submitted on time. Supporting evidence, including that provided by the required Supplementary Information Form, must also be supplied by the closing date for applications, unless it is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which reasonably prevented it being submitted on time. In the absence of such supporting evidence, the allocation of places will be made on the basis of the application alone.

In-Year admissions

From time to time a place becomes available further up the school. The allocation of places is in accordance with the admissions criteria. Preference will be given to children moving into the area from outside the Local Authority area who do not have a school place. Evidence will need to be provided that the child has recently moved in.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting on their schooling. All such requests will be considered on their merits and either agreed or refused, on that basis. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

The process for requesting such an admission is as follows: With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (state which one), and the reasons for that request. Parents will submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, headteacher etc. Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include: 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; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

Waiting Lists

The school will operate a waiting list for each year group. Where in any year the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the end of the first term after the beginning of the school year. This will be maintained by the admission authority and it will be open to any parent to ask for their child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application. Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. The waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria whenever anyone is added to or leaves it.

Appeals Procedure

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Appellants should contact the Executive Headteacher at Pencombe CofE Primary School at Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire, HR7 4SH within 20 days of the date of the letter refusing your child a place at the school for information on how to appeal. Information on the timetable for the appeals process is on our website at <https://pencombe.hmfa.org.uk/>.

School age

A full-time school place in the Reception class is available for children from the September following their 4th birthday, etc.

Deferred entry for infants

Parents offered a place for their child have a right to defer entry, or to take a place up part-time, until the start of the term beginning immediately after their child has

reached compulsory school age of 4. However, places cannot be deferred until the next academic year.

Pre-School Places

At Pencombe CofE Primary School, we have an Early Years setting, Pippin Class. We are able to offer spaces for up to 10 children from the age of two and half years and older.

We take the following matters into account when prioritising and deciding on admissions:

- Availability of places, taking into account the staff: child ratios and the age of the child.
- When the application is received (extra weight is given to those who have been on the waiting list the longest).
- The nursery's ability to provide the facilities necessary for the welfare of the child, including appropriate staffing arrangements.
- A child requiring a full-time place may have preference over one requiring a part-time place.
- Any extenuating circumstances affecting the child's welfare or the welfare of his/her family.

We operate an inclusion and equality policy and ensure that all children have access to nursery places and services irrespective of their gender, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation of parents.

Prior to a child attending nursery, parents must complete and sign a registration form. These forms provide the nursery with personal details relating to the child. For example, name, date of birth, address, emergency contact details, parental responsibilities, dietary requirements, fees and sessions, contact details for parents, doctor's contact details, health visitor contact details, allergies, parental consent and vaccinations etc.

Address definition

The address is the place where the child is permanently resident with his or her parent or parents or legal guardians. Evidence may be requested to show the address, for example: to which any Child Benefit is paid or at which the child is registered with a medical GP together with recent utilities bill, council tax bill or tenancy agreement. This evidence will be used when reaching a decision on the child's home address for admissions purposes (including where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility for each part of the week). Parents should not assume that a place will automatically be allocated to their child.

Enquiries

Should be to Executive Headteacher at Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire, HR7 4SH.

Signed.....
Chair of Governing Board

Signed
Executive Head Teacher

Date