

WEST PARK ACADEMY

Admissions, Transition and Transfer Policy

2025/2026



Revised: October 2024

WEST PARK ACADEMY

ADMISSIONS, TRANSITION AND TRANSFER POLICY

Parents who wish a place in our Nursery need to complete an application form which can be obtained from the school office. Children can start Nursery the term after they are three, if there are places available.

The criteria for oversubscription to our Nursery are:

1. The age of the child
2. The length of time the child has been on our waiting list

Parents who have a child in Nursery and wish for a place in Reception need to contact Admissions at Darlington Borough Council in the Autumn Term prior to the year they wish to start for an application form. All parents receive confirmation from the Local Authority at the end of the Spring Term. This will inform them which school their child has been offered a place in for the following September.

Admission of children outside their normal age group and deferred entry

If a parent seeks a place in a year group outside of their child's normal age group, they should complete an application form and attach a covering letter along with any accompanying documentation that details the circumstances behind their request; for example if their child has missed a significant amount of time due to ill health or they believe their child to be gifted and talented. This should be forwarded to the Principal of West Park Academy and the Admissions Committee will meet and consider the request. Once a decision has been made, the Admission Authority will write to the parent(s) informing them of the decision and setting out reasons for such.

Parents of summer born children* can also make a request to apply for their child to start school in the next academic year after they reach five and should follow the same process but should start the process in the September of the year prior to the year of entry.

Admission of children below compulsory school age

Schools within Darlington Local Authority have a single point of entry in September each year for pupils starting school in Reception. However children may attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age** and parents can defer the date their child is admitted until later in the school year.

*Summer born children relate to those born from 1 April to 31 August

**Children reach compulsory school age on 31 August following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August).

If a parent wishes to transfer their child to West Park Academy from another school in Darlington, they must contact Admissions at Darlington Borough Council to ask if there is a place available and complete a transfer form which can be obtained from the school their child is attending. If a child is requesting a place at West Park Academy from outside the Local Authority they must contact Admissions at Darlington Borough Council who will deal with their request.

All children are given the opportunity to visit the school before starting in September.

If requests for admission are greater than our admission numbers (presently 30 full time places for Nursery and 60 for Reception to Year 6) then the Local Authority will allocate the places according to our Admissions Criteria (see Appendix 1).

Transition: Nursery and Reception

Nursery

In the term before the children are due to start West Park Academy, a meeting is held for the parents to introduce them to the school and staff. They are also informed about pre-school visits.

Reception

In the term before the children start West Park Academy, parents are invited to a meeting where they can meet the staff

Children have the opportunity to visit West Park Academy. These visits are arranged by the Reception teachers. On one of the visits children are invited to stay for lunch. Most parents do not accompany their children on these visits but they are quite welcome to do so.

Transition: KS1 and KS2

In the Summer Term two days are set aside to allow the children moving into the next year group to visit their new teacher.

Secondary Transfer /Links with other schools

During the Autumn Term, forms and information provided by the Local Authority are sent home to parents of children who will be transferring to secondary school in the following year.

We liaise closely with local nurseries and secondary schools to ensure that the curriculum continuity and record keeping is effective.

The children going to secondary school visit their new school in the Summer Term.

The teachers responsible for the new secondary intake visit West Park Academy to meet the children.

APPENDIX 1

West Park Academy Admissions Policy 2025-2026

The Board of Trustees of Lingfield Education Trust is the Admissions Authority for this school. The Admissions Policy Criteria will be applied on an Equal Preference basis and works in association with the Co-ordinated Scheme for Darlington Borough Council. The Board of Trustees intends to admit up to 60 pupils to the Reception year group in September 2025. This number will apply to the Reception Year and to every other year group in the school.

After the admission of children with a statement of special educational need where West Park Academy is named on the statement and where there are insufficient places available to meet all parental preferences, priority will be given to applications in the following order:

Priority 1 - 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.
- A previously looked after child is a child who immediately moved on from that status after becoming subject to an adoption order, a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order including 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.
- An 'adoption order' is an order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and Section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976
- A 'child arrangements order' is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989.
- A 'special guardianship order' is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians as defined under Section 14A of the Children's Act 1989
- 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 purpose is to benefit society.

Priority 2 - Medical Reasons

Children with very exceptional medical factors directly relating to a placement at West Park Academy. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a doctor. (See explanation)

Priority 3 - Family Links

Children who have a brother or sister already attending the school and are expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

Priority 4 – West Park Academy Nursery

Children who are transferring from lower foundation stage (Nursery) to upper foundation stage (Reception) will be given priority over children from other settings.

Priority 5 - Distance

Urban Wards of Darlington Borough Council - Pupils who live nearest the preferred school measured from the front door of the home address (including flats) to the main school gate, by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the home address of the child. To remain consistent, the Board of Trustees at Shared Vision Learning Trust use the Local Authority's Geographical Information System to measure all distances. The criterion when measuring a route is to identify the shortest route judged to be safe (safe is lit at regular intervals, paved/tarmacked).

Priority 6 - West Park Academy

Children of staff members who have been employed at the school for more than two years will be given priority over children from other settings.

Explanations

Tie-Break

In the event of a tie-break, although the Board of Trustees of Shared Vision Learning Trust is the Admissions Authority, in this instance we would use the services of the Local Authority to carry out a thorough investigation, which may involve an Officer walking the route using a *pedometer* as distance will be the deciding factor.

Multiple Births

For multiple births when only one place remains, Key Stage 1 classes will be allowed to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child is a twin or from multiple births. The 'excepted pupil' will be allowed for the time in Key Stage 1 or until the class numbers fall back to current class size limit.

State Care Outside of England

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.

Medical Criterion

If you state a preference for a school and indicate your reason for doing so is 'medical', then you are required to send a supporting letter from a professional practitioner. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons why West Park Academy is the most suitable school and the difficulties it would cause if your child had to travel to another school.

The Authority reserves the right to make contact with the professional practitioner for independent information regarding your child's condition. We may also seek advice from other qualified professionals, e.g. Psychologists or other specialist where necessary.

Family Links

Children have a family link if:

- They are half or full brother or sister
- They are adoptive brother or sister

- Their carers are married/co-habiting and children live together in the same household
- They are children of the same household (e.g. carers have special Guardianship)

Home Address

The address is used for applying the admissions criteria. This means that when you state your school preferences you must give the home address at the time of application. You must not give the address of childminders or other family members who may share in the care of your child. For parents/carers who may have more than one property, reference should only be made to the property in which they and the child(ren) mainly reside.

Where the childcare arrangements are shared jointly between both parents, the Local Authority will consider the mother's home address to be the relevant address when considering the application unless legal documentation is provided to the contrary.

Appeals

If it has not been possible to offer your child a place at your stated preferred school, you have the right to appeal against the decision. Appeals are heard by an independent panel and parents are given the opportunity to state their case in writing and to attend the hearing in person.

Parents can bring along a friend or representative to support them. If you do wish to appeal against the decision not to offer your child a place at any of the maintained schools which you stated as a preference, you should complete the 'options' form, which is sent with the 'offer of place' letter and return it to the Schools' Admissions Team within 7 working days. The local authority can then send details of the independent appeals procedures and a 'Notice of Appeal' form.

To make a new appeal during the same academic year for a maintained school where an appeal has already been heard, is at the discretion of the local authority if, for instance there has been a significant or material change in the family circumstances.

Waiting List

If your child's application has been refused due to oversubscription, you may want to consider putting their name on a waiting list for the school. Completing the 'options' form, which accompanies the offer/refusal letter, can do this. Offers from the waiting list will be made in accordance with the oversubscription criteria based on the information provided at the time of application. The waiting list will be maintained for at least the first term in the academic year of admission.