

Admissions Arrangements for Entry in September 2026

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website and by request from the School Office. If you require a copy of this document in large print or audio format, please contact the School Office.

Admission numbers

Didcot Primary Academy opened in September 2016. The published admission number for the school is:

- 60 places in Reception - children born between 1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022¹

When the school is oversubscribed, in accordance with legal requirements, children who have an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan in which the school is named in Section I must always be admitted².

The oversubscription criteria below will be followed in descending order of priority.

- a) Children who are “looked after”³ (LAC) by a Local Authority (LA) within the meaning of Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of their application, and all “previously looked after” children⁴ (PLAC) [see footnote below] including those who appear to this Admissions Authority to have been in state care outside England (IAPLAC)⁵ and ceased to be in state care having been adopted [see footnote below]. Evidence of the previously looked after status and/or the adoption will be requested.
- b) Priority will next be given to the children of staff who have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made;
- c) Places will then be offered to children who have a sibling living at the same address who is attending the Academy at the time of admission;
- d) Any other children.

Tie break Criteria

Proximity of the child’s home, as measured by the straight line distance between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria c-d should the need arise.

¹ Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school be deferred until later in that school year or until the child reaches compulsory school age in the same school year. [i.e. the term after they have their 5th birthday]. Parents may also request that their child attend part time until the child reaches compulsory school age in that same year. Arrangements will be discussed between the parents and the Principal.

² An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the LA under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision, health and social care required for that child. Therefore, this is not an oversubscription criterion.

³ A 'looked after child' is a child who is either (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

⁴ Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) are children who are no longer looked after by a LA in England because they are subject to an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

⁵ The 2021 School Admissions Code regards a child as having been in state care outside 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.

If criteria c-d produces an identical result for two or more applicants the Omnia Learning Trust will use random allocation by lottery to determine who will be offered a final place.

How to apply for a place

To apply for a Reception place at the school parents must do so via your Local Authority common application process and return the Application Form by **15 January 2026**.

The address on the application **should be the child's address at the time of application**.

This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night). Please refer to the definitions section of this document for further information about home address, how cases of multiple addresses and multiple applications will be dealt with and the penalties for submitting false information.

It is advisable to keep a copy of the form before submitting it. All late applications will be considered after those received on time.

All applicants will be notified on **16 April 2026** in line with the Local Authority timetable as to whether the school is able to offer a place or not. Unsuccessful applicants will be sent details of the appeals procedure and will be placed on an order of priority waiting list using the over-subscription criteria set out in this document.

Applying for a place in Reception for a child/children who already have a place in Nursery at Didcot Primary Academy

Admission to Didcot Primary Academy Nursery does not guarantee admission to the main Academy Primary Phase. Parents of all children of the appropriate age must apply for a place to start Reception year group in a primary school even if the child already attends a nursery class. This means that even if your child already attends the nursery class at our school, a new application must be made to start in the Reception year group for the first time. Please refer to the Admissions Criteria in this Admissions Policy.

Waiting Lists

The Governing Body will keep a waiting list in rank order as identified by the published oversubscription criteria. The waiting lists will remain in place until the end of the Autumn Term of the relevant year of entry. In January, Oxfordshire County Council will write to parents who will need to respond in writing as to whether or not they wish to remain on the waiting list. Placing a child's name on the waiting list is not a guarantee that a place will become available. Neither does it prevent parents from exercising their right to appeal against the decision not to offer a place. Parents should note that whenever a new applicant is added to the waiting list, the list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria".

Late Applications

Any late applications made direct to the academy will be forwarded to the LA immediately. All late applications will be considered after those received on time.

In-Year Admissions

Applications outside of the normal admissions round must be made to Oxfordshire County Council and will be dealt with in accordance with the In-Year scheme. Any applications will be considered by the County Council using the school's published admission criteria. Please contact the academy for further details about In-Year admissions.

Deferred entry for infants

Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March.

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 a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting his or her 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, Nursery head teacher etc. Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include:

- Whether the child is 'summer born' and is seeking admission to a year group other than Reception (or is seeking admission to Reception rather than year 1);
- 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.

The Academy will consider each case on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the request and the child's best interests. We will also ensure the parent is aware of whether the

request for admission out of age group has been agreed before final offers are made, and the reason for any refusal.

Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time. An application from a child who would 'normally' be a year 1 child for a Reception place will be considered alongside applications for Reception.

Appeals against the Governing Body's decision to refuse admission

Parents whose applications for places are unsuccessful may appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel set up in accordance with section 85(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Appeals must be made in writing. Parents/Carers have the right to make oral representations to the Appeal Panel.

Infant classes [YR to Y2] are restricted by the legislation to 30 children. Parents should be aware that an appeal against refusal of a place in an infant class may only succeed if it can be demonstrated that:

- the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limits, or
- the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or had not been correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- the panel decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

Appeals will be heard by an Independent Appeals Service.

Appeals for admission in September 2026 will be heard during June/July 2026. Appeals must be made by May 31st 2026 to Oxfordshire County Council.

False Information

Where the Governing Body has made an offer of a place at this school on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application from a parent the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

Fair Access Protocol

The Fair Access Protocol is part of the admission arrangements for all schools in Oxfordshire and Didcot Primary Academy will operate as a part of the Protocols.

Data Handling/Sharing

When children leave or join Didcot Primary Academy (including in-year transfers), all files (including child protection files) will be transferred in accordance with best practice guidance stipulated in KCSIE 2024.

Safeguarding

The Local Authority will share information with the school when children being admitted to the pupil roll have a social worker and this information will also be requested by the school on the pupil

information form. This information will be used to ensure that decisions will be made in the best interest of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Definitions

“Looked After” children

A 'looked after child' is a child who is either (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

The School Admissions Code 2012 introduced a requirement for all admission authorities to broaden the existing priority for 'looked after' children or children in care (defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) to also include 'previously looked after' children.

Children who were 'previously looked after' were defined for admissions purposes as those who, immediately after being in care, became subject to an adoption⁶, residence, or special guardianship order⁷.

A revised School Admissions Code came into force on 19 December 2014 and this states that 'previously looked after' children included those who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 - Adoption Orders) and not simply those children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 - Adoption Orders).

In addition, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders. Those who previously received a residence order are now deemed to have a child arrangement order⁸.

If applying on behalf of a “previously looked after” child, who was previously in state care in England, the parent will need to provide the following evidence:

- an Adoption Order under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; or
- an Adoption Order under the Adoption Act 1976; or
- a Child Arrangements Order; or
- a Residence 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; or
- a Special Guardianship Order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s), under section 14A of the Children Act 1989.

⁶ An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) or an order under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).

⁷ 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/s.

⁸ A 'child arrangements 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 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Children who appear to this Admission Authority to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care after being adopted (“internationally adopted previously looked after children”) (IAPLAC)

A further revised School Admissions Code was agreed in July 2021 and this comes into force from 1 September 2021. The new Code further broadens the existing priority for 'looked after' children and 'previously looked after' children to include those children who appear to an Admission Authority to have been in state care outside England (in the School Admissions Code 2021 they are referred to as “internationally adopted previously looked after children” (IAPLAC), and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. The Code regards a child as having been in state care outside 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.

Responsibility for determining whether a child is eligible to be considered as an IAPLAC rests with the Admission Authority. Subject to ministerial approval, the Department for Education plans to publish non-statutory guidance on the admission of IAPLAC. This guidance will aim to assist and support admission authorities in assessing evidence provided by parents. If there is doubt about the acceptability of evidence provided by the parent advice will be sought from the Head of Oxfordshire’s Virtual School. This Admissions Authority will take a pragmatic approach to the decision-making process where evidence is lacking.

Home address – Starting Primary School (Reception year group)

The address on the application **should be the child’s address at the time of application**. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night).

The **time of application** is the entire time period from the point when applications can start to be made in the November of the year in which the child has his/her 4th birthday until National Offer Day on 16 April (or next working day) the following calendar year.

Sometimes an application is made based on an address at the time of application and the address then changes after the application has been submitted. It is important to tell the Admissions Authority (and/or Local Authority) about changes of address so that places can be offered fairly and so notification can be sent by post to the correct home address.

If the application address is found to have subsequently changed after the application was submitted and this information could have been provided when the application was first made or before places were offered, the Admissions Authority (or Local Authority) will consider the application to have been made on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading address. This may result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

If an application is made on the basis of a new address or intention to move to an area, information about the new address will need to be provided in order for it to be taken into account.

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for the academy to establish the home address.

Multiple Addresses

Where children spend time with parents at more than one address then the address given on the form should be the one that they live at (i.e. sleep at) for the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night).

If children spend time equally at different addresses, then the address which will be used for admissions purposes will be the one registered for child benefit. The Admissions Authority (and/or Local Authority) will request proof of the registered address, which must pre-date the application.

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for the academy to establish the address which will be used.

Multiple Applications (Applicants unable to agree on the schools to be listed on the application)

If parents cannot agree on the schools to list on the application and submit separate applications, the Admissions Authority (and/or Local Authority) will only consider the application made by the parent who receives Child Benefit for that child.

If a parent is unhappy with this decision their recourse would be to seek an order from the Court.

“shortest safe route” for home to school travel assistance assessments

This is measured from the same start point defined in the straight line distance measuring rules (see above). From the start point the route firstly connects to the nearest point of the digitised network.

The digitised network is constructed from road data supplied by Ordnance Survey called the Integrated Transport Network (ITN). The ITN has been accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads and takes corners at right angles. This is the same underlying information used by internet-based mapping solutions (e.g. Google Maps). However, the Council has a more accurate start point than internet-based mapping solutions and the ITN has been augmented by the LA to take into account other available public routes (e.g. alleyways, public footpaths, bridleways, etc.). The augmented ITN used by the Council is accurate to at least 1 metre.

All 548,000 kilometres of roads in Great Britain are accurately mapped in a consistent and logical network. The network does not include routes that are not defined as public; these include crossing parks with no paths where the park is not open and available all the time, “short-cuts” across patches of open land without paths, or footpaths across private land which are not defined by Ordnance Survey as public routes.

The end point of the route is the nearest open gate of the academy first arrived at from the direction of travel that is officially available for use by students for entry and exit to the academy site at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Admissions Authority. The

Council consults with the Admissions Authority annually to ensure accurate placement of gate(s) and their availability for use.

The shortest safe route is established using an algorithm within the bespoke software used by the Council. This software is called RouteFinder and is produced by Higher Mapping Solutions (www.highermappingsolutions.com). This programme integrates with the Council's database (ONE) which is supplied by Capita Children's Services (www.capita-cs.co.uk).

RouteFinder measures in kilometres and the measurement is converted into miles accurate to three decimal places, which gives an accurate reading up to 1.609344 metres.

The shortest safe route is not necessarily a driving route because it may use, in whole or in part, a non-driveable route (e.g. footpaths). The shortest safe route is also not necessarily a walking route because, for example, where the measurement uses a road, the route is along the centre of the road not along the edge (pavement or equivalent) of the road. In calculating the shortest safe route, certain parts of the network of roads and/or paths have been specified as unsafe and the route will use an alternative which will be longer. This longer distance will be used to determine whether a child is eligible for free home to school travel assistance.

Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Council cannot take a measurement from another measuring system into account because this would lead to inconsistency in the method used to measure the shortest safe route and determine a child's eligibility for free home to school travel assistance.

Home to School Travel Assistance

Some children qualify for free travel assistance from home to school.

The Council does not accept responsibility for the provision or cost of free travel assistance to the designated area school if it is not the closest or nearest available school and is over the statutory walking distance or where the route is assessed to be unsafe for a child to walk accompanied by a responsible adult as appropriate.

Where a child is eligible for free travel assistance, but spends time with different parents at different addresses, Oxfordshire County Council will only accept responsibility for the provision and/or cost of free travel from the registered home address.

[The home to school transport policy is available online.](#)