



# **SANDWELL ACADEMY**



## **Admissions Policy**

September 2024

**Date of issue: September 2024**  
**Updated: September 2024**  
**Date of review: September 2025**

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis (or sooner if required).

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 25 September 2024.

It is due for review on *insert date* (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature



Date 25 September 2024

Head Teacher

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- › 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 your child a place

## 2. 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.

## 3. 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.

A child reaches **compulsory school age** on the prescribed day following his or her fifth birthday (or on his or her fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

## 4. How to apply

As part of the National Co-ordinated Admissions Arrangements across all Admissions Authorities, parents are required to complete an online application form provided by their Local Authority. This form must be completed and submitted by 31 October 2024. Please note that Sandwell Academy must be named as one of the preferences, if you wish to be considered for a place at the Academy.

The application will only be valid if all the required information submitted is correct and submitted by the published closing date.

Parents/Carers should read the Sandwell MBC's 'Sandwell Schools Admissions Booklet' which is comprehensive and can be accessed from the Sandwell Local Authority website

The Academy will liaise with Sandwell Local Authority who in turn will liaise with other neighbouring Local Authorities in line with the National Co-ordinated Admissions Arrangements during the process. Parents need

to be aware that the naming of Sandwell Academy and the ranking on the Local Authority's online form are taken into consideration by the Local Authorities and, as a consequence, by the Academy. If Sandwell Academy is not named on the Local Authority online form, a place will not be offered.

Applications received after the closing date will be considered where the Academy identifies that exceptional circumstances apply. Applications received after places have been offered will be kept on file and form the basis of the 'Applications to Transfer to Year 7' which will include casual admissions.

Those who are offered a place at the Academy will be informed in March of the year of entry by their Local Authority. Those not offered admission will be informed at the same time and will have been offered a place at an alternative school by their Local Authority.

Parents/Carers of a young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan who wish to name Sandwell Academy as their chosen school should make this known to the relevant SEN team at their Local Authority. We encourage parents/carers in these circumstances to liaise with the Inclusion team within the Academy to determine whether the provision available is best suited to the young person's individual needs. The Academy will reply to all consultation for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan within 15 calendar days.

In accordance with the Code of Practice, the Academy will provide educational provision for all pupils with an EHC plan which names Sandwell Academy as the chosen school.

## 5. Sporting aptitude

Parents/Carers wishing for their child to be considered for Sporting Aptitude must register with the Academy by completing the Sporting Aptitude Registration form. Sporting Aptitude Registration forms should be returned to the Academy by the published deadline, and Sporting aptitude Tests will take place thereafter.

Details of the Sporting Aptitude Registration form will be published on the Academy website in the Spring Term of 2024. Those who have registered on time will be advised in writing about the arrangements for the Sporting Aptitude Test.

Participating in the Sporting Aptitude Testing provides an additional opportunity to be allocated a place, but must be undertaken in conjunction with the normal admissions process. Notification of the Outcome of the Sporting Aptitude Test It is a requirement of the statutory School Admissions Code (2021) that schools should "take all reasonable steps to inform parents of the outcome of selection tests before the closing date for secondary applications on 31 October so as to allow parents time to make an informed choice of school - while making clear that this does not equate to a guarantee of a selective place".

The outcome of the test will be sent to parents in mid-October 2024. Criteria for allocation of places by Sporting Aptitude Decisions about which students to admit on the basis of sporting aptitude will be made based upon the standardised scores from the physical tests. The physical tests will measure aerobic endurance, speed, power, agility, coordination and flexibility. Each applicant will be awarded a standardised score with the applicants with the highest scores being allocated places based on sporting aptitude. The physical tests are generic and measure aptitude across a range of sports for which the Academy has expertise and facilities.

We welcome applications for places on sporting aptitude from all academic abilities and those with Special Educational Needs. Should fewer than 20 applications based on sporting aptitude either be received or be deemed suitable for admittance on sporting aptitude, then places will continue to be allocated using the remaining criteria.

## 6. Residency

An applicant's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. In cases of shared parental responsibility at more than one address, the address used for distance calculation will be where the child is registered with the Local Authority/spends the majority of the school week (Monday - Friday). Where parental responsibility is shared equally at more than one address, the address where the child benefit is paid will be used. Where no child benefit is paid the address used to register the child with a GP will be used.

Residency of applicants will be established and checked at the time of application for a place. The Academy's ruling on residence, as defined by the Funding Agreement is final. Original official documentation will be required to prove the residency of applicants offered a place at the Academy. Any offer of a place that is fraudulently obtained will be withdrawn. Unsuccessful applicants may wish to inform us of any changes of address for communication purposes only. Any changes of address after the application deadline will not affect the child's application.

Operation of waiting list and appeals Parents who do not obtain a place for their child may appeal against the decision. There will be an independent Appeals Panel appointed in accordance with the provisions of the statutory Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals. If the Academy is oversubscribed, unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the Waiting List. Please note that your child's position on the waiting list may move up or down at any time. The School Admissions Code states that each added child will require the waiting list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. After the conclusion of the waiting list process, if there is an opportunity to apply to go on the Transfer List. If vacancies arise, those on the Waiting List/Transfer List will be offered a place using the Academy's Admissions Criteria outlined previously.

## 7. Requests for admission outside the normal age group

Parents/Carers may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Parents/Carers should continue to apply through their Local Authority and check with the Admissions and Appeals service for further guidance and information

Decisions on requests for admission outside the normal age group will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and 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 listed in section 6. 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.

## 8. Allocation of places

The school has an agreed admission number of 200 pupils for entry in Year 7.

All applicants will be tested using a NFER (National Foundation of Education Research) Non-Verbal Reasoning Test.

All children will be placed in one of the five ability bands, with the same number of places in each band, and an equal number of children will be taken from each. No child can fail this test and therefore any requests to re-sit the assessment will be refused. The test will last one hour. The dates for the test are published on the back page of this document and are also found in Sandwell MBC's Admission Booklet. There will also be a

'Mop Up' testing date (usually five school days after the published dates) for any student who, for any reason, did not attend their first date and who requests a further date within that time scale. Any student not sitting the test at all will be considered for a place but only after all students who did attend testing have been considered.

Due to the large number of applications the Academy regular receives, it is strongly advised that applicants attend their allocated test date and time. Further testing arrangements, after the 'Mop Up' testing session, cannot be made due to the marking system used by the testing company. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/carer(s) to ensure their child has received a test invitation and attends a testing session.

If places become available for students who have not taken the test, those applicants will be required to attend a further testing session to establish their band of ability to determine the allocation of places. The test results will be used to ensure that the Academy admits children of all abilities.

## 9. Oversubscription Criteria

If the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Plan, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order. Within each Band, priority for places will be allocated to:-

1) A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those 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 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).

2) Up to 10% of the total number of students based on sporting aptitude (i.e. up to 20). Places based on sporting aptitude will be allocated by numerical scores, based on a series of internationally recognised and standardised physical tests, to determine potential to succeed at a high level in Sport. The physical tests will measure aerobic endurance, speed, power, agility, co-ordination and flexibility. The physical tests are generic and measure aptitude across a range of sports for which the Academy has expertise and facilities.

3) Children of teachers who have been employed by the Academy, for two or more years at the time the application is made, or the parent/carers has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Up to 5 applicants will be considered under this criteria.

Priority will be determined on the basis of distance between an applicant's home address and the centroid point nearest to their home.

4) Thereafter, taking into account priorities 1, 2, 3, and above, for the towns Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Tipton and Wednesbury up to 30 places will be allocated and for the towns West Bromwich and Smethwick up to 40 places will be allocated, on the basis of distance between an applicant's home address and the centroid point nearest to their home.

Distance will be calculated according to a straight line measurement between the applicant's home and the centroid point (as the crow flies). There will be six centroid points, one each in Oldbury,

Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich - see Centroid Map. There will be up to 30 places attached to each of the centroid points for the towns Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Tipton and Wednesbury and up to 40 places attached to each of the centroid points for the towns Smethwick and West Bromwich. These will be available to pupils on the basis of their proximity to the nearest centroid point.

Maintaining an equal allocation of places in the five ability bands will always be the determining factor when applying the oversubscription criteria. For the towns Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Tipton and Wednesbury six

places will be allocated in each of the five bands of ability and for the towns Smethwick and West Bromwich, eight places will be allocated in each of the five bands of ability.

The following examples show how the Academy would allocate places:

Example 1 Only five applications in Band 3 Tipton – one further place would be allocated to the applicant with the shortest distance to one of the six Centroid Points using the distance criteria.

Example 2 More than six applications were eligible for places on sporting aptitude from Band 4 Oldbury – a maximum of six places would be allocated.

Preference is not given in favour of siblings or those with medical conditions. The term siblings includes biological siblings, step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address or siblings who are former pupils of the Academy.

### **Tie Breaker**

Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category '4' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and their closest centroid point is the same. This process will be independently verified.

If a tie-break is required in earlier categories to decide who has priority for admission between two children, priority will be determined on the basis of distance between an applicant's home address and the centroid point nearest to their home.

## **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) 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 Fair Access Protocol. We will not refuse admission on these grounds to looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with EHC plans naming Sandwell Academy as the school.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

We participate in Sandwell'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.

## **10. Mid-Year admissions**

Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time outside the normal admission round. If an application is received and there are no places in the application year group, applicants will be placed on a waiting list using exactly the same process and criteria as for Year 7 entry oversubscription.

Any vacancies will be offered on the basis of the admission criteria for the Academy.

Sandwell Academy is part of Sandwell Local Authority's in-year co-ordination scheme, details of the scheme can be found on Sandwell Council's website:

[https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200303/school\\_admissions/2056/schemes\\_for\\_co-ordinated\\_admissions](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200303/school_admissions/2056/schemes_for_co-ordinated_admissions)

If an application has not previously been made for your child, you may complete a Secondary Mid Year Application form. Sandwell Academy does not have its own Secondary Mid-Year Application form. All applications for a change of school must be made through the Local Authority. Parents/Carers will be notified of the outcome of their application, by Sandwell Local Authority, in writing within 15 school days.

For further information for Sandwell residents and a copy of the Secondary Mid-Year Application form, please visit the Sandwell Council website:

[https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200303/school\\_admissions/2053/changing\\_schools](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200303/school_admissions/2053/changing_schools)

## 11. Appeals

Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. The reasons for the appeal should be outlined in writing and sent to the Academy's Admissions Officer by post or email at [nduncombe@sandwellacademy.com](mailto:nduncombe@sandwellacademy.com). Should you require further assistance in applying for a change of school, it is recommended that you contact your Local Authority for guidance and information.

## 12. Additional information

Sandwell Academy is a fully-inclusive school, committed to fair and equitable treatment of all individuals, including those who identify with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, 2010. The Academy welcomes applications from children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the Academy has been designed and built to accommodate such needs. Where a prospective student requires additional resources or equipment in order to access the Academy's provision, we will fulfil our duty to acquire necessary auxiliary aids. The Academy's Accessibility Plan is available on the school website, and is reviewed annually.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Local Governing Board every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the agreed admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.