



## **Admissions Policy for Ratton School for the School Year 2027- 2028**

### **Introduction**

South Downs Learning Trust (**Trust**), a multi academy trust and the 'admission authority' for Ratton School (**School**), is required to determine the admission arrangements for each intake every year on or before 28 February, having consulted on any proposed changes from the previous intake for at least six calendar weeks between 1 October and 31 January in advance of determination.

The Trust delegates responsibility for the determination of the admission arrangements and their application to the Local Governing Body for the School, which in turn delegates to an Admission Committee of three Local Governors.

The school is an inclusive, mixed sex, non-selective secondary school without a sixth form, which welcomes applications from all applicants.

In education law and this policy, a 'parent' is defined as a biological or adoptive parent of the child (irrespective of whether they have care of, contact with or parental responsibility for the child), as well other persons who are not a biological or adoptive parent of the child, but who have care of, and/or parental responsibility for, the child. References to 'parent' or 'parents' within this policy mean persons meeting this definition.

### **Published Admission Number (PAN)**

The PAN for Y7 is **232** places.

### **Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**

Children with an EHCP are not admitted under this policy, they are admitted under entirely separate legal processes set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice. Parents of a child with an EHCP who want their child to attend the school must speak to their home Local Authority's SEND team, who will then consult the school on the suitability/compatibility of naming them in Section I of the child's EHCP.

Where a child's EHCP names the school in Section I, they will be admitted. Where this happens in the normal admissions round (i.e. admission to Year 7 in September), they will usually be allocated their places before all other children, thereby reducing the places available in the PAN. At all other times, they will be admitted regardless of pupil numbers.

### **Application Process – Normal Admission Round and Late Applications**

Applications in the '**normal admissions round**' must be coordinated by Local Authorities for all schools in their area. The 'normal admissions round' covers applications for admission to Year 7 in September which are made by the deadline for submitting applications (**Saturday, 31 October 2026**) or after the deadline but in time for an offer to be made on National Offer Day (**Monday, 1 March 2027**).

Parents must apply to their home Local Authority (i.e. the Local Authority for the child's home address, not the Local Authority for the school where this is different) using their Common Application Form (CAF). Full details can be found on the home Local Authority's website (for children living in the Local Authority Area of East Sussex County Council (**ESCC**), their secondary transfer admission page can be accessed via their admissions web page here - [Apply for a school place | East Sussex County Council](#) – apply for a secondary school). Paper forms will also be available on request to the respective Local Authority's admissions team.

A '**late application**' is one which is made after the deadline (**Saturday, 31 October 2026**) for submitting applications but not in time for an offer to be made on National Offer Day (**Monday, 1 March 2027**), and before the first day of term in September. Late applications are processed after the first round of allocations have taken place prior to National Offer Day, which will therefore reduce the chance of achieving an offer of a place at preferred schools.

### **Application Process – In-Year Applications**

An '**in-year application**' is one made for Year 7 on or after the first day of term in September, or for any other year group (Years 8 to 11) at any time.

The school has chosen to opt into East Sussex County Council (**ESCC**)'s coordinated scheme for in-year admission, which means that ESCC processes all in-year applications for the school (including for children living out of this Local Authority Area). Further information, including the relevant In-Year Application Form which must be completed, can be accessed via their admissions web page here - [Apply for a school place | East Sussex County Council](#) (change schools).

An in-year application for Year 7 may only be refused on the basis that there are no places left in the PAN set for that year group. The PAN only applies to Year 7 – it does not apply to any other year groups.

An in-year application for all other year groups (Year 8 to Year 11) may only be refused where it can be demonstrated that the admission of an additional child would prejudice the provision of efficient education to others and/or the efficient use of resources at the school.

Where multiple in-year applications are received and processed at the same time, and it is determined that some but not all children can be offered a place in the PAN or without causing prejudice (depending on the year group), the oversubscription criteria set out below will be used to determine which of the children will be offered places. This is the only circumstance in which the oversubscription criteria applies to in-year applications.

Parents must be informed of the outcome of their in-year application within ideally 10 school days, but in any event 15 school days, of receipt of the application. Where a place is refused, the reason for the refusal (as set out above) must be set out in the letter, along with details about the statutory right of appeal.

### **Oversubscription Criteria.**

Where there are fewer applications than places available, all applicant children will be admitted. Where there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

## **1. Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children**

A 'looked after child' is one 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, in England.

A 'previously looked after child' is one who was looked after in England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order, as well as a child who appears to the Admission Committee (on behalf of the Trust) to have been in state care outside of England (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), but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

Applications for looked after or previously looked after children may need to be supported by documentary evidence confirming their status, such as a signed letter from their social worker or former social worker confirming their current or previous status, an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order. In the case of children adopted from state care outside England (as defined above), evidence of having been in state care outside England and of being adopted may be required. Ideally, this should be received by the application deadline in the normal admission round. When assessing the evidence provided, the DfE's current guidance will be followed.

Where the Virtual School Head at the child's Local Authority has already verified the child's status and the school is able to confirm this with them, there will be no need for parents to provide the school with any documentary evidence.

## **2. Children with a Sibling at Ratton School**

Children with a sibling at the school at the time of application, who will still be at the school at the time of their admission, will be allocated places in this category.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'sibling' is a full brother or sister (sharing both parents), a half brother or sister (sharing one parent), an adoptive full or half brother or sister (sharing one or both parents), a step-brother or step-sister (where one child's parent is married to the other child's parent), a child of the applicant's parent's cohabiting partner, and a long term foster brother or sister.

In all cases, the sibling must live at the same address as the applicant child as part of the same core family unit. For the avoidance of doubt, the children of friends or extended family members will not meet the definition of a 'sibling' for the purpose of this policy, even if they live at the same address as the applicant child.

## **3. Children of Staff at Ratton School**

Children of a full or part-time staff member employed by the Trust on a permanent employment contract who works for more than 50% of their normal working week during term time at Ratton School will be allocated places in this category where one or both of the following criteria are met:

- a) The staff member has been employed by the Trust working at the school for at least 2 years as at the date the application for admission was submitted; and/or
- b) where the staff member was recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'child of a staff member' will include their natural or adoptive children wherever they live (including with another parent), as well as the children of their cohabiting spouse or partner, whether married or not, where they live with the staff member.

Where this priority applies, the staff member must be the parent whose details are provided in the application form. This is because schools are prohibited from obtaining the details of more than one parent during the application process.

Applications must also be accompanied by a signed and dated letter on headed notepaper from the staff member's HR Manager confirming they meet the criteria, so that the child can be identified as eligible during the application process.

#### **4. Children attending Ocklynge Junior School**

Children attending Ocklynge Junior School at the time of application will be allocated places in this category.

Where the oversubscription criteria is to be applied outside the normal admission round to in-year applications, or to the waiting list, the applicant child will be taken to be in attendance at Ocklynge Junior School at the time of application if they attended that school to the end of Year 6.

#### **5. Children living in the Catchment Area for the School**

Children whose home address (as defined in this policy) is located within the defined catchment area for the school, as per the Catchment Area Map published alongside this policy.

Parents can find out whether their child's home address is within the defined catchment area for the school by accessing ESCC's Secondary Community Areas Searchable Map via its catchment web page - [The importance of where you live | East Sussex County Council](#). Parents should search for their postcode in the search bar. More than one area may come up in the results – the side arrow should be used to scroll through these. The school is in the Cavendish & Ratton area.

#### **6. All Other Children**

All children not falling into any of the categories above will be allocated a place in this category.

#### **Tie Breaker**

Where there are more applicants than places remaining within any of the oversubscription categories above, places will be allocated by reference to the distance between the child's home address (as defined in this policy) and the school, with those living nearest having higher priority. This tie breaker will also be used to rank applicants within oversubscription categories on the waiting list (see below).

Distance will be measured using EACC's dedicated software for this purpose, which measures distance in a straight line (i.e. as the crow flies) from the Ordnance Survey point for the child's home address (as defined by this policy) and the Ordnance Survey point for the school.

Where the distance is equal (for example, where two applicants live at the same address, or in the same block of flats), the order in which places are allocated will be determined by random lottery in front of someone who is independent of the school.

In the case of twins, triplets and children of a higher multiple birth, or siblings born in the same school year from 1 September to 31 August, living together in the same core family unit, where one of them

achieves an offer of a place in the normal way, but the other(s) do(es) not, all will be offered places even where this means going over PAN/pupil numbers for the year group.

### **Child's Home Address**

For the purpose of this policy, the child's home address is the address at which they live and sleep for more than 50% of their nights (i.e. 3 or more nights) from Sunday to Thursday night during term time. Using this definition will establish which address will be deemed to be the child's home address in the case of shared care between parents.

The School reserves the right to seek some form of conclusive documentary evidence of the child's pattern of sleeping over the last five term time weeks preceding the application, where a question arises over whether the address stated in the application form is genuinely the one that meets the definition above, for example, a child arrangements order (noting permission of the court is required to share this with any third party), a consent order made within divorce or family proceedings, or a signed and dated letter from a family lawyer confirming the agreed arrangements.

### **Waiting List**

The school maintains a waiting list containing the names of all unsuccessful applicants for Year 7 until 31 December following admission. After that date, parents are contacted and asked if they want their child's name to remain on the waiting list. If no response is received within a reasonable time of the request, the child's name will be deleted from the waiting list. The same process will be followed after the Easter school holiday and during the summer holidays.

Waiting lists are maintained throughout the course of the school year for every year group subject to these termly checks.

The waiting list will be ranked by reference to the oversubscription criteria and tie breaker set out above, and not by reference to the date that the name was added to the list. This means that a child's place can go down, as well as up, the waiting list as the names of more children are added. Each time a name is added, or a place is offered from the waiting list, it will be re-ranked with random allocation being applied afresh where needed (i.e. where there is more than one child in an oversubscription category).

### **Admission Appeals**

Parents have a right of appeal against the refusal of a place, whether they have applied in the normal admission round or in-year. In addition to setting out the reasons for the refusal (e.g. no place available within the PAN, or the admission of an additional child will cause prejudice, as set out above), the refusal letter will contain full information about the right of appeal, including where the appeal and grounds should be sent, and the deadline for doing so.

Appeals are heard before an independent Admission Appeal Panel, in accordance with the [School Admission Appeals Code 2022](#), which contains mandatory guidance on the administrative and decision making process, and the timeline for hearing appeals.

The school publishes a timetable for appeals to be heard in the normal admission round by 28 February each year, ahead of National Offer Day.

## **Requests for Admission Outside Normal Age Group**

Parents have a right to request admission to a year group other than their normal year group, either above or below. Whether or not the request is agreed is at the discretion of the 'admission authority' for the school which, in our case, is delegated to the School's Admission Committee. These requests are not applications for admission, which will still need to be made separately in the usual way and at the usual time.

Parents are strongly encouraged to make their requests to the school (and the 'admission authority' for any other school they may want to express a preference for) as soon as possible, well ahead of any deadlines for submitting applications, so that they can obtain a decision in principle which will enable them to make informed decisions about their preferences in advance of the deadline.

The Admission Committee will consider requests and make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned, taking into account all information and/or evidence provided. As a minimum, the Admission Committee will take into account:

- the parents' views.
- the views of the Headteacher of the School (and potentially the Headteacher of the child's current or previous school).
- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development.
- information about the child's medical history and/or the views of medical professionals.
- whether the child has previously been educated outside of their normal age group.
- whether the child may have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

The Admission Committee will make a decision as to whether to agree the request in principle, or to refuse it. The decision will be communicated to the parents in writing, with clear reasons in sufficient detail for the decision to be understood.

Parents should note that a decision to accept an application in principle is not the same as an offer of a place. An application for admission must be submitted in the usual way, as set out above, and will be processed with all others received at that time, with the oversubscription criteria and tie breaker being applied as appropriate.

Parents wishing to make a request should send a letter to the Clerk to the Admission Committee at the school, carefully setting out their reasons in full (with reference to the factors set out above), attaching any supporting evidence they want the Admission Committee to consider.