



SPARKLE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

ORCHARDS INFANT SCHOOL
&
ORCHARDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR
ADMISSIONS

REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2026

Orchards Infant School as an academy is part of the **Sparkle Multi Academy Trust**. As such we are our own admissions authority.

Start of year admissions

The local authority has designated a Pupil Admission Number of 90 per year group. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the growth of the academy trust. This will be communicated to the local authority. The application for transfer into Reception for 2027 will be coordinated through West Sussex County Council.

For admission into reception at the standard point of entry: You should use the application form provided by the local authority. You can use this form to express your preference for a minimum of 3 state-funded schools, in rank order. Further information on this process can be found at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-places/apply/starting-school-places/> You will receive an offer for a school place directly from your local authority.

Oversubscription criteria

Where the number of applications for Orchards Infant School, received during the normal admissions round, exceeds the admission number of the school, the Academy Trust will apply the following criteria in strict order of priority.

Priority 1. Children in public care (looked after children) or a child who was previously looked after;

Priority 2. Children who live in the school's Catchment Area who have a brother or sister attending either Orchards Infant School or Orchards Junior School from the same address at the proposed date of admission (the sibling rule - where siblings include step, foster, adopted and other children living permanently at the address);

Priority 3. Children who have a parent who is employed by the school and has been so for two or more years at the time of application, or who has been recruited to a post where there is a recognised skill shortage.

Priority 4. Children who live in the Orchards Infant School Catchment Area

Priority 5. Children who live outside the school's Catchment who have a brother or sister attending either Orchards Infant School or Orchards Junior School from the same address at the date of admission (the sibling rule);

Priority 6 Children who live outside the school's catchment.

The Academy Trust will admit children with EHCPs where the school is named on the EHCP and the school can meet the individual needs.

Notes a) The definition of a 'looked after child' is a person under the age of 18 who is provided with accommodation by a local authority, acting in its social services capacity, for more than 24 hours, by agreement with the parents or in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989. Previously Looked After refers to those children who immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption order, (under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002), residence order (under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989), or specialist guardianship order (under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

Children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements (respite care) are not included in this criteria. Children in priority 1 above may be admitted above the PAN.

If we cannot agree to requests for admission in priorities listed above without exceeding the PAN, we will give priority up to the PAN to children living nearest the school.

All distances are measured by a straight line from the school to the child's home address, using Ordnance Survey address point data within the curtilage of the property. The boundary of the building structure for the address is from Ordnance Survey's MasterMap. For smaller, residential properties the grid reference marks a point near the centre of the building. For larger properties like schools with, for example, multiple buildings and large grounds, the grid reference relates to a point inside the main addressable building structure. The distance calculated is accurate to within 1 metre. 'Live' means the child's permanent home at the date when applications close or, if a significant house move is involved, the latest reasonable date before the final allocation of places. A child is normally regarded as living with a parent or carer and we will use the parent or carer's address for admissions purposes. You cannot lodge a child with a friend or relation to gain a place at a school. Only one address can be used as a child's permanent address. Where a child's parents live at different addresses and the child spends time at each address the following will be considered when making a decision about the address to be used for admissions purposes:

- how much time is spent at each address
- which parent has parental responsibility for the child
- who receives Child Benefit for the child
- where the child is registered for medical and dental care
- any residency or custody orders made by the courts.

Documentary evidence will be asked for to support information given about the above points. If you are due to move house during the period when applications are being made, you must seek advice as a change of address may affect your offer of a school place. You will need to provide written proof of your child's home address or the reasons for a change in a child's permanent home address.

The Sparkle Multi Academy Trust will withdraw places offered based on an address which is later found to be fraudulent.

If the Academy Trust withdraws an offer of a place you will be notified of your right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. Details of admissions appeals are available at <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/appealing-a-schools-decision>

Waiting list

Your child's name will automatically be placed on the waiting list held by the school where they have been refused a place. The list will be held open until the end of the last school day of the 2026/27 school year for admissions.

Waiting lists are made up of on-time and late applicants. Children are placed on waiting lists in strict priority order according to the school's published admission criteria and not according to when their application was received. The school will write to you if a place becomes available for your child and you will be asked to confirm if you wish to accept the place.

Appeals

Parents or carers may appeal against the admissions decision to an independent appeal panel appointed under the provisions of the Education Act 2001. The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel will be binding on the Trust and on the parent or carers. Parents / carers will be informed of their right of appeal when they receive notification of the outcome of their application. Details of the appeal process are available on the school's website.

In year admissions

An 'in-year admission' is defined as a request made for a place at Orchards after the commencement of school for the stated academic year or at the start of the year if in another year group than Year R. Orchards will operate its own in year admissions in conjunction with WSCC and manage its own waiting lists. Admission will be in relation to the over subscription criteria and therefore the position on the list of a particular child does not indicate they will always be the next to be admitted. Local authorities will be informed of all applications and their outcome. The school will participate fully in locally agreed fair access protocols.

Should you wish to apply for a place you should complete an application form available from the school website www.orchardsinfant.school or the school office. This should be returned directly to the school. We also strongly advise you make an appointment to visit the school.