

## RIVER MEAD SCHOOL

# ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS for 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

**The Mead Community Primary School  
(Hilperton site)**  
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Policy Ratified: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mead Academy Trust has **three** schools:

- **The Mead Community Primary School** is a split site school with sites at **Hilperton** and at **Wingfield**. Each school site operates from separate bases and each base provides for the full primary age range.
- **Castle Mead School**, Trowbridge
- **River Mead School**, Melksham.

The four sites will be treated as four separate schools for admissions purposes.

This Admissions Policy applies solely to applications for places within **River Mead School**. This school offers all pupils access to an inclusive education designed to enable each child to reach their full potential. The school is responsible for determining its own policy.

In accordance with government legislation, this school consults with the Local Authority and other local schools in respect of the Admission Policy, as required, and in line with this adheres to the Wiltshire Council Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Admissions 2020/2021.

**The application round for entry into Reception 2020 opens on the 1 September 2019. The deadline date for applications to be received is midnight on the 15 January 2020. The home address given for the child must be the address where the child is resident as of the deadline date.**

The aim of the policy is that it should provide clear guidance on admissions for parents/guardians, so that they may take the best decisions on the preferred school for their children.

### a. **Designated Area**

This school aims to provide a place for all children whose address is within the designated area. A designated area is a discrete geographical zone served by a school. The address that determines a child's designated area is the place where she/he is ordinarily resident with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for the majority of the school week. Most schools have a discrete designated area but some addresses fall within areas shared by two or more schools. Children living outside the county boundary are treated as if the children live within Wiltshire but outside the designated area for the school(s) in question.

For admission criterion purposes, the address used for Barges, will be the sorting office or main post office address, closest to the place of mooring as of the deadline date. Proof in the form of a licence will be required and must be submitted at the time of application.

### b. **Preferences**

Parents will be invited to state up to three ranked preferences. Each preference will be considered equally. This means that The Mead Academy Trust will consider all applications against the published admissions criteria for each individual school. As far as possible applicants will be offered a place at the school to which they have expressed a preference.

Where the applicant has made more than one preference, the Trust will make an offer for the highest ranked preference school possible with available places, in accordance with the

standard admission criteria. Where it is not possible to offer a place at a preferred school, and the applicant lives in Wiltshire, the LA will allocate a place at an alternative school. Allocations will be made after all expressed preferences have been considered. An applicant will normally be offered a place at the designated school for their home address. An alternative school may be allocated in cases where the designated school is full and the alternative school is within the safe statutory walking distance and has places available or it is a school to which free home to school transport would be provided.

In the case where there are more children living within an area, than there are places available and the parent has not named the designated school as one of their preferences, the remaining places will be randomly allocated.

c. **Children with Education, Health and Care Plans**

All children whose education, health and care plan names a school must be admitted.

d. **Published Admission Number**

A Published Admission Number (PAN) is agreed for each school annually and defines the number of places available for the year of entry. All applications must be agreed until the PAN has been reached and this figure will not be exceeded other than in exceptional circumstances, for example, a child living in the designated area for who there is no reasonable alternative place available. In this circumstance, "Reasonable" is defined as a school within the statutory safe walking distance from the applicant's home address of two miles for children aged under eight and three miles for children aged eight or over, or it is a school to which free home to school transport would be provided. The Published Admissions Number (PAN) is:

**30 at River Mead School**

e. **Address**

The child's address provided on the application form should be that of the child's normal place of residence. Only one address can be considered for application purposes. The address provided will be used to determine the child's priority for a school place. The Local Authority reserves the right to confirm the address provided by the applicant using the council tax reference number which is provided as part of the application.

For Year Reception September 2020 entry, the address used to determine priority of school places for on time applications submitted in the main round, will be the child's normal place of residence as at the deadline date of the 15 January 2020. A future address from an applicant who is moving can be considered if the Trust receives evidence in the form of an exchange of contracts or a tenancy agreement of a minimum of six months by the 7 February 2020.

Future addresses from applicants who currently own a property that is unoccupied or rented out, for which they plan to return to, will not be used when allocating places, unless a formal notice to terminate the rental agreements has been received by the deadline date/exceptional circumstances date. Such applications will be checked to confirm the applicants have returned to the property. If the applicant has not returned to the address, it will be considered a fraudulent application and the place will be taken away, even if the child has already started school. If no proof is provided, the current address will be used to determine the child priority of a school place.

For In-Year transfer applications the current address at the time of application will be used.

f. **Shared Parental Responsibility**

Where two (or more) adults have parental responsibility for a child it is preferable that they should agree before submitting an application form which school(s) to name as their preference(s). In cases of dispute, or where two application forms are submitted, the Trust will process the application received from the adult who has a Residence Order. If no such Order has been made, preference will be given to the parent with whom the child is living for the majority of the school week.

If both parents are in dispute as to whom the child lives with the majority of the school week, the Trust will process the application received from the adult who is in receipt of the child benefit, if this is not available then the address used on the NHS card will be used.

In the event of a further dispute regarding the address used, parents may wish to take independent legal advice on whether they should seek a Specific Issue Order from the court to decide on where the child is schooled. For in year transfer applications, until any such order is made, the placement will continue in the best interests of securing educational provision for the child with a minimum of disruption.

For year of entry, where possible, a place will be offered in accordance with the preferences to the parent who can provide evidence that they are in receipt of child benefit.

g. **Multiple Births**

The Trust will endeavour to place siblings born at the same time (e.g. twins, triplets etc) in the same school. If necessary the school will be required to admit over PAN to accommodate such children. In accordance with paragraph 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2014, twins and multiple births will be classed as permitted exceptions to the Infant Class Size Regulations. This will only be the case when one of the siblings is the 30<sup>th</sup>, or the 60<sup>th</sup> child admitted.

h. **Children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)**

Applications for children of UK service personnel with a confirmed posting to the country, will be considered in advance of the family moving into the county if necessary. Where possible, an application must be included in the normal admission round.

An official letter, such as a posting note or letter of support from the commanding officer should be sent to the Trust as soon as possible. This should include the relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

Until a fixed address is available, the Unit postal address will be used and a school place allocated accordingly. For service personnel moving back to a property that they own and that is currently rented out, then this address can be considered provided a signed letter from the Commanding Officer is received stating the future address or a formal notice to terminate the rental agreement. This should be received by the deadline/exceptional circumstances deadline.

If there is a tie-break situation then the criteria of the relevant admissions authority will be applied.

The Trust will not refuse a child of UK service personnel a place because the family does not currently live in the area. It is also permitted to reserve places for these children. If a place is not secured at the preferred school and the applicant has provided proof of a Wiltshire address then an alternative place will be allocated. This will be at the next nearest school to the unit postal address or quartering address with available places.

Children will be considered to be siblings if any brother or sister (including step siblings living at the same address) have been formally offered and have accepted a place at the school. The sibling link will not apply if the child on roll is in Yr 6. Their position on any waiting list will be set accordingly.

All applications will be dealt with in accordance with these admission arrangements. If a reasonable alternative school cannot be offered, the child may be admitted as an 'excepted pupil' under the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations.

## **2. STARTING SCHOOL**

There is a legal entitlement for all three and four year olds to have access to fifteen hours free early education per week – available from registered child minders, school-based childcare, pre-schools, day nurseries, playgroups, or as part of a Childrens Centre. Working parents of children aged three and four years of age, will be able to access 30 hours for Free Entitlement, certain criteria will need to be met.

A school place will be made available for children from the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Full-time education is available to all reception pupils.

Parents have the right to ask that their child attends part-time and this will be provided by arrangement with the school governors. Part-time provision has been determined as either five mornings or five afternoons a week.

Schools will be responsible for informing parents of the induction arrangements for new entrants to the Reception Class (s). These may involve a short period of part-time provision or a phased entry at the beginning of Term 1, which will normally be for a fortnight. Individual children(s) cases for induction, should be discussed by the parent(s) with the school directly

## **3. JOINT ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS WITH PRE-SCHOOLS**

A small number of schools enter into a formal joint arrangement with a pre-school or nursery to provide education jointly to children before they reach statutory school age. Such an arrangement usually involves each child attending school for some sessions each week, however attending the pre-school or nursery school does not give priority in itself for admission to the partner school.

The date on which a child can be admitted to a joint arrangement must be no earlier than the start of the term following his or her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday but can be later than this.

Registration at any nursery or pre-school unit will not be considered as an application for a school place. Attending a nursery/pre-school does not guarantee any child a place at a school. Applications can only be considered in line with the schools individual over-subscription criteria.

## **4. EARLY, DEFERRED OR DELAYED ADMISSION**

### **a. Early admission**

Admissions earlier than the term following the child's 4<sup>th</sup> birthday may only be agreed in exceptional circumstances, such as medical or social factors that have an adverse effect on the child. The request must have the approval of the Trust's professional adviser and there must be no suitable alternative pre-school provision available. Early admission will be agreed for a maximum of one traditional term before the next available normal entry date.

b. **Deferred admission until later in the academic year**

Parents do not have to ensure their child receives full time education until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. However, parents have the right to start their child in school in the September of the academic year following their fourth birthday. In such circumstances, parents also have the option to start their child on a part-time basis or defer their child's entry until later in that academic year.

If a parent decides to defer their child's entry to the school that they have been offered until later in the academic year, that place will be held for the child and will not be offered to another child. However, please note that entry can-not be deferred beyond the point at which their child reaches compulsory school age (for the avoidance of doubt the law states that 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). For children born between 1 April and 31 August, parents can-not defer entry beyond the beginning of the April term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Please note also, that children who attend part-time until later in the school year can-not do so beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

If a parent decides that they no longer wish to take up their child's place, they should inform the school that the place is no longer required. The offer of a place will then be withdrawn and reallocated to the child who is top of the waiting list at that time. The parent must then submit a fresh application for a place in year one for the following academic year. The application can be submitted from April 2021, but will not be considered until at least June 2021.

Any request to defer or attend part-time should be made to the schools as soon as an offer is received

c. **Delayed Admissions**

All applications will be processed in accordance with the School Admissions Code, paragraphs 2.17, 2.17a, 2.17b, which came into force on the 19 December 2014.

Parents 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. In addition, the parents of a summer born child (born from 1 April to 31 August) may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1.

All requests must be submitted to the LA by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for entry in to 2021.

All requests should be made from the September following the child's third birthday, in order to give sufficient time for the case to be considered by the admissions authority prior to the deadline for applications of the 15 January 2020.

Parents of a summer born child may choose not to send their child to a school until the September following their fifth birthday and they may request that they are admitted outside their normal age group – to Reception, rather than Year 1. All admission authorities are required to make clear in their admission arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group.

The decisions on requests for applications outside the child's normal age group are made by the Admissions Authority for each particular school. For this Academy school, the Admissions Authority is the governing body. The decision to admit outside of their normal age group is made on the basis of the circumstances of each case. All parents who wish to apply for delayed entry into Reception must first submit a formal application via the Local Authority, and then the parent(s) should contact the school to discuss their request.

Decisions will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

**If the parental request for delayed admission into Reception is agreed,** a separate application for a place in the next cohort would have to be made in the following September. This application would be considered along with all the other applicants for admission in that year at the preferred school. There would be no guarantee that a place would be able to be offered in the school. If the school is over-subscribed and you are not offered a place, the Local Authority will make an alternative offer. However, please note that delayed admission into Reception in the alternative school may not be possible.

**If the parental request for delayed admission into Reception is refused,** the formal application which has already been submitted will be processed, unless the LA receives a request from the parent to withdraw the application. If no request to withdraw the application is received, then after the offer of a school place had been made, the parent can then inform the Local Authority and the school that they want to defer entry until later in the academic year, as outlined above.

When informing a parent of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the admission authority **must** set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

**Right of Appeal for admission of children outside their normal age group** - Parents who are refused a place at a school for which they have applied have the statutory right of appeal to an independent Admission Appeal Panel. They do not have a right of appeal if they have been offered a place and it is not in the year group they would like. However, if parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of the request for delayed entry into Reception, they have the right to complain against the decision through the Complaints Procedure for decisions made by council officers or under the School's Complaints Procedure where the school is the admissions authority.

All applications for children requesting admission outside their normal age group will be processed as outlined in Wiltshire Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme, which has been drafted in line with the School Admissions Code. We will refer to the supplementary non statutory advice to comply with the admission of summer-born children. This is available at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission).

**5. Deadline – applications received by the deadline date of midnight on 15 January 2020 will be considered as First Round applications**

The closing date for main round applications (i.e. applications for entry into Reception 2020) is the 15 January 2020. All applications received after the deadline of 15 January 2020, including those directed incorrectly to schools and not forwarded to the LA before the deadline, will be treated as late applications and considered only after those applications received before the deadline have been determined.

**6. Oversubscription Criteria**

Please note the oversubscription criteria will apply to this site only and not across all school sites operated by The Mead Academy Trust.

Where a school site is oversubscribed, places are allocated to children in order of the ranked criteria listed below:

**a. Looked After Children/previously Looked After Children**

Definition: 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 71. 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).

**b. Vulnerable Children**

Definition: Children from families registered with the National Asylum Support Service; Children or families with a serious medical, physical or psychological condition where written evidence is provided at the time of application from a senior clinical medical officer, general practitioner or specialist showing that it would be detrimental to the child or family not to be admitted to the School.

For the purpose of the above criteria the word 'family'/'families' is determined as living at the same address at the time of the application and also living at the same address on a permanent basis. Proof will be required and must be submitted by the deadline date.

**c. Designated area siblings and shared area siblings**

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the School as at the deadline date and will continue to attend the School at the time of entry, and where the child lives within the designated area or shared area at the same address as the sibling. This includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address.

**d. Other children from the designated area or shared area**

Children resident within the designated area or shared area who do not qualify under one of the criteria above.

**e. Other Siblings**

A child is considered under this criterion if a sibling is attending the School at the deadline date and will continue to attend the School at the time of entry, and where the child lives at the same



address as the sibling. This includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address.

f. **Children of staff at the school**

A child is considered to fall under this criterion:

- i where the member of staff has been employed at the School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to School is made, and/or
- ii. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

If applicants wish to be considered under this criterion, then a letter from the Executive Head Teacher, or Head of School, confirming the above applies to the applicant, must be provided at the time of application.

g) **Other Children**

Children to whom none of the above criteria apply.

**If the School is oversubscribed within any category above**, the **straight-line distance** from the child's home address to the school will be used as the determining factor. Distances supplied by the Local Authority will be used and these will measure the straight line distance using the Ordnance Survey eastings and northings for the child's home address and the School. Those living closer to the school will be given priority.

**Tie Break** - If two or more children with the same priority for admission live an indistinguishable distance from the preferred school, but can-not all be admitted, then the available places will be decided by means of casting lots (random allocation). This will be undertaken by a School Business Manager, witnessed by a Trust Governor.

**7. Waiting lists**

Waiting lists will be maintained for all intake year groups in the school. Children will automatically be added to these lists if a preference higher than the school place offered has been refused. All applicants have the right of appeal against any refusal of a place. The existence of a waiting list does not remove this right from any unsuccessful applicant.

The position on a list will be determined by applying the published oversubscription criteria and not by date order of receipt. This will mean a position will change if a later application is received from someone with higher priority according to the oversubscription criteria.

Waiting lists for all year groups will close on the last day of the summer term 2021.

A fresh application can be made for a place for the next academic year group but this will not be considered before the 31 May 2021.

Places that become available will not be offered to pupils who are not on the waiting list.

If your child is offered a place from a waiting list for the school, then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer. If the place is not accepted then a further letter will be sent informing the applicant that should they not accept or decline the place within 5 working

days, the place will be withdrawn. A further letter will be sent informing the applicant the place has been withdrawn.

Notes:

- Names will only be removed from the waiting lists if a written request is received, or if the offer of a place that becomes available is declined.
- Registration of interest on the school's pre-admission list will not be considered as an application for a school place within the school.
- Parents must contact the school to obtain information on the existence of a waiting list, and /or the maintenance of a waiting list.
- Except for service families, children will not be considered to be living within the designated area for the school until the Trust receives an exchange of contracts or a signed tenancy agreement of a minimum of six months.
- Except for service families, children will not be considered to be a sibling unless their brother or sister is attending the school and is expected to still be in attendance at the chosen start date.

**8. Applications for Reception 2020 Intake – applications received after 15 January 2020**

Applications received between the 16 January 2020 and 24 April 2019 will be treated as second round applications.

Applications received after the 24 April 2019 will be treated as third round applications.

**9. In Year Transfer Applications for year groups other than Reception 2020 Intake**

Applications received after the 25 July 2020 for the year of entry and any applications received for other year groups are classed as In-Year transfer applications.

Other than in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the two schools involved, a transfer will, if the applicant is not moving address, only be considered as being for the start of the next traditional term.

All applications will be considered together with any applications that have already been refused and the child's name will be placed on the School's waiting list accordingly.

Applications received will be considered no more than a maximum of one term in advance. All applications will be considered together and are ranked using the oversubscription criteria listed in this policy

Applications received requesting more immediate admission are considered in the order that the School Admissions Team receives them. If more than one additional application for the School is received on the same date, places are allocated to children in order of the over-subscription criteria as listed in this policy.

In all cases parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to state up to a maximum of three preferences. An offer will be made at the school listed as highest preference possible, which has an available place.

If your child is offered a place at the school then you must accept or decline the place within 10 working days of the date of offer.

If your child is offered a place at the School and you accept the place, you must take the place up within 28 working days of the required admissions date stated on the original application form. Should the place not be taken up within the 28 working days the School will then write to the parents informing them that the place has been withdrawn.

Requests for places in year groups other than the one relating to the child's chronological age will only be agreed if supported by the Trust's relevant professional adviser(s) and the school.

#### 10. **Proof of address**

The Trust reserves the right to ask parents for proof of their address. If the parents' current address is different to that held on the LA's Council Tax system the Trust may ask parents to provide proof of the new address if one is indicated. Acceptable proof of address includes:

- A formal exchange of contracts or a signed solicitor's letter stating contracts have been exchanged and specifying a completion date, or
- A signed and dated tenancy agreement of a minimum of six months.

If parents fail to provide proof of a new address, the Trust will use the old address for admission purposes. The Trust reserves the right to check that parents are living in the address indicated on the application form. If parents are not living there, the applications will be investigated and the allocated place may be withdrawn.

#### 11. **Fair Access Protocol**

The School will act in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol which the Trust has adopted to give access to educational provisions for hard to place children.

If the Governing Body of the School refuse admission to a child with challenging behaviour where there are places available, (outside the normal intake round) the case must be referred to the LA for consideration under the In-Year Fair Access Protocol. This will normally only be the case where the school has a particularly high proportion of children with challenging behaviour or previously excluded children.

This protocol does not apply to a Child in Care (Looked After Child, a previously Looked After Child) or a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or Education, Health Care Plan, as these children must be admitted.

Further information on the In Year Fair Access Protocol including further criteria for referral, can be viewed at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

#### 12. **Appeals Procedure – Main Round Applications**

Parents have a right of appeal to an independent panel against any decision made by, or on behalf of, the Trust as to which education is to be provided for their child.

**First Round Appeals**

For applications received from 1 September 2019 – 15 January 2020 and for offers made on National Offer Date, appeals must be received by the LA no later than 14 May 2020.

**Second Round Appeals**

For applications received from 16 January 2020 – 24 April 2020 and for offers made on 29 May 2020, appeals will be heard as soon as possible.

**Third Round Appeals**

For applications received after the 24 April 2020 and for offers made after 30 June 2020, appeals will be heard as soon as possible.

All appeals will be heard in accordance with the timescales which have been determined and are explained in the School Admissions Appeals Code.

Parents who have appealed unsuccessfully can reapply for a place at the same school in a later academic year, and have a right of appeal if unsuccessful.

Where there have been material changes in circumstances in the same academic year and a repeat application is considered and again refused, the parents will have the right to a fresh appeal.

If a place has been awarded by the independent appeal panel the place must be taken up within 28 days of the required date of admission stated on the original application form, unless the child is not of statutory school age.