

Admissions Policy for Admission 2027/2028

This policy sets mandatory requirements and guidelines for admission authorities, including Innovate2Educate Partnership Trust Board and the school governing body, to ensure fair and transparent admissions processes.

This policy was approved as follows:

Approver:	Trust Board	Date:	14th January 2026
Owner:		Version:	V1.0
LAC adoption date:	01.10.2025	Review frequency:	Annual Review / Consultation 6 yearly
Status:	Mandatory	Next review date:	October 2026 / October 2031

Document History

Version	Version Date	Author	Summary of Changes
V1.0	October 2025	Tracey Evans	Full review of existing policy. Trust approval 14 th January 2026.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Governors annually review the school pupil admission number. This policy contains details on how priorities are given to parents seeking a place for their child at Ryecroft.

2. ADMISSION LIMIT

The school's Pupil Admission Number (PAN) currently stands at 60.

The Governors have also expressed their desire that the school should remain an attractive option to parents living outside the school's catchment area, particularly in order to ensure the financial and academic viability of the school.

3. CATCHMENT AREA

Ryecroft attracts a significant percentage of pupils from outside its current catchment areas.

As it stands at the present, the school's defined catchment area is very extensive and encompasses a number of villages and hamlets. Its rural nature means that despite the relatively small number on roll, most pupils have to travel some distance to school by a variety of means. Four First schools feed pupils into Ryecroft - All Saints CE Academy, Denstone; the Dove CE Academy, Rocester and St. Peter's CE Academy, Alton.

Parents of all pupils wishing to enter Ryecroft, other than at normal intake, are asked to apply directly to the school. Only parents living within the school's catchment area are entitled to free school transport within the distance limits set down by the Local Authority.

4. ACCELERATED TRANSFER OF PUPILS

The procedure for accelerated transfer is lengthy and exhaustive and involves the Education Psychological Services. Applications for accelerated transfer should be addressed to the Chief Education Officer's Allocations Department.

The position adopted by Ryecroft is consistent. It is most improbable the school would have any knowledge of the individual pupil in question and could not therefore comment on the child's intellectual, physical or social maturity and whether he/she would benefit or otherwise from early transfer. Such views must be left to those who know the child well, in particular staff at the child's current school. The following points are, however, consistently made. Regard must be given to future implications for the child being in a Year group above his/her chronological age in such matters as

- i) participation in team sporting activities,
- ii) representing the school in sports teams
- iii) physical growth in later years compared with peer group
- iv) development of social skills being maintained
- v) the recognition that the whole process of assessment must be undertaken again at the next point of school transfer

5. OVER-AGE RETENTION

Occasionally, pupils remain an additional year in a particular Year group which then dictates they will remain a year behind their chronological age throughout their education. The same procedures apply as for accelerated admission.

6. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

If the number of pupils seeking admission to the school exceeds the number of places available, then the following order of priority will be used:

- 1) Children in care and children who ceased to be in care because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order), including those children 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 *see additional note * below*.
- 2) Pupils with exceptional circumstances either on medical or social grounds. Applications must be supported by a professional report stating exactly what circumstances provide the grounds for medical or social inclusion and why the child must attend Ryecroft and no other school.
- 3) Children who have an elder sibling in attendance at Ryecroft C.E. Middle School and who will still be attending the school at the proposed admission date; (For admission purposes, a brother or sister is a child who lives at the same address and either: have one or both natural parents in common; are related by a parents marriage; are adopted or fostered by a common parent or are unrelated children who live at the same address, whose parents live as partners.)
- 4) Children living within the catchment area of Ryecroft C.E. Middle School (see additional note below**).
- 5) Pupils from recognised feeder schools:
 - Dove C.E. Academy, Rocester
 - All Saints CE Academy, Denstone
 - St Peter's CE Academy, Alton
- 6) Pupils who attend a school within The Innovate2Educate Partnership:
 - Hutchinson Memorial C.E. First School, Checkley
 - All Saints C.E. First School, Church Leigh
 - Picknalls First School, Uttoxeter
 - Richard Clarke First School, Abbots Bromley
 - Bramshall Meadows First School, Uttoxeter

- 7) Children of members of staff at Ryecroft C.E. Middle School in either or both of the following circumstances:
- a) 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 the school is made, and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- 8) Pupils whose parents express a wish for a Church of England education for their child, based on:

Applicants being able to provide a copy of a certificate of Baptism or certificate of Thanksgiving or Dedication for the Gift of a Child.

Involvement in the past two years by the pupil or parents in the work and worship of a Christian Church (see additional note below ***). Applicants will be asked to identify themselves as being either:

- known to the church
- attached to the church
- at the heart of the church

Guidance on these categories will be available on a Church Support Form which should be signed by a recognised representative of the Christian Church of which the pupil or parent is a part. The Church Support Form is a separate form which is attached to this policy or available from the School office. It is essential that those applying on the grounds of religious preference request and complete this form. The form needs to be submitted at the time of application.

- 9) Other children arranged in order of priority according to how near their home addresses are to the main gate of the school, determined by a straight-line measurement as calculated by the local authority's geographical information system (see additional note **** below).

Where it is not possible to accommodate all children applying for places within a particular category then the local authority will allocate the available places in accordance with the remaining criteria.

Additional notes

*Children in care means children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989 and who is (a) in care of a Local Authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see definition in Section 22 (1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

Child arrangement orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

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 (or special guardians).

**Copies of school catchment area maps are available from the local authority
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Admissions-secondary/Catchment-areas.aspx

*** In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church [or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church [or in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship] or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

**** Ryecroft C.E. Middle School uses a geographical information system (GIS) to calculate home to school distances in miles. The measurement is calculated using Ordnance Survey (OS) data from an applicant's home address to the main front gate of the school. The coordinates of an applicant's home address is determined and provided by the local land and property gazetteer (LLPG) and OS address point data.

In accordance with legislation, children who have an Education Health Care plan (EHCP) that names Ryecroft C.E. Middle School as being the most appropriate to meet the child's needs must be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to other applicants.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any supportive information required in order for the application to be assessed against the published admissions criteria, the school will not seek to obtain this information on behalf of the applicant.

The home address is considered to be the child's along with their parent's main and genuine principal place of residence at the time of the allocation of places i.e. where they are normally and regularly living. If a child is resident with friends or relatives (for reasons other than legal guardianship) the friends or relatives address will not be considered for allocation purposes.

Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives with both parents for part of the school week, parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the address they wish to be considered for allocation purposes.

It is expected that parents will agree on school places before an application is made, and it may be necessary to request evidence from you to confirm that this is the case. The school is not in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If a child's home address changes during the admissions process it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the local authority immediately. Where there is a proposed house move taking place during the admissions process the local authority will only accept the revised address for purposes of allocation where parents/carers can provide documentary evidence of the move by 11 March 2026. It will be necessary for sufficient evidence of a permanent move to be provided by the applicant by this date before it will be taken into account for allocation purposes at the national offer date.

If a place is offered on the basis of an address that is subsequently found to be different from the child's normal and permanent home address at the time of allocation of places then that place is likely to be withdrawn.

If there are a limited number of spaces available and we cannot distinguish between applicants using the criteria listed, such as in the case of children who live in the same block of flats, then the child or children who will be offered the available spaces will be randomly selected. This process will be independently verified.

Any Staffordshire child not obtaining a place at any of their parents preferred schools will be allocated a place at their catchment area school (if places remain available) or the next nearest school with a space available and advised about the independent appeals process.

Waiting lists

Unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria stated above and not based on the date their application was received. There will be a period of two weeks after the national offer date whereby available places will not be reallocated. If places become available after this date they will be offered according to the child at the top of the waiting list.

Waiting lists will be kept until 31 December of the year of admission. No other waiting lists will be maintained.

Inclusion on a school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available at Ryecroft C.E. Middle School.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed and is subject to change during the year i.e. they can go up or down the list since each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the oversubscription criteria listed above.

Children who are subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the fair access protocol (FAP) will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

Late applications

Application forms received after the closing date will be considered alongside those applicants who applied on time wherever possible. Where it is not practicable because places have already been allocated, or are shortly to be allocated, then late preferences will be considered only after those that were made before this point.

A late application does not affect the right of appeal or the right to be placed on a school's waiting list.

Repeat applications

Parents do not have the right to a second appeal in respect of the same school for the same academic year unless, in exceptional circumstances, the local authority has accepted a second application from the appellant because of a significant and material change in the circumstances of the parent, child or school but still refused admission.

Admission outside of the normal age group

Parents may seek to apply for their child's admission to school outside of their normal age group, for example if the child is exceptionally gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

These parents will need to make an application alongside children applying at the normal age which should explain why it is in the child's best interest to be admitted outside of their normal age which may include information such as professional evidence as to why this is the case and why an exception should be made in the case of the child. A decision as to whether this is an appropriate course of action will be made by the Governing Body who will take into account the circumstances of the case and views of the headteacher. Parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular year group.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

FOR ADMISSION TO A CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

The purpose of the Supplementary Information Form is to verify the Christian commitment of the parent(s) applying for a place at a voluntary aided Church of England school. **This form should be completed if you want your application to be considered using the Christian commitment oversubscription criteria of the school admissions policy. Failure to complete this form may affect the oversubscription criterion in which your child is placed.**

I / We – Name(s)			
Of – Address			
Parent(s) of (Child's name)		Date of birth	

Declare Christian Commitment, for at least the previous **12 months**, described as:

Please tick as appropriate

'At the heart of the church' – A regular worshipper who is on the electoral roll (or equivalent) of the church and worships at least twice a month. The worshipper could be one or both parents or the child.	
'Attached to the church' – A regular but not frequent worshipper. A person who usually attends a monthly family or church parade service or is regularly involved in a weekday church activity including an element of worship.	

Parental Signature(s)	Please print your name(s)
1.	1.
2.	2.
Date	Date

PLEASE GET THIS FORM SIGNED BY THE PERSON VERIFYING YOUR DECLARATION

Verified by	Vicar, Priest in Charge, Minister of Religion etc. (During an interregnum the form may be signed by a Churchwarden)		
Signature			
Please print your name		Date	
Name and Address of Church			
Status within the church			
Your contact address/tel-ephone			
Comments			

Please return the completed form to the school

