

# Meppershall Church of England Academy

## ADMISSIONS POLICY YEAR OF ENTRY 2026 - 2027

<b>Date adopted by Governors/ Academy</b>	<b>September 2024</b>
<b>Policy Status</b>	<b>Statutory</b>
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This policy applies to all stakeholders on the Meppershall Academy sites.

## RECEPTION YEAR

### INTRODUCTION

Meppershall School is a Church of England Academy within the Diocese of St Albans in Central Bedfordshire and is part of the Poppy Hill Church of England Multi Academy Trust ("the Trust"). The Trust is the admission authority for the school but has delegated responsibility for admission decisions to the local governing body of the school ("the Governors"). The Governors will admit up to the published admission number of 30 children to the reception year group in September at the beginning of each academic year.

The Local Authority (LA) operates a timetabled co-ordinated admissions procedure in line with government legislation. The LA will manage the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Governing Body, on behalf of the Trust, will allocate the available places in line with this policy.

*Meppershall Academy's has become a Split Site Primary school, with our Meppershall Year 5 & 6 students being educated on the Henlow Academy site. They have the opportunity to make an application to transition into Henlow at Year 7 and continue their academic journey on the same site, taking their GCSEs and completing their Key Stage 4 education at Henlow Academy.*

*Children in the school's Nursery must apply for a Reception place in the same way as any other child, if they wish to transfer from the Nursery to the school's Reception class.*

Applicants must apply to their child's home LA. Central Bedfordshire Council operates an online application process and Central Bedfordshire residents can find details of that process, and the online application form, at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions).

A paper application form can be requested by emailing [admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The closing date for either paper or online admission application forms to be received by the home LA is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Please note that the information in this policy is correct for the year shown. Policies for future years may well be different.

### **HOW PLACES ARE OFFERED**

Pupils who have an Educational Health & Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school will be admitted within the school's PAN and before any oversubscription criteria are applied. In the event of there being more applications than available places, the following oversubscription criteria will be applied, in order. Please also see the definitions sections below.

- Category 1 Looked after children or children who were previously 'looked after but immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order; this includes children who have been adopted from state care outside England
- Category 2 Children whose home address is in the school's catchment area **and** who have a sibling who will be attending the school at the time of entry.
- Category 3 Other children whose home address is in the school's catchment area.
- Category 4 Children of permanent staff employed at the school
- Category 5 Any other children who have a sibling who will be attending the school at the time of entry.
- Category 6 Children living outside the school's catchment area, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian Church by attending a service of worship at the relevant church at least once a month for the year immediately prior to an application being made. Applicants in this category need to ask their priest or minister to complete the relevant section of the application form.

Category 7 Children who have very exceptional medical reasons to attend the school.

Category 8 Any other children.

If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised mapping system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the National Land and Property Gazetteer address point of the pupil's home to the designated measuring point of the school (the main entrance door of the Meppershall school site)

In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the decision will be made by random selection, using the Synergy Admissions database to allocate the place.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Category 1 - Looked after children** A 'looked after' child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

### **Previously 'looked after' children**

A previously 'looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order. An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. 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).

Highest priority will also be given to children who appear to the Governors to have been in state care outside of England and to have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

**Categories 2 and 5 'Sibling'**

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, foster siblings where foster care has been arranged by a local authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the Academy at the time of application and be likely to remain in the Academy at the proposed date of admission.

**Category 3 'Catchment area'**

The school's catchment area is the ecclesiastical (church) parish of Meppershall. A map of the parish is available on the website [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) and is also attached to this policy.

**All categories: Home address**

The address given on the application form must be the child's permanent home address at the closing date for applications. If a child lives at more than one address because childcare arrangements are shared, the Governors will consider the address for admission purposes to be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time, unless the application is supported by a copy of a Court Order stating that a different address must be used for Academy admission applications. If a child lives at two different addresses equally, the application must include a copy of any Court Order which states the address to be used for Academy admission purposes.

Where there is no such Court Order in place, parents should make a single joint application naming one address. Please note that applications submitted by separated parents will be subject to the same address verification checks as all other applications.

#### **Category 4**

Staff who work at the Academy with a permanent contract, employed on either a full or part time basis. The member of staff must have been employed at the Academy for 2 or more years at the time the application for admission is made; or they must have been recruited for a post where there is a demonstrable skill shortage. Staff can request a list of the roles for which the Governors have determined there to be a demonstrable skill shortage from the School Business Manager.

#### **Category 6 "Christian Church".**

A Church of England church is one which is a member of the Anglican communion. The governors define a 'Christian' Church to be one which is a member of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance.

The form mentioned in Category 6 is attached to the Central Bedfordshire application form and is also available separately at [Confirmation of Religious Affiliation Form](#) .

#### **Category 7 Very Exceptional Medical Reasons**

The Governors will give an application priority under this criterion where there are 'very exceptional' medical reasons which make it essential for your child to attend Meppershall Church of England Academy and where it is the only school that could meet your child's needs.

You will need to submit a medical report from your child's doctor or consultant, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for your child to be admitted to the school and the difficulties that would be caused if your child has to attend another school. The Governors will make their decision on the basis of the evidence provided.

#### **UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS.**

##### **Appeals.**

Parents who have not been allocated a place for their child have the right of appeal to an independent panel. The LA will explain the procedure to you if this situation arises.

### **Waiting list.**

Where it is not possible to allocate all applications for the school, a waiting list will be kept. The waiting list is ranked in line with the school's oversubscription criteria and will be re-ranked each time a name is added to the list. It is not based on the date the application was added to the list. The waiting list will be held until 31st July in the academic year of intended entry.

### **IN YEAR ADMISSIONS**

Requests for admissions into other year groups should be made on the In-Year application form to Central Bedfordshire Council. Applications can be made online or by downloading the form from the Local Authority website (please visit [Applying for a school place during the academic year](#)). Applicants who wish their application to be prioritised under Category 6 must complete the relevant section of this application form.

Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access protocol will be admitted even if the school is full. Parents of children entitled to be considered under the Fair Access Protocol may also make an in year application to the school.

All unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal to an independent panel. The LA will explain the procedure to you if this situation arises.

### **DEFERRED STARTS AND PART-TIME PLACES FOR RECEPTION CHILDREN**

Successful applicants are entitled to a full-time Reception place from the September following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, if parents so wish, children may attend on a part-time basis until the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

A child's admission to the school can be deferred until later in the Reception year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age and (in any event) not beyond the start of the summer term 2027.

### **DELAYED RECEPTION ADMISSION FOR SUMMER BORN CHILDREN**

Summer born children do not reach compulsory school age until the September after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parents who do not wish their summer born child to start school until

then must normally make an in year application for a place in year 1. However, parents may instead request that their summer born child is admitted out of year group, to the Reception class starting in September 2027. Parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, and decision will be made by the Trust in consultation with the Head of School.

Parents are advised to make an on-time application for a Reception place in the child's normal age group and to make their request for admission out of year group at the same time (please see the next section headed "Applications for admission out of year group" for more information). However, all requests will be considered.

If the recommended process is followed, the Trust will respond to the request before any place is offered.

If the request is granted, the parent can withdraw their application for a Reception place in the child's normal age group and will need to make a new application as part of the following year's normal admission round and this will be processed within the normal allocation process.

A place is never guaranteed at the academy and in the case of oversubscription, places are offered in accordance with the academy's oversubscription criteria. In short it would be delaying the application rather than an offer of a place.

If the request is refused, the child's parents must decide whether to accept any offer of a place in the child's normal age group or to reject it and make an in-year application for a place in year 1.

\*A summer born child is one born between 1 April to 31 August.

#### **APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION OUT OF YEAR GROUP**

All requests for admission out of year group must be made in writing, directly to the Trust via the Head of School (c/o the school office) The request should include the parents/carers' reasons for the request and include any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant; such as information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether the child has previously been educated out of year group; and

whether the child would naturally have fallen into a lower age group if not for being born prematurely.

The Trust, will then consider the request, making their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child in accordance with the School Admissions Code, and taking account of the views of the Head of School. Once determined, the decision will be communicated by the Trust to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision. There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision not to grant a request for admission out of year group.

