

Whitstone School Admissions Policy 2021/22

Whitstone School is an Academy and the Board of Governors is the admissions authority for the school.

The school serves Shepton Mallet and its surrounding area. The school caters for students aged 11-16 and is fully comprehensive.

Whitstone School Admission Arrangements aim to be fair, clear and objective. Arrangements and practices comply with the requirements of the School Admissions Code and School Admissions Appeals Code. The Local Authority (LA) is required to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all young people in Somerset. Therefore, this document should be read in conjunction with the Somerset LA published Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2015 which is available from Somerset County Council. (See contact details at end of this document).

The Published Admission Number for Year 7 2021 is 125.

The Application Process

All applications for admission to Year 7 in September 2021, and any supplementary information forms, must be submitted to your home Local Authority, using the 'Common Application Form' which is available from every Local Authority or from Whitstone School. Completed application forms can be submitted electronically or on paper and must be sent directly to the applicant's home Local Authority, to be received no later than 23.59 on 31 October 2020.

All applications will be considered under the Equal preference and Ranking system of allocation. The LA will forward all applications to the school and the Board of Governors will rank them against the criteria below. This list will then be returned to the LA under the co-ordinated admissions scheme and the LA will make the offer of a place on 1 March 2021 or the next working day.

Application forms for children to start in Year 7 which are delivered or post marked after 31 October 2020 will be recorded as late and cannot be administered until all on time applications have been considered.

Applications to join any year group during the academic year

In-year applications must be submitted using the governors, in-year application form which are available from the school and from the school website.

Applications may be submitted directly to the school at any time during the academic year. The Governors' Admissions Committee and/or sub group will consider all applications on a weekly basis and applicants will receive a response within 10 school days following receipt of the application. Where a school place is offered it will be held open for 14 school days and applicants will need to confirm acceptance within this time.

Over Subscription Criteria

The school will be required to admit a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) if the statement names the school before the following criteria are applied:

1. Looked After Children (Children in the care of a Local Authority or have been previously and are now formally adopted or subject to a residence/child arrangement order or special guardianship order.).
2. Children living in the catchment area (please also see important note 2), with an older sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.
3. Children living in the catchment area.
4. Children living outside the catchment area, with an older sibling at the school at the time of admission, and who live at the same address.
5. Children who attend one of the identified feeder primary schools in Year 6 at the time of the application closing date (see important notes)
6. Children of staff employed at the school on a permanent contract for a period of no less than two years at the time of the application closing date.
7. Children outside the catchment area, but nearest the school

Important Notes:

1. *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).*
2. If there are not enough places to satisfy all the applications under any one criterion, priority will be given to those living nearest the school (straight line measurement). Where two distances are equal and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, priority will be determined by independent drawing of lots.
3. A copy of the schools Catchment map is available to view at the school and can also be made available upon request from the Local Authority.
4. Feeder primary schools in criterion 5 are: St Paul's Junior, Oakhill Primary, Stoke St Michael Primary, Croscombe Primary, Upton Noble Primary, St Aldhelms & West Pennard Primary.

Siblings

For the purposes of Admissions, a sibling is defined as a child living at the same address as a half or full brother or sister, an adoptive brother or sister or children of the same household.

Multiple birth applications (for example twins)

In the case of multiple birth applications, the published admission number will be exceeded at the point of allocation to ensure multiple birth siblings can be allocated places at the same school if they would otherwise be split (sibling definition applies).

Parent or parent/carer

Natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law).

Home Address

The home address is important as school places are allocated on the basis of the home address of each child. A child's home address is considered to be where the child spends the majority of their time with the person(s) who have care of the child.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required, together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned. Places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless house moves have been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or the signing of a formal lease agreement. The Admissions Authority reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support your claim to residence.

It should also be noted that an address used for childcare arrangements cannot be used as a home address for the purpose of applying for a school place. A fraudulent claim to an address may lead to the withdrawal of the offer of a place.

You must notify The Admissions & Entitlements Team, County Hall, Taunton of any change of address during the admissions procedure.

Issues relating to shared residency arrangements

Legislation and guidance states that only one offer per child is made by the Local Authority. Therefore where separated parents issue separate applications for their child the Local Authority can only offer one place. In this situation the Governing Body requires parents to resolve matters between themselves. If an agreement cannot be reached parents may wish to seek legal advice. The Governing Body will not become involved in private disputes. The Governing Body does recognise that there may be situations where parents cannot ultimately reach an agreement between themselves and it is, therefore, necessary for the Governing Body to take a decision. Where this is the case the Governing Body will try to establish where the child spends the majority of their time and prioritise the application made by the parent living at this address.

Each parent will be required to write to the Governing Body and inform them of the number of days each week the child spends with them. Where the child spends equal time with both parents the Governing Body may ask for additional information including evidence of which parent/carer is in receipt of child benefit, and/or the name of the GP surgery at which the child is registered. When the Governing Body has received all the necessary information from both parents a decision will be reached based on the evidence provided.

Distance Measurements

For the purpose of measuring home to school distance, all calculations will be measured using a straight-line measurement from the address point of the home to the address point of the school using the LA's GIS mapping system. (Address Point is a dataset that uniquely defines and locates residential, business and public postal addresses in Great Britain. It is created by matching information from Ordnance Survey digital map databases with more than 27 million addresses recorded in the Royal Mail). In the case of multi-level dwellings such as flats, the staircase will be included in the distance measurement.

Equal Preference with Ranking allocation method

This approach requires the Local Authority to rank all applications against the published over-subscription criteria for the school concerned and where schools are over subscribed, places will be allocated up to the published admission number in strict priority order. Where more than one school can be offered, the highest ranked preference will be allocated.

Waiting list

Where an application has been refused, the child will be placed on a waiting list. This will be kept on order of over-subscription criteria by the Governing Body, and will be maintained until the end of the academic year to which the application applies. Where places become available within the Admission Number they will be allocated to the highest ranked eligible child on the maintained list.

Children who are the subject of a direction by a Local Authority to admit or who are allocated to the school in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocols, will take precedence over those children on a waiting list.

Appeals

Applicants whose school place application is turned down have the legal right to appeal to the Governing Body against the decision to refuse admission. Details concerning how to appeal are explained in the decision letter sent out by email or post on the published dates.

Withdrawal of places

The Governing Body will consider withdrawing the offer of a place if;

- The place has been offered on the basis of an application which is subsequently found to be fraudulent or intentionally misleading.
- The parent/carer has not responded to the offer within a reasonable period of time and a further opportunity has been given for the parent to respond within 10 days having explained that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not.

Retained or Accelerated Entry

The governors will consider applications for retained or accelerated entry in cases where parents would like their child to be admitted to a year group either side of their child's chronological year group. The reasons for the request must be fully explained on the appropriate SIF and included with the school place application form.

Children from Overseas

The Governing Body will only allocate a place to anyone moving into the country from abroad if they have documentary evidence of a home address and copies of the passport and/or visa if required. The only exceptions are children of UK Service personnel and other Crown servants (including Diplomats) returning to the area.

Children of UK Service Personnel

The Admissions Authority endeavour to ensure that their admission arrangements support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. In year applications are usually considered for admission up to a maximum of half a term in advance of the place being taken up. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel and other Crown servants where a place can be made available up to a year in advance of being required providing the appropriate documentation is provided (an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended address.)

Usually, an in year place may be allocated prior to actual residency, only on receipt of exchange of contracts or a formal signed rental agreement. An exception is made for children of UK service personnel and other Crown servants. This means that, providing the application is accompanied by an official government letter (e.g. MOD, FCO or GCHQ) declaring a relocation date and intended address, The admissions authority will process the application on that address. If a home address is not available at this stage the admissions authority will accept a unit postal address or quartering area address.

If the parent/carer is moving to the area as a result of leaving the armed forces then no special consideration will be given to the application under the grounds of the application being made by a service family.

Contact information

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Somerset Local Authority

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www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions
Telephone: 0300 123 2224