



# **Admissions Policy 2026/27 Sunnyside Academy**

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FOR CHILDREN

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1	19 December 2023	Sue Lister	Key dates updated to reflect the year to which the Policy applies. "Carers" replaced with "guardians". Definition of "looked after child" added. Further explanation of sibling criteria added. Expansion of the definition of exceptional circumstances under which late applications will be considered. Expansion of the explanation given around how waiting lists are maintained. Expansion of the explanation around the child's home address. Consequences of providing false and misleading information added.
2	17 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	Sue Lister	Clarification added as to how places are awarded using the straight-line distance measurement (criteria 5).

Sunnyside Academy is an academy school and is part of Ad Astra Academy Trust. The Board of Trustees of Ad Astra Academy Trust is the admissions authority for the school, however the Trust commissions Middlesbrough Council to undertake the administration of the admissions process on its behalf.

This policy refers to the intake year beginning September 2026.

### **Admission Numbers**

School admission numbers are set with regard to the physical capacity of each school. The admission number will apply to the relevant intake year only (Reception class).

Sunnyside Academy has an agreed Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 for entry into reception. The school will accordingly admit at least 30 pupils in the relevant age group each year if sufficient applications are received. All applications will be admitted if 30 or fewer apply.

### **Application Procedures and Timetables**

The timetable for the Primary Admissions Schemes for 2026/27 is similar to previous years and takes into account the statutory dates in the School Admissions Code. The full timetable for Academy admission arrangements is detailed in Middlesbrough Local Authority's 2026/27 Coordinated Admissions Scheme (please see the website [here](#)). Parents/guardians will be able to make on-line applications for admissions for the 2026/27 school year via the Middlesbrough Council web site [www.middlesbrough.gov.uk](http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk).

### **Admission Date**

Middlesbrough has a single admission date, with all reception pupils admitted full-time in September 2026. All children requiring a reception place at a school must apply for a place even if the child attends the school's nursery.

Parents/guardians can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the academic year or until the child reaches compulsory school age\*, but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the academic year. Parents/guardians can also request that their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

\*A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday. (Or on the fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day) The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

In November 2025, notices will be displayed in public places such as libraries inviting parents/guardians who attend private nurseries or do not attend any nursery, to register with the LA in order to receive a primary application pack.

Mid November 2025, parents/guardians will be provided with an application pack and invited to express up to three preferences for schools, including academies, voluntary aided schools, foundation schools and schools maintained by other Local Authorities.

Parents/guardians will be requested to make their applications by a closing date of 15 January 2026. Every effort will be made by the Local Authority to ensure that applications are received by the closing date, however the responsibility for applying remains with the

parent/guardian.

All applications will be processed in accordance with Middlesbrough's Co-ordinated Admission Scheme and all preferences are considered equally. Parents/guardians will be informed of their child's allocated school place on 16 April 2026 (or the next working day where 16 April falls on a weekend or bank holiday).

### **Oversubscription criteria**

Where more parents/guardians have expressed a preference for a particular school than the admission number, the Admissions Authority must apply its over-subscription criteria in deciding which parents/guardians' preferences can be met. After the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where a particular school is named in the Plan, the remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:

1. Children who are 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<sup>1</sup> including those 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. 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). See Note 1.
2. Pupils permanently resident in the Admission Zone, i.e., the address at which the child is registered for child benefit, who express a preference for that school (proof of address may be required) (see Child's Home Address section).
3. Pupils who will have a brother and/or stepbrother and/or sister and/or stepsister or the child of the parent/guardian's partner living at the same address attending the school in the September of admission. See note 2.

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<sup>1</sup>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) at the time of making an application to a school. 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. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). 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 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. 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).

4. Pupils with exceptional social and / or medical reasons for attending the school, which in the latter circumstances are substantiated by the Local Authority medical advisors. A letter from the child's GP or other relevant professional such as a social worker must be submitted with the application. Social reasons do not include domestic arrangements such as parents/guardians working commitments or childcare arrangements. Only exceptional circumstances such as parents/guardians who have a disability, which may mean their child must attend a particular school, will be considered (in this instance a letter from the parent's/guardian's GP or other relevant professional such as a social worker must be submitted with the application). The supporting letter should detail why the school is the only one that can accommodate the child. See Note 3.
5. Pupils who reside closest to the school as determined by a straight-line distance measurement; from the address point for the child's home to the identified main school gate, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

When distinguishing between pupils within the same criteria the pupil with the highest second criteria will be admitted i.e. a pupil living within the admission zone who has a brother or sister attending the school in the September of admission will have a higher criteria than a pupil who lives in the admission zone but does not have a brother or sister attending the school.

Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications, for example two applicants who live at an equal distance from the school, the Local Authority's computerised system will use random selection.

**Note 1:** Relevant evidence must be provided such as a copy of the adoption certificate or court order plus details of when and where the child was in care and names and contact details of social workers involved. If relevant evidence is not provided the child cannot be considered under this criterion.

**Note 2:** For consideration under the sibling criteria, the sibling must still attend the school at the time when the child for whom the place is sought joins the school. This criterion only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school.

**Note 3:** Full details must be submitted at the time of application. If you have any concerns or need any guidance about what might be classed as exceptional social or medical reasons, or what evidence may be submitted, please contact the Admissions Team to discuss the matter in confidence before you submit your application. Applications submitted with evidence appertaining to exceptional social and/or medical reasons may be shared with and discussed at an admissions panel meeting which can include professionals such as a doctor, educational psychologist, social worker etc. who will give opinions and make decisions on whether the application fits the criteria.

### **Nursery**

For children attending the school nursery, applications to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home Local Authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.

### **Twins or Multiple Birth Children**

If you have more than one child who are twins or part of a multiple birth going through the application process this year, you must make a separate application for each child and indicate on each online or paper form that your child has a sibling also going through the process. A place will be offered to the other child(ren) if one of your twins/multiple birth children is offered the last place available and you have applied to the same school for the other child(ren).

### **Late Applications**

The Local Authority will accept applications which are received late only when there is evidence of an exceptional circumstance which prevented submission by the stated deadline and only if the application is received before the date the allocation procedures begin. These will then be treated in the same way as all other applications. Examples of exceptional circumstance may include when a single parent/guardian has been ill for some time, or a family has just moved into the area or returned from abroad. In the event of a late application not being accepted or receipt is after the date the allocation procedures begin, and the school(s) requested are oversubscribed, then places will be offered at the school nearest to the home address with places available.

Where families have moved to a new address after places have been allocated, preferences will only be agreed if places remain available in the preferred school. If the preferred school, including the admission zone school, is full, a place will be offered at the school closest to the home address with places available.

### **Right of Appeal**

Parents/guardians whose child has been refused a school place, for which they have applied, will be offered the right to appeal against the Admission Authority's decision.

Further Information:

### **Re-Allocation of Places, which become available before Appeal Hearings**

Where places become available prior to an appeal hearing, they will be re-allocated from the waiting list in accordance with the over-subscription criteria.

### **Waiting Lists**

Waiting lists will be maintained for those unsuccessful at gaining a place at their preferred school for admission to the Reception Year. The waiting lists will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out above and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. The waiting lists will be held open until the 31 December of the intake year (December 2026), after which time they will close.

### **Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school**

Children are entitled to a full-time school place in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents/guardians can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the academic year or until the child reaches compulsory school age\*, but not beyond the beginning of the final term of the academic year. Parents/guardians can also request that their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age. This

arrangement would be made with individual primary schools after the Local Authority has allocated a place by the normal admissions round.

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school in writing, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Before deciding to delay a child's entry to school, we would recommend that parents/guardians visit the schools they are thinking of applying for. The teachers will be able to explain the provision on offer to children in the reception class, how it is tailored to meet the needs of the youngest pupils and how the needs of these pupils will continue to be met as they move up through school. They may also be able to allay any concerns parents/guardians may have about their child's readiness for school.

\*A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

### **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

In exceptional circumstances parents/guardians may seek a place for their child outside 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/guardians of a summer born child (i.e. a child born from 1 April to 31 August) may prefer not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and request that they are admitted out of their normal age group i.e. to reception rather than year 1.

If a parent/guardian wishes their child to be admitted outside their normal age group, then this must be made clear on their application to the Local Authority for a school place. Relevant information must be submitted with the application such as information about the child's academic, social and emotional development, this should include third party evidence such as medical history and the views of a medical professional and / or information from previous educational establishments or any other information the parent/guardian think is relevant.

The application will be considered by the Local Authority and /or the admissions authority of the school/schools to which the application is made (please note that the Local Authority can only make decisions for community schools. Any school which is its own Admissions Authority such as foundation schools, academies and voluntary aided schools will be responsible for their own decisions). A decision will be made as to whether the child can be admitted to that school outside the normal age group. If the school refuses to admit the child outside the normal age group relevant reasons will be provided. Parents/guardians have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at a school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school, but it is not in their preferred age group.

Parents/guardians of summer born children must apply for a reception place for their child at the usual time but must make clear on the application that they wish to admit their child outside of the normal age group, i.e. a year later, providing evidence as detailed above. The request must be made by the primary applications closing date (15 January 2026), any requests received after this date will not be considered during the main allocation process. If the request is refused, parents/guardians must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 for the September following the child's fifth birthday. If the request is agreed by the preferred school/schools, then the application for reception will be withdrawn before a place is offered. The parent/guardian must then make a new application (to the school(s) that agreed to the request), as part of the main admissions round the following year, the application will be processed as normal, and places will be allocated at schools according to the schools' oversubscription criteria.

Parents/guardians of summer born children who delayed their children's start for one year and remain one year behind, must also follow the process as above, i.e. they must apply for a Year 7 secondary school place when their child is in Year 5 as part of the main admissions round and again ask that their preferred school/schools agree to consider an application for Year 7 in the following year when the child will be in Year 6. All applications must be made within the main admissions round timetable and places will be allocated according to the schools' oversubscription criteria.

Parents/guardians should be aware that schools and admission authorities cannot be required to honour a decision made by another school or authority on admission out of the normal age group, if a place is not available at the school(s) that have agreed to the request, other schools may insist the child is admitted to the correct year group. This may also apply to children moving later in their school life from primary school to secondary school, if the child is due to move into Y7 (the first year of secondary school), the secondary school may insist the child be admitted to the correct year group according to their date of birth.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the School Admissions Team or the Head Teacher of the school(s) you may be interested in applying for.

### **Child's Home Address**

A child's home address, for the purpose of School Admissions, is considered to be the parent's or legal guardian's permanent address. If parents do not live together and your child lives for periods of time with each parent, the home address will be the one where the parent receiving the Child Benefit lives.

Proof of address may be required (see below for details of evidence which may be requested).

Parents/guardians must not give the address of child minders, grandparents or other family members or friends who may share in the care of the child.

If parents/guardians move house during the application and/or allocation process, parents/guardians must inform the School Admissions section immediately as this could have an effect on which school the child is allocated. Proof of address move will be required; two pieces of evidence must be submitted such as Child Benefit Letter, Child Tax Credit letter, Council Tax bill, tenancy agreement, solicitor's letter confirming house sale, bank and credit card statements. Due to the coordinated admissions processes, the address used for the



allocation process will be the address at the time the allocation process begins (please note, places can be finalized several weeks before offer letters/emails are released to parents/guardians, therefore if you are moving house around this time, please contact the Admissions Team for guidance or refer to the 'Primary and Secondary Education in Middlesbrough – A Guide for Parents 2026-27'. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the School Admissions Team are provided with the correct address and/or any address change details with any relevant evidence.

The Local Authority will not consider temporary addresses as being the parental address. This means that if, for example, you live in temporarily with other family members or move to temporary accommodation for any reason, the parental address will remain at the address at which you were living before the temporary move took place.

### **False and Misleading Information**

The Local Authority reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school, the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.

### **Choice Adviser**

The Local Authority has a Choice Adviser who is independent of the admissions process and will be able to offer advice to parents/guardians on the admissions process. The Choice Adviser can be contacted on 01642 201872.