Admissions Policy

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Review Frequency	

Review date	Version No.	Approved by	Date approved	Effective from
Dec 2024	1	ATB	Dec 2024	Jan 2025

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1. Introduction

ConNEct Multi Academy Trust is the Admissions Authority responsible for determining and applying this policy in the following academies in accordance with the DfE School Admissions Code:

- Consett Academy
- North Durham Academy
- Wellfield School
- Beamish Primary School
- Castleide Primary School
- Catchgate Primary School
- Pelton Community Primary School

The Trust will consider all admissions applications sent to them by the Local Authority (LA) and will apply the policy fairly and consistently to every application received. The Trust is also responsible for organising admission appeals in compliance with the School Admission Appeals Code.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at any of the Academies in the Trust;
- Set out the Trust's arrangements for allocating places to the students who apply to ensure that all Academy places are allocated and offered in an open, fair and reasonable manner;
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place.

3. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE) as amended and updated from time to time:

- School Admissions Code (2021)
- School Admission Appeals Code (2022)
- The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012

As a Trust, the academies are required by their funding agreement to comply with these codes, and with the law relating to admissions as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This policy also has due regard to the Equality Act 2010.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definitions

The normal admissions round is the period during which parents/carers can apply for state-funded school places at the school's normal point of entry, using the common application form (CAF) provided by Durham Local Authority.

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of the Local Authority;
- Being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in exercise of its social services functions.

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption and Children Act 2002; or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order; or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order.

Sibling includes:

- All natural brothers and sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and
- The child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address as the applicant.

Parent - A child's father or mother.

Step Parent - the man or woman who is married to someone's mother or father but who is not their birth father or mother.

Legal Guardian - A legal guardian is when a person (other than the child's parent or de facto custodian) has legal custody and control over a child. The guardian has the right to make all decisions concerning the child, and is legally responsible for the child.

Local Authority Foster Carer – Usually long term but not exclusively. All children and young people in foster care are the responsibility of the Local Authority in the area where the child's birth family is resident at the time of being taken into care. The key responsibility remains with that Local Authority regardless of whether they are placed in local authority foster care or with an independent fostering provider.

Private Foster Carer – Usually short term but not exclusively - The parent(s) and/or other person with parental responsibility (PR) retains PR during a private fostering arrangement. They are responsible for any decisions about the child although they may wish to delegate certain responsibilities to the private foster carer, for example giving permission for immunisations and routine health care and agreeing to the child going on an educational trip. Even where some powers are delegated, the parent or person with PR retains the final responsibility for the child's care. A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (without the involvement of a LA).

Young Carer – children and young people under 18 who provide regular or ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, disabled or misuses substances.

5. Published Admission Number (PAN)

The PAN is the number of places we intend to make available for our normal pupil admission annual intake. Once the PAN has been set for an Academy we will not refuse any applications submitted during the normal admission round for Year 7 where the PAN has not been exceeded.

However, if there is an unexpectedly high demand and the Trust believes we could admit additional children, we will inform the LA and either admit children above the agreed PAN or increase the PAN accordingly to accommodate more children.

The current PAN for academies within the Trust is:

Academy	Phase	PAN
Consett	Secondary	300
Consett	Post 16	100
North Durham	Secondary	250
Wellfield School	Secondary	196
Beamish	Primary	15
Castleside	Primary	20
Catchgate	Primary	38
Pelton Community	Primary	55

6. How to apply

To apply for a place at an Academy within the Trust, parents/carers should complete the Common Application Form (CAF). The completed CAF must be returned to the Local Authority by no later than **31 October**.

Any CAF received after that date will be classed as 'late' and will not be dealt with until all applications received on time have been through the application process.

Address

The address supplied on the CAF must be where the child and parents/carers live permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, child tax credit letter, child benefit letter, medical card, or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. *If there is joint custody for the child, then the address of the parent/carer receiving the child benefit should be used.*

Children who have:-

(1) an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan; or

(2) a statement of Special Educational Needs;

which names an Academy of the Trust as the most appropriate educational setting for the child, will be admitted in priority to all other applicants.

Oversubscription Criteria

If the Academy is oversubscribed, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in the following order of priority:

1. **Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order* including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted**. A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (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. **Medical reasons or special educational need**

   Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement.

3. **Sibling links**

   Children who have a sibling** already attending the Academy and who is expected to be on roll at the time of admission.

4. **Children of staff employed at the Academy.**

   Children of all staff employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made and/or the member of staff has been recruited to fill a post at the Academy where there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

5. **Applications to their nearest school**

   Those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route***

6. **All other applicants**

   Tiebreaker

   Where the school is oversubscribed within any of the above categories the following tiebreakers will be applied:

   a) For those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address, priority will be given to those living closest to the nearest school measured by the shortest walking route;

   b) For other children, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school applied for. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered and two applicants live equidistant from the school, the LA's system of random allocation will apply. In the unlikely event of the school being oversubscribed within categories 1, 2 or 3 tiebreaker (b) will apply.

Footnote1 : 'School' means any maintained secondary school or a DFE maintained Academy in County Durham. Distance will be measured by the shortest walking route. Those parents who live in County Durham and have children in year 6 in primary schools maintained by Durham County Council will be provided with information for them to find out which school is nearest to their home address according to the official measuring system. The same information will be provided for any other applicant on request.

* An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence 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. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under 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).

** Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, half - brothers, or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner. Some schools give priority to siblings of pupils attending another community and voluntary controlled school with which they have close links (for example, schools on the same site). Where this is the case, details will be published in the Local Authority's Admissions Brochure.

*** In assessing home to school distance, the LA uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify and measure the shortest route utilising only the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN) and Urban Paths Network (UPN) which are national recognised datasets. The LA will not include any other routes or any other method of measurement. Routes are measured from the centre point**** of the child's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point**** of the building, to the nearest school site entrance. In all cases the GIS identifies the route to be measured by connecting in a straight line the centre point**** of the child's house to the closest point on the nearest route on the ITN/UPN.

7. Notification of Places

The formal offer of a place will be issued by the LA who will write to parents/carers on the National Offer Day - being **1 March (or the next working day)** for applications for secondary school places **and 16 April (or the next working day)** for applications for primary school places.

8. Admission Waiting lists

The Trust will maintain the waiting list. Positions on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to the date any application was received or the date the applicants name was added to the waiting list. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the Academy in accordance with the Durham County Council Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence.

Unsuccessful applicants may wish to contact Strategic Data Manager, ConNEct Multi Academy Trust by email (Admissions@connectmat.org.uk) to request to be included on the waiting list.

The waiting list will be maintained until 31 December in the admission year.

Late applications

For secondary academy places, applications received after the closing date of 31 October, will be considered 'late' and may not be dealt with until all 'on time' applications have been through the application process.

For primary academy place, applications received after the closing date of 15th January, will be considered 'late' and may not be dealt with until all 'on time' applications have been through the application process

Multiple births

If children of multiple births (twins and triplets) and siblings require admission in the same year group and there is only a single place left within the PAN, the Trust will offer places above the admission limit.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if:

- It was made in error;
- Parent/carer fails to respond to the offer of a place within the agreed deadline;
- It is established that the offer of a place was obtained through fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

9. Definition of Statutory School Age for Primary Phase Children

Legally, children do not have to be in full time education until the term following their fifth birthday. This is compulsory school age. However, children are normally admitted to school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Childs Fifth Birthday	Can defer until	If deferred child will join
1 September – 31 December	January	Reception Class
1 January – 31 March	April	Reception Class
1 April – 31 March	Please see section 'Deferred entry to reception class, but if a summer born child defers entry to the following September, they would be expected to enter a Year 1 class full-time.	

Deferred entry to reception class

Where an applicant to reception is below compulsory school age the parent/carer can request:

a) That the date their child is admitted is deferred until later in the academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age; or

b) That their child takes up the place part-time until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Delayed entry to reception class

Summer born children (children born from the beginning of April to the end of August) reach compulsory school age in the September following their fifth birthday. If a parent/carer wishes for their summer born child to start school in the reception year group in the September following their fifth birthday the Trust will decide based on the circumstances of the individual case. Factors considered may include:

- In the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth.
- Whether delayed social, emotional, cognitive, or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school.
- Whether they have been previously educated outside their normal age group.

10. In-Year admissions

The Trust are responsible for managing in-year admissions, further information can be found in the Trust's In-Year Admission Policy

11. Sixth Form Admissions Policy

The Admissions Authority for Consett Academy Sixth Form admission is ConNEct Multi Academy Trust, which is responsible for determining and applying the policy. Any query regarding Consett Academy Sixth Form admissions should be directed to the Academy.

Applications for the Consett Academy Sixth Form should be made directly to the Academy. Parents/carers or students wishing to apply for a place in Consett Academy Sixth Form should telephone or email the Academy by no later than **15 February** in the year of admission.

Admission to Year 12 Consett Academy Sixth Form will be given preference from (students in Year 11 at Consett or North Durham Academies):

1. Students in Year 11 at either Consett or North Durham Academies.
2. Students in Year 11 from outside either Consett or North Durham Academies.

All students must meet the specific requirements for each course they wish to study, details of which are outlined in the prospectus and on the website.

12. Admission appeals

Parents/carers have a right to appeal against a decision of the Trust to reject an application for an Academy place.

Any appeal should be sent to the Strategic Data Manager, ConNEct Multi Academy Trust by email (Admissions@connectmat.org.uk)

Parents/carers wishing to appeal must set out their grounds for appeal in full and in writing.

The Trust is responsible for handling any appeal, which will be handled by an independent appeal panel in accordance with the DfE School Admission Appeals Code.

Any parent/carer who considers our arrangements unlawful, or not in compliance with the DfE School Admission Code or DfE School Admission Appeals Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the schools adjudicator. The schools adjudicator will consider whether the referred arrangements comply with the Code and with the law relating to admissions.

Objections must be referred to the schools adjudicator by no later than 15 May in the determination year.

13. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure: all policies are adhered to across each Academy.

The Academy Trust Board will: monitor and evaluate the policy.

Any changes to this policy will be subject to a minimum six week consultation process (to take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year) with the following groups:-

- parents/carers of children between the ages of 2 and 18 who reside in County Durham;
- other persons in County Durham who have an interest in the proposed admissions (in the opinion of ConNEct Multi Academy Trust);
- all other relevant admission authorities within County Durham; and
- the Local Authority.

Where no changes are made, a six week consultation process will take place at least every seven years with the above groups. The Trust will finalise any changes to this policy or the admission arrangements for September admissions by no later than the preceding 28 February in the determination year in question.