In-Year Admissions Policy

Policy Owner	**A. E. Pearson**
Review Frequency	**Annually**

Review date	Version No.	Approved by	Date approved	Effective from
September 2025	1	ATB	27th March 2024	1st April 2024
December 2026	2	ATB	10 December 2026	10 December 2026

Contents

	Page
Introduction	4
Links to other policies	4
Points to consider before making your application	4
Teaching and school organisation	4
Friendships	5
A Fresh start	5
Resolving present difficulties	5
Is there a best time for a child to change school?	5
Uniform	5
Transport	5
Making an application	6
Application Process	7
Allocating places	8
Infant class size legislation	8
Notification	8
Appeals procedure for in-year admissions	9

1. Introduction

The Connect Multi-Academy Trust (CONNECT MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST) is the admissions authority for the following Academies:

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

In-year admissions are those requesting a transfer from one school to another outside of the normal admission round. This policy applies to all Academies within the CONNECT MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST.

2. Links to other policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Trust policies and procedures:

- Admissions Policy
- Admission Appeal Guidance

The policies are published on the Trust and Academy websites, if you require a hard copy of a policy, please email: admissions@connectmat.org.uk

3. Points to consider before making your application

3.1 Teaching and school organisation

Each school teaches the national curriculum in different ways and different times of the academic year. It may be the case that the part of the curriculum currently being studied at one of our Academies was covered by your child's current school earlier on in the academic year. This may impact on your child's education as they may be repeating work your child has already completed. Alternatively, it could be that areas of the curriculum have been covered in our Academies but not yet covered at the current school. This means your child will completely miss some areas of the curriculum.

Older children, who transfer school after option subjects have been chosen may find that they cannot do the same subjects in one of our Academies, or the exam boards and courses are different. Parents/carers should consider the impact this may have on your child's education.

The last two years of secondary school, children prepare for their GCSE examinations. This is an extremely important time, and it is considered that changing schools at this stage should be avoided, if possible, because it may have an impact on a child's GCSE results. The same options may not be available.

Examination requirements differ from school to school and schools do not always use the same examination boards. Problems may arise in subjects involving course work that must be submitted

to examination boards by set dates. Students who have not completed essential course work may be unable to complete the examination.

3.2 Friendships

Forming friendships is an especially important aspect of school life. Children should feel happy and content at school and relationships with friends and teachers are a key part of any child's social development and educational progression. If relationships have broken down at your child's current school, you must discuss this with your child's school before deciding to transfer to another school. Problems that your child may be experiencing may not go away simply following a change of school.

3.3 A Fresh start

Sometimes a change of school can enable children, who are suffering from an unwanted reputation or a clash of personalities in their local school or community, to start again. However, this does not always happen – especially if old habits or ways of behaving or dealing with problems do not change. Sometimes the difficulties can transfer too, particularly if the previous school has not been given time to resolve the situation.

3.4 Resolving present difficulties

Sometimes a change is considered because there has been a disagreement between the parents or child and the school. There are very few differences that cannot be resolved if an issue is discussed openly and reasonably between a school and parent/carer. Parents/carers are encouraged to settle any differences with schools and only move their children to another school as a last resort.

3.5 Is there a best time for a child to change school?

If you must change school, it is generally better for a change of school to take place at the end of a term or at the end of a school year to minimise the disruption to the child's education.

3.6 Uniform

It may be necessary to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, for your child if you decide to transfer schools. It should be noted that the Trust is unable to provide any subsidy, even for low-income families, in connection with uniform costs.

3.7 Transport

The Local Authority is required by law to provide or pay for free transport for pupils who must travel more than the statutory distance to their nearest suitable school.

For pupils of primary age this distance is 2 miles and for secondary pupils this distance is 3 miles.

It is important that you do not confuse the right to express a preference for a school with an entitlement to travel assistance. If you have expressed a preference for a school which is further away from your home and the distance to this school is more than the statutory distance, you may not be entitled to travel assistance. If this is the case, you will need to think about the costs involved with getting your child from home to school and back on time and safely as this is your responsibility. For more information regarding home to school transport assistance, parents/carers should visit the Durham County Council website.

4. Making an application

If, having considered all the points listed above, you decide to apply for a school transfer; you must:

- notify the child's current school of the intention to change school; and
- contact us to request an application form.

Application forms can be requested by email at admissions@connectmat.org.uk telephone number 01207 292180 or are available to download from the Trust and Academy websites

There are separate forms for primary and secondary in-year admissions, parents/carers must ensure they complete the correct form. Sections A and B must be fully completed by the parent/carer and Section C must be completed by the child's current school. Forms that are not fully completed will be returned to the parent/carer and/or the current school, this may delay the in-year admission application process.

It is not possible to apply for a school place any further in advance than six school weeks, for example if you wish to apply for a place from the beginning of the Autumn Term, the earliest you could apply would be the beginning of June.

Parents/carers are legally required to ensure that their child maintains school attendance and therefore children should remain at their current school until a decision is made about the parental request for a change of school. If you do not ensure your child attends school and the absences are not authorised, you could be guilty of an offence and prosecuted for this offence.

Applications for an in-year admission must be completed by a person who has parental responsibility for the child. It is important that all those with parental responsibility agree to the application for the in-year transfer. If this is not the case, you should email admissions@connectmat.org.ukto inform us the details of the parent who does not agree.

You are asked to complete the form as a parent, legal guardian, Local Authority Foster Carer, Private Foster Carer or Social Worker. The following is a definition of each category:

- **Parent**: A child's 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 council 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 council regardless of whether they are placed in local authority foster care or with an independent fostering provider.
- **Private Foster Carers:** Usually short term but not exclusively. The parents 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 a school 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 one that is made privately (without the involvement of the council).
- **Social Worker:** Is a professional concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective wellbeing.

Children Formerly in Care are defined as previously Looked After Children who have ceased to be so because they have been Adopted or became subject to a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order immediately following being looked after. If your child is a child formerly in care then you must provide a copy of the Adoption Certificate, Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order at the time of application for your child to be considered under this criterion.

When completing the application, the address given MUST be your child's current address at the time of application. You MUST include the postcode so that the application can be assessed correctly. You MUST NOT give the address of childminders or other members of your family who may care for your child.

If you own more than one property, you should only state the property where you and the child actually live at or spend the most time at during the school year (such as Mondays to Fridays, term-time only). We will not consider temporary addresses as being the child's address. This means that if, for example, your child lives temporarily with other family members or moves to temporary accommodation for any reason, the child's address is the one where the child was living before the temporary move took place.

If parents are separated and the child lives for periods of time with each parent, the address used must be the property where the child is resident during the school year (such as Mondays to Fridays, term-time only). If the child lives with each parent an equal amount of time during the school year, you must either agree between each other, or if this is not possible, provide a Court Order as to which address should be considered as the main address. You are not allowed to apply for a school place from two addresses. An offer of a school place will not be made until only one home address has been agreed.

If you are applying for a place for medical reasons, please make sure that you attach supporting evidence from a professional dealing with your case, such as a doctor. The evidence must explain why the school you wish your child to attend is the only school that can meet your child's medical or social needs and what difficulties would be caused if they had to attend an alternative school. Reasons such as food allergies, asthma, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) will not be considered as exceptional medical factors as all schools are able to effectively manage these.

5. Application Process

The fully completed form must be returned to Strategic Data Manager, c/o Connect Multi-Academy Trust, Head Office, High Street, Stanley, Co Durham. DH9 0TW (email: admissions@connectmat.org.uk) **Please be aware that photographs are not acceptable and will be returned as will partially completed forms.**

If you have submitted the form via email, an email acknowledgement will automatically be generated to the sender's email address upon safe delivery to the school admissions mailbox.

If the sender does not receive an acknowledgement, there is no guarantee that the Trust has received it.

The Trust aim to reply to all in-year admission applications within 10 school days of receiving a complete application form. However, in certain circumstances some applications may take longer to process. Please be aware that applications cannot be processed during school holiday periods.

The Academy may contact parents/carers, to arrange a meeting to discuss the in-year admission request. In some circumstances, representatives from the Local Authority and the current school may also attend.

6. Allocating places

Places are offered for in-year applications on a first come first served basis. If there is one place available at a school and more than one child has applied on the same day, the school's oversubscription criteria will be applied to determine which child has the highest priority and should be offered the place. Where applicants are within the same oversubscription category, distance from home to school will be the deciding factor.

7. Infant class size legislation

Infant classes are those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year i.e., Reception and Years 1 and 2.

Infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single teacher; however, additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances including:

By law, infant classes must not have more than 30 children except for limited exceptions. This means it is exceedingly difficult to win an appeal and personal circumstances such as home to school distance, childcare arrangements, transport issues or having children at other schools are not reasons in themselves to make an appeal successful.

An appeal can only be successful if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- If the admission of the child would not increase the class size to over 30
- If the admission arrangements do not comply with the law
- If the admission arrangements were incorrectly applied
- If the decision to refuse admission was unreasonable (completely perverse and outrageous) considering the admission arrangements

If a child's circumstances meet any of the exceptions listed, then the child may be admitted to an already full/oversubscribed Reception, Year 1 or 2 class as an excepted pupil. This means that the child can be added to a class of 30 in these year groups without the requirement to take qualifying measures i.e., employment of an additional teacher.

8. Notification

You will receive written notification of the outcome of your application. The outcome is normally sent by post.

If you are offered a place the school will contact, you to make arrangements for admission. All offers are available for four school weeks only. If a child has not started by the date given in the offer letter, then the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

If the application is refused, the notification will set out the reason for refusal and information regarding the applicant's right of appeal against the decision.

A copy of the notification will also be sent to the Local Authority.

9. Appeals procedure for in-year admissions

If it has been necessary to refuse an application for in-year admission, the applicant has the statutory right of appeal against the decision not to offer a place at the preferred school.

The appeal must be made in writing, stating the child's details, and giving the reasons for appealing. Appeal forms and guidance are available from and should be submitted by email to admissions@connectmat.org.uk. Alternatively hard copies are also available please contact on telephone number 01207 292180.

Appeals are considered by an Independent School Appeals Panel and their decision is binding on the admission authority, the parent/carer, and the school.

The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel will arrange a date and time for the appeal hearing and the applicant will receive an invitation to attend along with copies of the documentation. Appeals can take up to 30 school days to arrange.

The Clerk to the Independent Appeals Panel will notify the appellant by telephone of the outcome on the day of the appeal, this will then be confirmed in writing, within 5 school days of the hearing.

If an appeal is successful, the Academy will contact parents/carers to arrange admission.

If an appeal is unsuccessful, the parent/carer is unable to appeal again in the same academic year for the same school unless there has been a material change of circumstances that the panel was not aware of at the hearing. A new appeal form would need to be submitted.

Further information about the appeals procedure can be found in the Trust's Admission Appeal Guidance which is published on the Trust and Academy websites.