Diocese of Hereford
Multi-Academy Trust

"Be Courageous, be strong, do everything in love"

Admissions Arrangements
Bitterley C E Primary Academy 2028/2029

The Trust and the Academy have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the Schools Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation.

The Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust acts as the Academy's admission authority and determines its own admission arrangements in line with the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. The Trust has devolved the responsibility for the coordination and processing of any and all applications for places at each of its schools to Shropshire Council. However, The Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust still makes **all** decisions regarding admissions of children to their schools.

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GRACE SERVICE FAMILY
A FAMILY OF SCHOOLS FLOURISHING TOGETHER

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2028/2029

At our academy, pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the academic year (1 September - 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2028. The Published Admission Number ("PAN") is 16.

When can my child start school?

Children can attend primary education from the September following their 4th birthday. The law requires that children attend school from the prescribed day[4] following their 5th birthday. Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to the school is deferred until later in the school year, or until the child reaches compulsory school age in that year. They can also request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age. However, the offer of a place cannot be held over until the next academic year.

NB: Children become of compulsory school age on the first prescribed day following their 5th birthday: 31 August, 31 December or 31 March (or on that day if any of these dates are the child's birthday).

Shropshire Council and the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust does not offer the option for a child to start primary schools before they are eligible.

Deferred Transfers

Children born from 1 April to 31 August – known as summer born children – do not need to start school until the September after their fifth birthday, a year after they could first have started school. **Most summer born children start at age 4 with no issues**.
Parents of summer born children have two options if they feel their child is not ready to start Reception with their natural cohort. These are outlined below:

Option 1 – Deferred Start

If a parent of a summer born child does start school aged 4, they can, if they wish, agree with the allocated school a pattern of part time attendance or a deferred start until later in that school year for your child. You can discuss this with the school. This will require the parent to apply on-time (by 15 January) using the application process provided by Shropshire Council. Once places are allocated on the 16 April the parent can contact the Headteacher to discuss the deferred start.

Option 2 - Delay for a full year.

If a parent decides their summer born child will start school aged 5 and wants their child to start school in reception (not Year 1), they need to make a request to the school's admission authority. This is called requesting admission out of the normal age group – because children born from 1 September in one year to 31 August the following year are normally educated together in one year group.

The parent will need to submit a form requesting a formal delay and nursery provision (in the case of Reception delays) and primary schools (in the case of Secondary delays) will need to complete forms and

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assessments and submit to Shropshire Council School Admissions Team for processing. **Delay requests ideally need to be submitted no later than the deadlines for the respective transfer groups (15 January for Reception).** We do appreciate that in extenuating circumstances, submitting such a request before the closing date does present a challenge. Should this occur, the team will do their best to process prior to the end of the academic year, though there is no guarantee of this.

If parents do not make a request for admission out of the normal age group your child will start school in year 1. Parents should consider the potential impact of missing the reception year. The admission authority makes the decision in the child's best interests. The government believes it is usually not in a child's best interests to miss the teaching that takes place during the reception year, and that it should be rare for a child to start school in Year 1.

It is important to advise a parent that, should their summer born child delay for a year, they will reach school leaving age at the end of year 10, rather than year 11. The school will not ask them to leave, but they will no longer be required by law to attend school and the school may not be able to enforce their attendance. Children usually take their GCSEs in year 11.

Children with special educational needs or a disability

Having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) does not necessarily mean a child should delay starting school. It may be better for them to start school before compulsory school age so they can access the support available there.

Parents[(i)] wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2028 must complete the common application form ("CAF"), made through the local authority in whose area you live at the time of application. The online CAF application must be submitted to that local authority no later than 15th January 2028; applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by Shropshire local authority on 16 April 2028 or the next working day, i.e. the published 'National Offer Day'.

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Over-subscription criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming Bitterley CE Academy will always be offered places. If there is then greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. 'Looked after children' [iii] or children who were previously 'looked after', but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those who appear to the admission authority, the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

2. Families who have exceptional medical[iv] or social needs that make it essential that their child attends Bitterley CE Primary Academy rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family.

3. Children of staff[ix] in either or both of the following circumstances:

   a. Where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time for which the application for admission is made

   b. The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

4. Children of service personnel[v] with a confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area.

5. Children with a normal home address (see appendix (vii)) in the catchment area and with a sibling[vi] either on the roll of the academy at the time of application, or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the academy for them and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the academy.

6. Children with a normal home address[vii] in the catchment area (See Appendix 2)

7. Children with a normal home address outside the catchment area and with a sibling either on the roll of the academy at the time of application, or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the academy and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the academy.

8. All other children.

Note: Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight-line distance between the home and the academy[viii], with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 7 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the academy will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the academy.

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In-Year Admissions

The Trust has devolved the responsibility for the coordination and processing of any and all applications for places at each of its schools to Shropshire Council. However, The Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust still makes all decisions regarding admissions of children to their schools.

Mid-term applications will be dealt with using the same admissions criteria given above. Applications must be made via the Shropshire Council online portal (Synergy - Homepage (shropshire.gov.uk) If there is a space in the relevant year group a place will be offered. A formal letter from Shropshire Council's Admissions Team will be sent to the parent on our behalf, advising them of our decision to offer a place and the need to contact school directly to arrange a start date.

If there are no vacancies in the year group, Shropshire Council's Admission Team will speak to the Headteacher to consider whether additional places can be offered. A decision must be notified to parents within 15 days of making the application.

If a place cannot be offered, parents will receive a formal letter and information on how to appeal against the decision from Shropshire Council's School Admissions Team on our behalf.

Shropshire Council will maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants. If any vacancies arise, places will be offered to applicants included on the waiting list in strict accordance with normal published oversubscription criteria. If a place can be offered the applicant will be expected to take up the place within 6 school weeks or by the start of the next half term, whichever is the earliest date, with the exception of Reception children who have deferred entry until later in the same academic year. If an offer of a place is refused, the name will be removed from the waiting list.

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Admission outside normal age group[ii]

In addition to requests from summer born children to start Reception in the September following their fifth birthday parents can also seek a place for a place for their child outside of their normal age group, e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health, or if they are gifted and talented. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus of the academy's Leadership team that to do so would be in the pupil's best interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the Headteacher in advance of applying for a place. Parents have a statutory right to appeal against a 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. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

The process for requesting such admissions is as follows;

With the application, parents should request that the child is admitted to another year group (state which one), and the reasons for that request. Parents will need to submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, headteacher etc.
Some of the evidence a parent might submit could include:

- information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional;
- whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and
- whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time.

Waiting Lists

Shropshire Council will maintain a waiting list for unsuccessful applicants on our behalf. If any vacancies arise, places will be offered to applicants included on the waiting list in strict accordance with normal published oversubscription criteria. If a place can be offered the applicant will be expected to take up the place within 6 school weeks or by the start of the next half term, whichever is the earliest date, with the exception of Reception children who have deferred entry until later in the same academic year. If an offer of a place is refused, the name will be removed from the waiting list.

The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription and does not depend on the date on which an application is received. Therefore, each time a new child is added to a waiting list will cause it to be ranked again in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria. The length of time a pupil has spent on the waiting list does not affect their ranking on it.

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Multiple births

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births), even if this meant exceeding PAN of 16 for Reception 2028/29 or where admission would prejudice the efficient education or efficient use of resources in other year groups.

Fair Access

The academy participates in the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol ("FAP"); this covers children that fall in to prescribed categories of vulnerable and/ or hard to place children, where they are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year AND it can be demonstrated that reasonable measures have been taken to secure a place through the usual in-year admission procedures. As this is a separate admissions process required by the School Admissions Code and administered by the Local Authority, where a place has been allocated under the FAP such admissions are made without reference to those on the waiting list and may necessarily take priority over them.

Appeals

Bitterley CE Primary; is required to offer all pupils refused admission the right to an appeal in front of an independent appeals panel. The Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust is **responsible** for setting up the independent appeals panel and must do so in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. The panel must be independent of the school. The Trust has arranged for Shropshire Council to administer the admissions appeals form on its behalf. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should do so via the Shropshire Council Website www.shropshire.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents must be given at least 10 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to lodge an appeal.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from School Business Manager at the admin@bitterley.dhmat.org.uk

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Appendix 1 to the Admissions Policy

(i) **"Parent"** is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person;
- a biological parent; or
- any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the academy for advice.

(ii) **Admissions outside the normal age group** - parents need to provide strong supporting evidence for seeking a place outside the normal age group at the time of application to Shropshire Admissions and should also discuss the position with the Headteacher as early as possible. However, the decision will be made by the Admission Authority taking your views and those of the Headteacher in to account as well as information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. If their request is agreed, and this should be clear before the national offer day, their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2029) for a Reception place in September 2029.

If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in September 2028 (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria above) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the summer term 2029 for a Year 1 place in September 2029. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies, as it could be full with children transferring from the 2028-2029 Reception Year group.

(iii) A Looked After 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 the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) [1]. An adoption order is an order 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)

(iv) **When applying under criterion 2** (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Bitterley CE academy. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the academy is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties

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that would be caused if your child had to attend another academy/school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, heath visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The academy reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

(v) **Children of Service Personnel;** admission authorities **must**:

- allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address.
- use the address at which the child will live when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria. This **must** include accepting a Unit postal address or quartering area address for a service child. Admission authorities **must not** refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, or reserve blocks of places for these children; This is in accordance with Paragraph 2.21 of the Schools Admissions Code.

(vi) **By the term sibling,** we mean a brother or sister, half-brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, stepbrother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the academy place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the academy, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

(vii) **By normal home address**, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child. The academy will require to see a Council Tax statement or utility bill dated within the last 3 months showing that you correctly live at this address

If parents are moving house, Shropshire Council will ask for evidence of the move on the academy's behalf, before considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel are exempt). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address, which might be considered only temporary; nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not

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normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the academy/school week. Where there is an equal split, or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous academy/school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book, which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact Shropshire Council to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the academy may seek further evidence. The academy works closely with the Local Authority to ensure that places are not obtained at the academy on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the academy is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the academy has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the academy will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the academy.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the academy/school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, that evidences the reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared, or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made and withdraw the offer of a place.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home Local Authority must be informed.

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If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address, which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

(viii) For admission purposes, all distances are measured as a straight-line distance on a computerised mapping system between home address and the nearest entrance gate of the school, by pinpointing their eastings and northings; the shortest distance will be given priority. Where two addresses are within the same block of flats, the lowest number of flat or nearest the ground floor will be deemed to be the nearest distance.

(ix) Children of staff criterion 3 applies to all staff who work on site at the school; it does not apply to contracted staff (eg: catering/cleaning/maintenance, supply teachers).

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Appendix 2 - Catchment Area Map Please see below our catchment area map, however parents can access an interactive online map for further details **- [General Map Viewer]**