Admissions Policy

26/27

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Statement of Intent

Extol Trust is the admissions authority for all mainstream schools within the Trust, the responsibility for admissions to Springwell Special School is administered by Hartlepool's Local Authority SEND Team in full consultation with the Headteacher.

The purpose of this policy is to set the arrangements about how children will be admitted to our mainstream schools, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Extol Trust welcome all pupils, and places at our schools are offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner. We work closely with the Local Authorities in which our schools are based and have agreed to adhere to their Co-ordinated Admission Schemes.

Extol Trust work to the principle that any parent accessing our admissions arrangements will be able to understand easily how places for an individual school will be allocated and will not be alienated or discouraged from applying based on admissions criteria.

Scope

This policy sets out the arrangements for admissions to our mainstream schools. It considers normal round admissions for Reception and Year 3 In New Silksworth Junior Academy. It also details procedures for in-year admissions from Reception to Year 6 that come within the statutory guidance in the School Admissions Code. There are separate documents setting out the admissions arrangements for each school's nursery offer and Springwell School's Admissions and Transfers Policy.

When formulating the school's admission arrangements, the Trust Board will not:

- Place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements.
- Give priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in their application.
- Introduce any new selection by ability.
- Give priority to children based on any practical or financial support their parents give to the school or associated parties, including any affiliated religious organisation.
- Give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial or educational status of parents applying – apart from where these factors determine a child's pupil premium eligibility, and for children whose parents work at school.
- Take account of reports from previous schools about children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other children in the family. Discriminate against any protected characteristic.
- Give priority based on a child's or their parents' past or present hobbies or activities.

Equal Opportunities

The Trust Board will not establish admissions criteria that excludes individuals with a particular protected characteristic. The admissions criteria will not exclude a greater proportion of pupils with particular protected characteristics, unless the Trust Board can justify how this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Fair Access Protocol

We participate in individual Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2023) 'School Admission Appeals Code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Co-ordinated admission policy of each LA

This policy complies with our funding agreement and Articles of Association.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance when carrying out the overall admission of pupils into the school.
- Overseeing, and determining annually, admissions arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applicants than places at the school.
- Ensuring that oversubscription criteria does not discriminate against any child.
- Ensuring that the practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective.
- Publishing the admissions arrangements on the school website, including the oversubscription criteria.
- Publicly consulting on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements.
- Clearly communicating any reasons for rejecting the admission of a pupil, as well as the parent's right to appeal and the appeal process.
- Implementing any advice or recommendations given by the Schools Adjudicator without undue delay.

The Local Authority in which schools are situated are responsible for;

- Each Local Authority is required to have a scheme in place each year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools and academies within their area. Our policy is designed to be compatible with these schemes.

The Schools Adjudicator is responsible for:

- Acting in line with the relevant legislation and guidance pertaining to admissions.
- Receiving concerns and objections regarding the admission of pupils and making recommendations to the admission authority as a result of these concerns and objections.
- Approving variations to determined admissions arrangements where there has been a major change in circumstances or law.

The Appeals Clerk is responsible for:

- Having an in-depth knowledge of the relevant appeals codes and other relevant law.
- Providing an independent and impartial service for admission appeals.
- Making the necessary administrative arrangements for hearings.
- Notifying all parties of the order of proceedings in advance of an appeals hearing.
- Responding to queries from appellants in advance of an appeals hearing or identifying who will be appropriate to respond.
- Being an independent source of advice on procedure and admissions law.
- Keeping accurate records of proceedings and providing written notification of the appeals panel's decisions

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Trust Board where relevant regarding admitting pupils to the school.
- Working with the Trust Board when determining the school's capacity.
- Ensuring that the Trust Board has all the information it needs to set admissions arrangements and participate in LA co-ordination schemes.
- Planning for pupils admitted through in-year admissions to start as soon as possible.

Determining a Published Admission Number PAN

The Trust Board will determine after discussion with individual LGB,s the PAN for each school within the Trust. The PAN for each school in Extol Trust are currently as follows:

Name of School	Published Admission Number PAN
Clavering Primary School	60
Eldon Grove Academy	75
New Silksworth Infant Academy	70
New Silksworth Junior Academy	70
Roseberry Primary School	60
Rossmere Academy	55
Thorntree Academy	60
Springwell School	Not applicable

The Trust Board will publish individual school PAN annually. The Trust Board will consult on any proposal to decrease/increase the school's PAN and submit a "significant change application" to the Regional Department for Education (DfE) Directors. The Trust Board will notify the LA of any increases/decreases to the agreed PANs and will reference the changes on the individual school's website.

If the Trust Board decides that it can accept more pupils than laid out in its PAN, it will notify the LA in good time so that the LA can deliver its coordination responsibilities effectively

In line with statutory requirements, the Trust Board will not refuse admission to any age group, other than the relevant age groups, on the grounds that the number of children admitted has already reached the PAN; however, the Trust Board may refuse admission on the grounds that the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Applications

4.1 Admissions Procedures

As highlighted Extol Trust has agreed that our schools are aligned with the LA's Co-ordinated Admission Schemes in the authority they are based. As such, parents should view admission procedure and timeline on links highlighted below.

Name of school	Which LA Co-ordinated Admission does the school adhere to?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging/ providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at the school?
Clavering, Eldon Grove and Rossmere Academy	**Hartlepool Local Authority** Full details School admission arrangements | School admission arrangements | Hartlepool Borough Council	Schools Adjudicator *Office of Schools Adjudicator* *Bishopsgate House* *Feethams* *Darlington* *DL1 5QE* *Tel: 01325 340402* *Email: osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk*	Extol Trust
New Silksworth Infant Academy	**Sunderland Local Authority** Full details School admissions - Sunderland City Council		
New Silksworth Junior Academy			
Roseberry Primary School	**Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council** School admissions - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council		
Thorntree Academy	**Middlesbrough Local Authority** Middlesbrough agreed school admission arrangements		

Springwell Special School	**Hartlepool Local Authority**		HBC

4.2 Applications in Normal Admission Round

Parents will be provided by the LA with a common application form (CAF) or access to an online portal to apply.

Parents will note their three preferred schools, along with a brief explanation, in rank order.

Parents will provide LAs with the following information within the CAF:

- Their name and their child's name and date of birth
- Their and their child's address and proof of residence

The CAF will be submitted to the parents' LA. Parents are not guaranteed to have their preferences met. Closing date 15th January 2026

The Trust Board will request supplementary information for the purpose of processing applications, where necessary; however, it will not request any of the following:

- Any personal details, including information on criminal convictions or financial status
- The first language of the parent or child
- Details about the parents' or child's disability, medical or SEND requirements
- Any parental agreement to follow the ethos of the school in a practical way
- For the child to complete any part of the form or for two parents to provide signatures

Once a place has been offered, the Trust Board may ask for the child's short birth certificate as proof of birth date.

Our schools will never give priority to applications solely on the basis that they have completed a supplementary form.

For previously looked after children (PLAC) and LAC, the Trust Board will request a copy of the adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order, and a letter from the LA confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the order being made.

The Trust may request evidence that demonstrates a child was in state care outside of England prior to being adopted.

4.3 Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group if they feel their child is not ready to start school with their peers, for example because the child has suffered ill health.

In addition, the parents of a summer born child (born between 1 April and 31 August) may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than year 1.

Requests must be submitted in writing to the Local Authority and include supporting reasons for the request plus any supporting evidence from relevant professionals. If parents of summer born children wish their child to be admitted to the reception year in the term following their fifth birthday, rather than year 1, then parents should submit a written request providing reasons for seeking a place outside of the normal age group and any supporting evidence from relevant professionals.

Requests must be submitted before the closing date for reception applications in the child's normal age group in good time for the local authority to notify the Trust, and for the committee to consider the request and inform the parent of the outcome before the closing date for the normal age group. In other words, for children due to be admitted to reception in September 2026 where the parent wishes the child to delay admission to reception until 2027, written requests must be submitted well before the deadline of 15 January 2026.

The Trust will make decisions based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of

- the parent's views;
- 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;
- whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely;
- the views of the Headteacher.

If a request relating to a summer born child is agreed, the parent's application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered and they should reapply through the normal admissions round for a reception place in the following year. If the request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any offer of a place in the current academic year (which will still be subject to the oversubscription criteria in this policy) or to withdraw their application and apply for a year 1 place the following year. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full of admitted pupils transferring from the previous reception year group. A parent's right to appeal set out below does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group.

Allocation of Places

5.1 Oversubscription Criteria

The Trust Board aims to ensure that oversubscription criteria is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and compliant with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. This means that the oversubscription criteria will not unfairly disadvantage, whether directly or indirectly, any child based on a protected characteristic or economic disadvantage.

If the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Statement or Plan, the over-subscription criteria for the school / academy will be applied as follows;

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 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. Children with brothers or sisters who are already at the school.

3. Children whose main residence is within the catchment area of a school.

4. Children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants

5. Proximity to the school.

Please note

Note 1. Relevant evidence must be provided such as 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. In addition to the criteria above, New Silksworth Junior School has an additional criterion at point 3 : Attendance at New Silksworth Infant Academy (KS1)

Note 3: Where two applications cannot otherwise be separated, the Trust will follow a fair, clear and effective 'tie-breaker' procedure by allocating the place to the pupil who lives closest to school.

Definitions

Looked After Children: The definition of a 'looked after child' is a person under the age of 18 who is provided with accommodation by a local authority, acting in its social services capacity, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, by agreement with the parents or in accordance with section 22 of the Children's Act 1989. Previously looked after refers to those children who immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order (under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014), or specialist guardianship order (under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989). Children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements (respite care) are excluded.

Rules for Siblings Those children who have brothers or sisters who will be attending the school in the following September. Included in this factor are stepbrothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters living at the same address and who will be attending the school at the expected time of admission. 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.

Rules for Residence We have the right to investigate whether you live at the address you say you do, and we may change any offer if incorrect information has been given.

Rules for Those Pupils who are Distinguished from the Great Majority of Other Applicants Those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school. Medical Grounds/Exceptional Circumstances. A panel of specialist officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this criterion. If you think your child has a particular medical or social need to go to a certain school, you must provide supporting evidence from a doctor, psychologist or other professional involved with your child. The supporting evidence must relate specifically to the school you are claiming medical grounds/exceptional circumstances for and clearly demonstrate why it is only that school that can meet your child's needs in a way that no other school can.

If you are applying online for a place under this criterion, please send your supporting evidence to the Admissions Team in the by the closing date, which should include your child's name and date of birth. NB: Exceptional social reasons do not, in the view of the Trust, include domestic inconvenience arising from parents' work patterns, child-minding problems, separation from particular nursery/primary school friends. Problems of this kind are widespread and cannot be classed as exceptional. Medical reasons do not include temporary conditions. They are permanent medical conditions which require special treatment available at the preferred school only. Medical evidence must be provided, and the Trust must be satisfied that the child would suffer to a significant degree if he/she went to any other school.

Proximity to the School Those children who live closest to the school as determined by a 'straight line' distance measurement; from the (ordnance survey) address point for the child's home to the (ordnance survey) address point of the school.

Tie Breaker If more children qualify under a particular criterion than there are places available, priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school (as described under criteria 5).

5.2 Offers

All offers will be made on National Offer Day, i.e. 16 April 2026 or the next working day where this date falls on a weekend or bank holiday.

Where the school is oversubscribed, the Trust Board will rank applications in accordance with the determined arrangements, and will ensure that only one offer will be made per child by the LA.

5.3 Withdrawing an offer

An offer will only be withdrawn if it has been made in error, a parent has not responded within 20 working days, or if the offer was made via a fraudulent or misleading application. Where an offer has not been responded to within the designated time frame, the trust board will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and will explain that the offer will be withdrawn if they do not. If any application is found to be fraudulent after a child has started at the school in the first term of the new academic year, the school may withdraw the place. If the fraudulent application is found after this time, the pupil will not be removed.

6. In-year admissions

Ours schools will follow the same process for in-year admissions as for admissions at the start of the academic year.

The Trust Board will publish in-year arrangements on the school website by 31 August each year, detailing how applications will be dealt with between 1 September until the following 31 August. These arrangements will set out how parents can apply for a school place, including whether the Trust Board will handle applications or whether the LA will accept these applications on its behalf.

Where the school has places available in 2026, it will offer a place to every child who has applied for one without condition or use of oversubscription criteria, unless to do so would be to prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources.

The published in-year admissions arrangements will also provide a suitable application form for parents to complete, including a supplementary information form, where necessary, and set out when parents will be notified of the outcome of their application and details about the right to appeal.

The school will consider all such applications and if the year group applied for has space available, then a place will be offered. If a place is not available, then the child's parent can ask for their child's name to be added to the appropriate waiting list. As with admissions at the start of the academic year, parents whose applications are turned down are entitled to appeal through the process outlined below.

The school will notify all parents within 15 school days of receipt of an in-year application of the outcome of this application. The school will notify the LA of every application and its outcome within two school days or as soon as is reasonably practicable beyond this.

Where an offer is accepted, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to start as soon as possible.

7. Waiting List

For admissions at the start of the academic year, the school will operate a waiting list which is maintained until 31 December on year of entry. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order set out in the oversubscription criteria. When additional children are placed on the waiting list, the list will be re-ordered in line with the oversubscription criteria – no pupil will be prioritised based on when their name was added to the list.

The Trust Board will make clear in the admissions arrangements the process for requesting admission outside of the normal age group for the admissions round.

Parents may request that their child is placed on the waiting list if they are not successful in receiving a place. Where a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

For in-year admissions, if there is a waiting list for that year, the child will be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available, or the child finds a new school setting. The list will set out the priority for places in the same order as admissions at the start of the year – when a place becomes available, it will be offered to the parents of the child at the top of the list.

If a child on the waiting list is offered a position at the school, the parents will be notified by letter and will have the option of accepting or rejecting the place within 28 days.

8. Consultation, determination and publication

8.1 Consultation

The Trust Board will consult on any proposed changes to the admissions arrangements. Consultation will last for a minimum of six weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. The Trust Board will consult on admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if no changes have been made in that time.

The Trust Board will consult with the following:

- Parents of children between the ages of two and 18
- Stakeholders
- Other admission authorities within the relevant area
- The LA
- Any LAs in which pupils have historically come from

8.2 Determination and Publication of Admissions Arrangements

The Trust Board will publish a copy of the full proposed admission arrangements and the contact details of the individual responsible for admissions liaison on the school website. A copy of the proposed admission arrangements will be made available upon request.

Admission arrangements will be determined by 28 February in the determination year on an annual basis, even when no changes to the arrangements have been made.

The Trust Board will notify all appropriate bodies of the finalised admissions arrangements when they have been determined. A copy of the finalised admission arrangements will be sent to the LA for entry by 15 March in the determination year. Finalised admission arrangements will also be published on the school website by 15 March in the determination year and will continue to display them for the whole offer year.

Any objections to the admission arrangements will be directed to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.

8.3 Variations

The Trust Board will not revise the admissions arrangements for a school year once they have been determined, unless this would be necessary to give effect to a mandatory requirement, a determination of the Schools Adjudicator, or any misprint in the admission arrangements.

The Trust Board may, in exceptional circumstances, propose variations where there have been major changes in circumstances that necessitate a change.

Any proposals to vary the admissions arrangements will be referred to the Secretary of State.

9. LA in-year coordination scheme

The school will inform the LA by 1 August of whether it will participate in the LA's in-year coordination scheme and will send any relevant information for the LA to publish on its website.

Where the school is participating in the LA coordination scheme, the school will provide the LA with details of the number of places available no later than two school days following the request of such information from the LA. The school will also provide information to parents about how they can find details on the relevant scheme.

10. Appeals

10.1 Appeal Process

When informing a parent of their unsuccessful admissions application, The Trust will send written notification of their decision. This will include:

- The reason why admission was refused.
- Information about the right to appeal.
- The deadline for lodging an appeal.
- Contact details for making an appeal.

Parents will be informed in the letter that, if they wish to appeal, they must make the appeal in writing. Grounds for appeal are not limited.

10.2 Admission Appeals

The Trust Board will publish an appeals timetable on their website by 28 February each year. The timetable will comply with section three of the 'School Admission Appeals Code' the 'School Admissions Code', other law relating to admissions, and relevant human rights and equalities legislation, for example, the 'Equality Act 2010'.

Timetable.

The Trust Board will set a timetable for organising and hearing appeals that:

- Includes a deadline for lodging appeals which allows appellants at least **20 school days** from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal.
- Ensures that appellants receive at least **10 school days'** notice of their appeal hearing.
- Includes reasonable deadlines for appellants to submit additional evidence, for admission authorities to submit their evidence, and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and parties.
- Ensures that decision letters are sent within **5 school days** of the hearing wherever possible.

The Trust Board will ensure that appeals lodged by the appropriate deadlines are heard within the following timescales:

- For applications made in the normal admissions round, appeals will be heard within **40 school days** of the deadline for lodging appeals

- For late applications, appeals will be heard within **40 school days** from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within **30 school days** of the appeal being lodged.
- for applications for in-year admissions, appeals will be heard within **30 school days** of the appeal being lodged.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board on an annual basis. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and other interested parties.