



ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025- 26

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NORTHBOURNE SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26

Northbourne CE Primary School
Cockcroft Road,
Didcot
OX11 8LJ

Admissions Policy 2025-26

At Northbourne CE Primary School we strive to nurture excellence, through:

- Igniting a love of learning and educating all children to excel as individuals
- Promoting responsible and compassionate global and local citizenship
- Developing and nurturing self-aware, resilient and healthy children.

We realise our vision through our four core values of **love, community, integrity and perseverance**, which are rooted in the life story of St. Peter. Through overcoming the challenges he faced on his spiritual and personal journey, he became the rock on which Jesus built the church.

As an inclusive school, we welcome applications from all members of the community; from Christian families, those of other faiths and those of no faith.

This policy applies to the academic year 2025-26, and governors have made every effort to ensure these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities. The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) is the admissions authority for Northbourne CE Primary School, and this policy is formally determined by ODST.

Parents who wish their child to attend Northbourne are very welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through a member of our office team.

Admission arrangements to the Reception Year in September 2025

At Northbourne, pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1st September – 31st August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2025. There are 45 places available. Our policy is not to offer admission in September 2025 to children born on or after 1st September 2021.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2025 and 31 March 2026 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child (provided it is taken up during the school year 2026-27), although, in the majority of cases, we find that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1st April 2026 and 31st August 2027 (summer-born children) who do not reach compulsory school age until September 2026, parents who do not wish them to start school in school year 2026-27, but to be admitted to the Reception year in September 2026 for school year 2026-27, should proceed as follows. They should apply at the usual time for a space in September 2025 together with a written request that the child is admitted outside his or her normal age group to the Reception year in 2026. Parents would need to provide supporting reasons for seeking a place outside the normal age group and should discuss the position with the headteacher as early as possible. The school will consider the request carefully and if it is agreed this should be clear before the national offer day (16th April 2025), as their application for the normal

year group will need to be withdrawn before this space is offered. They should then reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2025) for a Reception Year place in September 2025. If the request is refused the parents must decide whether to wait for any other offer of a place in September 2025 (which will still be made in line with the over-subscription criteria below) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the summer term 2026 for a Y1 place in September 2026. Parents should be aware that the Y1 group may have no vacancies as it could be full with children transferring in the 2026-27 Reception year group. Agreement by the school in 2025 to defer does not guarantee a place in September 2026 – the normal over-subscription criteria apply.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, parents may also request that s/he attends part-time. Such arrangements should be discussed with the headteacher following allocation of places through the Local Authority. Generally, we find it beneficial for children – socially, emotionally and academically - to start school full-time as quickly as possible after the start of the school year.

Parents (note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2025 must complete the common application form provided by their home Local Authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to the LA no later than 15th January 2025. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered *after* those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on 16th April 2025.

Over-subscription criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan naming Northbourne School will always be offered places. If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is then greater demand for admissions than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted (see note 2);
2. Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attend Northbourne School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family (see note 3).
3. Children with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school (note 4).
4. Children whose normal home address is in the designated area of the whole of Didcot (note 5).
5. Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 5 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school 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 school.

All other admissions

Admissions to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. All year groups at the school have 45 places. Applications must be made directly to the Local Authority on a form available from school or through Oxfordshire County Council Admissions Team. Admissions outside the normal age group will be dealt with as indicated below. If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than the Reception year will only be considered by the Governing Body up to half a term [using the three term year] in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break. **Please note that the school does not have a normal point of entry to Y3 – applications for entry at the beginning of Y3 are treated as outlined in this section.**

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, 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 which 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 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.

Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, for example, related to those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the headteacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors will ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. 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.

Waiting lists

The Local Authority maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, where parents ask for their child's name to be added to 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. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. Oxfordshire County Council periodically seeks confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the waiting list.

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 children in the case of multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number of 45 for Reception 2026-27 or 45 places in other year groups.

Fair access

The school participates in Oxfordshire Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

Appeals

There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It should be noted that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same school year (1st September – 31st August) unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from our school office at Cockcroft Road, Didcot OX11 8LJ, (01235) 817744, or from office.3852@northbourne.oxon.sch.uk

Notes

Note 1

“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, or
- Any person who has care of the child or young person

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school.

Note 2

By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A ‘child arrangements order’ is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A ‘special guardianship order’ is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Note 3

When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical and social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Northbourne School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child has to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker etc who is aware of our child’s or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 4

By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent / carer’s partner where the child for whom the school 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 school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 5

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.

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 school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgement 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 residence
- The period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- Confirmation from any previous 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 content insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school 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 school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the Local Authority to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (for example a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card, if there are 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. Childcare arrangements are not sufficient reason for listing another address.

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.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when 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.

We define 'the whole of Didcot' as an address including Didcot, as supplied to us by Oxfordshire County Council from the Royal Mail information used for school admissions.

Note 6

The straight line distance used to determine proximity of the home to the school will be measured by Oxfordshire Local Authority's Geographical Information System, as described in Oxfordshire's Starting School booklet. This uses a straight line as measure. The start point of the measurement will be the geographical placement of the address (address point using the Easting/Northing British Coordinate system) as available to Oxfordshire County Council from information compiled from Royal Mail and/or district or city councils. This placement is accurate to 10 centimeters. The end point of the measurement will be determined by the Admissions Authority of the school and provided to the LA. The calculation of the distance will be made in metres using a Pythagoras calculation. This calculation will be converted into miles by dividing the distance by 1609.344 to achieve a distance in miles accurate to three decimal places.