Admissions Policy

Aims and Ethos

The Free School Norwich is a state funded Free School open to all primary aged children. The school welcomes children of all abilities, faiths, social and cultural backgrounds.

The Free School Norwich mission is to:

- Enable all children to belong in our community, do their best and thrive to achieve personally, socially and academically.
- Provide a truly broad and balanced primary school education for all children with opportunities for everyone, preparing them for later life.
- Enable all members of the school to be and feel safe. They learn to keep safe.

The ethos of the school is "Strive, Thrive, Achieve".

The school operates no catchment area to enable any child to apply for a place, regardless of where they live.

The school complies with the Schools Admissions Code 2021 and the Schools Admissions Appeals Code 2022.

Published Admission Number

The Board of Trustees has responsibility for admissions to the school and admits 28 pupils into each year group.

How to Apply

Prospective parents/guardians of children entering in Reception should submit applications to Norfolk County Council Schools Admissions online by the January admissions deadline in the year in which their child is due to start school.

Norfolk County Council and the Principal work together to consider applications for places in EYFS. Parents/guardians will be informed of the outcome of their application in April by Norfolk County Council and the school.

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by Norfolk County Council and advised of their right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Oversubscription criteria

At any time where there are more applications than the number of places available, places will be offered in the following order priority:

1. Children with an EHCP naming the school;
2. Previously looked after children or children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subjected to a residence order or special guardianship order (PLAC);
3. Children who are due to start school and who have a sibling attending the school at the time of their admission; Siblings include step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address;
4. Children of staff at the school. Where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage;
5. All other children who have applied for a place.

Where the offer of places to all the applicants in any of the categories listed above would still lead to oversubscription, the remaining places in that category will be determined by random allocation. This will be conducted by The Free School Norwich in the presence of an independent person.

Deferred entry for children in EYFS

Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have a right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take a place up part-time, until the child has reached compulsory school age. Places cannot be deferred beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Children reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31st August, 31st December and 31st March.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents may request that their child is admitted to a year group outside their normal age range, for instance where the child is gifted or talented or where a child has suffered from particular social or medical issues impacting their schooling. All such requests will be considered on their merits and either agreed or refused, on that basis.

If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group. The process for requesting such an admission 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 submit any evidence in support of their case with the application, for instance from a medical practitioner, head teacher 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.

The school will consider each case on its merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the request and the child's best interests. We will also ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before final offers are made and the reason for any refusal. Requests for admission out of the normal year group will be considered alongside other applications made at the same time.

In year applications (applications for admission to the academy outside the normal admissions round)

The Free School Norwich will consider all such applications and, if the year group applied for has a space available, admit the child unless one of the permitted reliefs apply. If more applications are received than there are places available, the oversubscription criteria shall apply

Waiting Pool

The Free School Norwich operates a waiting pool for places in all year groups. If a place at the school becomes available, it is allocated in accordance with the above oversubscription rules. Names are kept in the waiting pool for a period of one year.

Applications for places in all year groups, including transfers into EYFS after January 1st, should be submitted to The Free School Norwich on the waiting list application form.

The school also accepts in year transfer applications that come through Norfolk County Council Admissions.

Admission Appeals

The Free School Norwich complies with the Schools Admission Appeals Code. Appeals for places in the case of oversubscription are heard by an independent Admissions Appeals Panel.

Additional information

If false or misleading information is used to gain entry to the school, the offer of a place may be withdrawn. Following an offer of a place proof of the child's date of birth will need to be provided.

Principal: Darren Webster
Chair of Trustees: Julia Virgoe
Policy approved: January 2026
Policy Review Date: January 2027

Appendix 1:

Waiting List Application Form

From time to time, places become available at The Free School Norwich during the school year and for this reason the school operates waiting lists for all classes. Should a place become available at any time, it is offered by random allocation to an applicant on the waiting list.

If you would like to place your child's name on the waiting list for a place at the school, please complete and return this Waiting List Application Form to the school office. You will be contacted by telephone should a place become available to you.

Child's First Name:

Child's Surname:

Male/Female:

Parent Name(s):

Child's Date of Birth:

Home Address:

Telephone Number:

Mobile Number:

Email Address:

Child's Current School (if applicable):

Special Educational Needs (if applicable):

Special Medical Needs (if applicable):

Any Other Information:

Does your child have a sibling currently attending the Free School Norwich? YES/NO

If YES name of sibling:

Appendix 2: Appeal Process

Admission Appeals

If you are refused a place at The Free School Norwich you have the right to appeal to an independent review panel.

How to appeal

Download the Admissions Appeal form (Appendix 3) or contact the school and ask for a copy of the form.

Complete and return the form, with any additional supporting information, within 20 school days from the date of notification that your application was unsuccessful.

When the appeal hearing will take place

Appeal hearings will be organised by the Board of Trustees on behalf of The Free School Norwich and will include volunteers who are independent of the school.

For first admissions, the appeal hearing will take place within 40 school days after the final date for lodging appeals.

If you applied to change schools during the school year and the application was refused, the appeal hearing will take place within 30 school days of the date you lodged your appeal.

Before the appeal hearing

You will receive a written summary of the case for refusing your child a place before the hearing.

The Board of Trustees will tell you when and where the appeal will be heard 14 days before the hearing.

Your appeal will be heard in private. You can bring a friend, relative or representative if you would like to. You can also decide whether to bring your child to the hearing or not.

You should try to come to the hearing in person, but the panel will consider a written appeal case if you decide not to attend.

The appeal hearing

Hearings can be in person, by telephone, video conference or in writing.

At the hearing there are usually three panel members who make the decision. The panel members are volunteers and are independent of the school and the local authority.

There will also be a clerk who will record the proceedings and advise on law and procedure.

The school will be represented by a presenting officer who will give the reasons for refusing your child a place.

The panel will firstly decide whether the admission authority (The Free School Norwich) has shown why it cannot admit more children. If they agree that the case has been made, they will then consider all the points you have made. You will be given the opportunity to explain to the panel why you want your child to go to the school.

The panel's decision is based on balancing the needs of your child against the effect of admitting another child to the school.

After the hearing

Wherever possible you will be informed of the decision by email by the next working day. You will also be sent a letter within seven days explaining the decision and reasons for it.

Decisions of the appeal panel are binding on both the parents and the school.

You have no further right of appeal in the same academic year unless there is a significant change in circumstances. This would include circumstances such as a new medical problem where this was not known about and considered at the original appeal hearing.

If your appeal is unsuccessful, you may decide you want to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Read more about how to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Appeals Timetable 2024-2025	
Appeals closing date	Tuesday 26th May 2026
Appeals hearings	June/July 2026

Further Information

DfE School admissions appeal code

Appendix 3: Admission Appeal Form

Admission Appeal Form **(Please Print in capital letters)**	
Child's name:	
Child's date of birth:	
Parent/Carer Name:	
Relationship to the child:	
Current home address:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Current school details:	
Reason for appeal: you must complete this section giving full reasons for your appeal (continue on a separate sheet if necessary). Attach any additional paperwork securely.	

Attendance at the appeal hearing (please tick one):	• I will be attending the appeal hearing ☐ • I will not be able to attend the appeal hearing but someone will attend on my behalf ☐ • I will not be able to attend the appeal hearing and understand that the panel will base its decision on my written reasons and evidence ☐
Parental declaration (MUST be completed) I understand that the Inspiration Trust is not responsible for forms lost in the post. I also confirm that the information I have given on this form is true and that I am a parent/carer of this child as defined under section 576 of the Education Act 1996.	
Parent/ Carer's signature:	**Date:**

Please send this form to (we strongly suggest you get proof of posting):

The Free School Norwich,

Kings House,

Surrey Street,

Norwich,

Norfolk,

NR1 3NX

Forms can also be emailed to: office@freeschoolnorwich.org.uk