

# STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION RULES AND ARRANGEMENTS

## RECEPTION TO YEAR 6

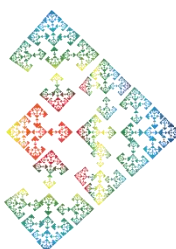
**2026 – 2027**

*Everybody; Every moment; Every idea counts!*



**Ridgeway  
Education  
Trust**

Excellence Through  
Partnership



Date of last consultation of admission arrangements:  
Determined by Trust Board:  
Date for next review:

January 2025  
10th December 2024  
December 2025

## Introduction

Stephen Freeman Primary School is an academy. [Ridgeway Education Trust \(RET\)](#) is the admissions authority and is responsible for admissions decisions. The Trust and the school's Governors will work closely with Oxfordshire County Council and will use the Council as their agent for the processing of applications for places.

This admissions policy meets all lawful requirements including those set out in the following Acts, Codes, policies and relevant case law:

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [School Standards & Framework Act 1998](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [School Admission Code 2021](#)
- [Oxfordshire County Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme](#)

School Admissions Appeals will be conducted under arrangements set out in:

- [School Standards & Framework Act 1998](#)
- [School Admissions Appeals Code 2012](#)

## Admission Number

The admission number for entry to Reception year group each academic year will be 60.

### **Coordination of admissions for the normal admissions round (Entry to Reception year group each September)**

Stephen Freeman Primary School is part of the coordinated admission process for Oxfordshire for children starting school for the first time in the Reception year group each year.

Children can start school for the first time in the Reception year group in the academic year after their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and must start school in the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Applications must be made by 15 January of the academic year in which their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday falls. Applications made after this date will be considered to have been made late. Applications can be made online by using the link on Oxfordshire County Council's website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions)

Notification will be sent by second-class post on 16 April of the academic year in which the application was made (or next working day) for applications received by 15 January. Online applicants will also receive notification by email.

Late applications received after 15 January but by the closing date for late applications published in Oxfordshire County Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme will be treated as late applications. Notifications for late applications will be sent by second-

class post on the date published in Oxfordshire County Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme (mid-June of the application year).

Late applications or changes of preference received after the late closing date for applications published in Oxfordshire County Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme will not be processed until after the response date for late applications (late-June of the application year).

[The full scheme is published on Oxfordshire County Council's public website.](#)

### **Admission outside normal age groups**

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances and a decision made based on what is in the pupil's best interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governing board may ask relevant professionals for their opinion. 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.

### **In-Year Admissions (Reception year group to Year 6)**

Stephen Freeman Primary School is part of the coordinated in-year admissions process for Oxfordshire.

Applications for entry to other year groups at the school (Reception year group to Year 6) to start during the academic year, can be made at any time. Applications for entry to other year groups each September can be made no earlier than the first day of the second-half of the Summer Term (June each year).

Applications can be made via Oxfordshire County Council's website:

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransfer](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransfer)

5pm on each Thursday during term-time will be treated as a closing date for applications for that week, although a different time-scale may operate during the late summer term.

Applications received by each "closing date" will be considered during the following 10 school days. In most cases the admissions authority would aim to respond to applications by the Thursday, 10 school days after the "closing date".

The last date for which an application can be accepted for immediate entry during each academic year will be the last Thursday in June of that academic year.

It is possible to apply in advance of an intended start date. However, in-year applications can be made no more than six weeks before the requested entry date if this is not the beginning of a school term or half-term or from the beginning of the half-term prior to the requested start date (at the earliest).

Usually, places will be offered if there are places available in the year group (the number of children in the year group is less than the published Admission Number for the school). Where the Admission Number has changed since that particular year group joined the school, the previous Admission Number may be used. Sometimes, it will not be possible to offer places even though there are fewer children in the year group than the Admission Number because the school has had to organise in such a way that the admission of a further pupil would cause prejudice to the efficient education of the children already there.

If there are no places available in the appropriate year group, no applicants will be offered a place.

If a place is available in the appropriate year group but there are more applications for places than places available, the over-subscription criteria (below) will be applied and the child(ren) with the highest priority under the rules will be offered place(s).

When a place is offered, a child is expected to start as soon as possible, unless the place has been offered during the previous term for a start at the beginning of the following term. In this latter case, the child is expected to start no later than the beginning of the term requested.

[The full scheme is published on Oxfordshire County Council's public website.](#)

## **Admission Criteria**

Even if a child already attends the nursery class at the school, a new application must be made to start the Reception year group.

In accordance with legal requirements, children who have an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan<sup>1</sup> naming the school will always be admitted.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is 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 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.
2. Children of a member of staff who is employed by Ridgeway Education Trust where the member of staff has been employed by 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. The member of staff must have parental responsibility (sole or shared) for the child.

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<sup>1</sup> An Education, Health and Care plan is a plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision required for that child.  
***This is therefore not an oversubscription criterion.***

3. Children who have a sibling on roll at the school at the time of application who are expected to still be attending Stephen Freem Primary School at the time of entry. However, if there are more applicants than places, priority will be given within this group to those children who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by Oxfordshire County Council.
4. Children who live in the designated (catchment) area.
5. All other children.

In all categories, 1-5, above, priority will be given to children who are eligible for Service Pupil Premium and then to children who live closest to the school by the straight-line distance as calculated by Oxfordshire County Council.

### **Looked-after children and previously looked-after children**

A 'looked-after child' is one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its functions. 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 (eg a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). A 'looked-after child' includes any child who appears to have 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.

### **Designated (Catchment) Areas**

These can be viewed on the Oxfordshire public website. Living within a particular school's designated area gives a high priority for admission but there is no guarantee that a place will always be made available. There is also no guarantee that free transport will be provided to the designated (catchment) area school if it is not the closest or nearest available school.

## Siblings

'Sibling' means a natural brother or sister, half-brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/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.

## Twins and Children from Multiple Births

Where the parent has made the same preferences of school and, through the normal operation of the admission arrangements, the last available place at a school has been allocated to one twin, or child from a multiple birth, the other twin, or the other children from the multiple birth, will be offered a place at that school. This means that, in these circumstances, the Published Admission Number would be exceeded.

## Measuring distances from home to school (the straight-line distance calculated by Oxfordshire County Council)

Information about Oxfordshire County Council's Directorate for Children, Education & Families' Geographic Information System for measuring home to school distances can be read [online](#).

## Random Allocation

If the distance "tie break" produces an identical result for two or more applicants and these applicants live at different addresses and are not children of a multiple birth (see above), the Admission Authority will use random allocation to determine who will be offered a place.

## Home address – Starting Primary School (Reception year group)

The address on the application **should be the child's address at the time of application**. This is the address at which the child spends the majority of term-time school nights (Sunday night to Thursday night).

The **time of application** is the entire time period from the point when applications can start to be made in the October of the year in which the child has his/her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday until National Offer Day on 16 April (or next working day) the following calendar year.

Sometimes an application is made based on an address at the time of application and the address then changes after the application has been submitted. It is important to tell RET (the Admissions Authority) (and/or Local Authority) about changes of address so that places can be offered fairly, and so notification can be sent by post to the correct home address.

If the application address is found to have subsequently changed after the application was submitted and this information could have been provided when the application was first made or before places were offered, RET (or Local Authority) will consider

the application to have been made on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading address. This may result in the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

If an application is made on the basis of a new address or intention to move to an area, information about the new address will need to be provided in order for it to be taken into account.

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for Stephen Freeman Primary School to establish the home address.

### Changes of Address

Changes of address which occur after the closing date for applications (15 January each year) can be taken into account if proof of this change is provided no later than the date set down in Oxfordshire County Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme. To confirm a new address, RET (and/or Local Authority) needs one of the following:

- A solicitor's letter advising contracts have been exchanged (**if the property is being purchased**); *or*
- A copy of a tenancy agreement (if the property is to be rented). **If this tenancy agreement comes to an end before the September when the child could start his/her Reception year, RET (and/or Local Authority) may not accept the address for admissions purposes; or**
- A copy of the Council Tax Bill **showing the same name(s) as on the school place application (CAF)**; *or*
- **A letter from a new employer** (e.g. University college) where accommodation is being provided by the employer and is tied to the new post/job giving details of this new address; *or*
- **Service Family Accommodation (New Quarter)** if this is a military posting with provided accommodation; *or*
- **Assignment Order** if this is a military posting but new quarter has not yet been notified – the address of the military base will be used for allocation purposes.

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for Stephen Freeman Primary School to establish the home address.

### Multiple Addresses

If children spend time at more than one address the address used for admissions purposes will be the one registered and confirmed as the main address by the school. If it is not possible to establish the main address from the nursery/school records and the parents state that the child spends 50% of time with each parent, the parents will be asked to agree which address will be used as the main address for admissions purposes or they will be required to have this determined legally via a Court Order.

## Fraudulent Applications

If a place has been obtained on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application (for example, a false claim to residence in a designated/ catchment area) and this results in the denial of a place to a child with a stronger claim, the admission authority for the school may withdraw the offer of the place. This follows the guidance in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.14 of the School Admissions Code (September 2021) published by the Department for Education:

“[2.13] An admission authority must not withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority must give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application must be considered afresh, and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

[2.14] A school must not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school, except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the length of time that the child has been at the school must be taken into account. For example, it might be considered appropriate to withdraw the place if the child has been at the school for less than one term.”

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for Stephen Freeman Primary School to establish whether a fraudulent application has been made and whether to withdraw a school place offer.

## **Multiple Applications (Applicants unable to agree on the schools to be listed on the application)**

If agreement cannot be reached in a timely manner and this would risk no application being processed and the child being without a school place, the application submitted from the parent with the address registered and confirmed as the main address by the nursery/school will be proceed. If it is not possible to establish the main address from the nursery/school records and the parents state that the child spends 50% of time with each parent, the parents will be asked to agree which address will be used as the main address for admissions purposes. If they cannot agree or a parent is unhappy with a decision made by the admissions authority their recourse would be to seek an order from the Court.

## **Home to School Travel Assistance**

Some children qualify for free travel assistance from home to school.



Oxfordshire County Council does not accept responsibility for the provision or cost of free travel assistance to the designated area school if it is not the closest or nearest available school.

Where a child is eligible for free travel assistance, but spends time with different parents at different addresses, Oxfordshire County Council will only accept responsibility for the provision and/or cost of free travel from the registered home address.

[The home to school transport policy is available online.](#)

### **In-Year Admissions and In-Year Fair Access Arrangements**

The Published Admission Number (PAN) only applies to the relevant age group. The Admission Authority may not refuse admission to other age groups on the grounds that they have already reached their PAN, but may refuse admission where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Parents will be notified of the result of their application in writing within 15 school days (we will aim to do this within 10 school days).

The In-Year Fair Access Protocol is part of the admission arrangements for Stephen Freeman Primary School as it is for all state-funded mainstream schools in Oxfordshire.

The Protocol is published on the Oxfordshire County Council's public website.

### **Waiting Lists**

Oxfordshire County Council will act as the agent for Stephen Freeman Primary School for waiting lists.

For those applying through the normal admissions round for Reception the waiting list will be maintained from shortly following initial allocation in the April preceding the start of the academic year in September until the end of June of their Reception year.

In the case of those applying in year the waiting list will be maintained until the end of June of that academic year. It will be possible to place a name on the list from 1 June, the beginning of the academic year, and the list will be discontinued on 30 June.

[The Waiting List policy is published on the County Council's public website.](#)

### **Admission Appeals**

There is a statutory right to an admission appeal should a child be refused a place at Stephen Freeman Primary School. Any appeal will be heard by an independent admission appeal panel.

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals)

### **Determined**

Paragraph 1.49 of the 2021 School Admissions Code requires Admission Authorities to determine Admission Arrangements by 28 February each year regardless whether a consultation has taken place.

[Objections to these arrangements and rules can be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year.](#)