



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY
TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE

Admissions Arrangements and Policy

Academic Year 2026/2027

Person Responsible:	Headteacher
Last Reviewed:	November 2025
Next Review Due By:	November 2026
Approval Level	Trust Board
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SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

1. STATEMENT OF CRITERIA

- 1.1 Shire Oak Academy is part of The Mercian Trust. The Trust is the admission authority and is responsible for setting and monitoring the school's admission arrangements. These arrangements comply fully with the School Admissions Code 2021, the School Admission Appeals Code, the Equality Act 2010, and all relevant statutory provisions.
- 1.2 The current Published Admission Number (PAN) for Year 7 is **268**. This number reflects a temporary expansion previously agreed with Walsall Local Authority to accommodate a short-term rise in local pupil demand.
- 1.3 Shire Oak Academy will admit students up to the PAN into Year 7 each academic year. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of available places, the oversubscription criteria set out in this policy will be applied to determine priority for admission.

2. SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION

- 2.1 Shire Oak Academy hosts a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) which provides additional, targeted support for pupils with a range of mixed and complex learning needs. The SRP forms part of Walsall Local Authority's wider SEND place-planning arrangements and is funded and commissioned through the Local Authority. The provision has a maximum capacity of **16** pupils across the Academy at any one time.
- 2.4 Placements into the SRP are made exclusively through the statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. Where the Local Authority names Shire Oak Academy's SRP in a child's EHCP, the Academy must admit the pupil. These admissions are made in addition to the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) and are not subject to the oversubscription criteria in this policy.
- 2.3 The SRP provides specialist teaching, adapted curriculum pathways and high levels of individual support tailored to pupils identified needs. Pupils within the SRP are included within the wider life of the school, with access to mainstream lessons where appropriate, alongside structured interventions and personalised learning programmes.
- 2.4 Information about the SRP, including the nature of the provision, entry processes and parental guidance, is available within the Academy's SEND Information Report and Local Offer.

3. POLICY STATEMENT AND AIMS

- 3.1 The purpose of these admission arrangements is to ensure that all applications for places at Shire Oak Academy are processed in a fair, consistent and transparent manner, and that children transferring from primary school experience a welcoming, well-supported and well-planned transition into secondary education.
- 3.2 The Academy is committed to supporting pupils as they move from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3 by ensuring continuity of learning, effective pastoral care and early identification of individual needs. The Academy works closely with local primary schools to gather transition information, including SEND and safeguarding data, and the SENCo contributes to transition planning for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). As with other schools within The Mercian Trust, Shire Oak Academy maintains proactive links with primary schools

both locally and out of borough, ensuring that all transferring children receive appropriate induction and support prior to arrival.

- 3.3 During the transfer period, pupils may take part in pre-induction visits, taster days, curriculum bridge activities and pastoral transition sessions. Where additional support is required, bespoke arrangements for individual pupils will be made in consultation with families and primary schools. Following admission, every pupil is allocated a personal tutor who acts as the first point of contact for families and is responsible for routine communication, wellbeing oversight and monitoring of academic progress.
- 3.4 The school's approach reflects the shared ethos across The Mercian Trust of prioritising smooth transition, pastoral stability and strong academic foundations in Year 7. The Academy aims to ensure that parents and carers feel confident in choosing Shire Oak Academy and assured that their children will be joining a safe, supportive and aspirational learning community.

4. IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

- 4.1 Shire Oak Academy participates in Walsall Local Authority's co-ordinated arrangements for in-year admissions and the Fair Access Protocol. Parents or carers seeking a place outside the normal point of entry should follow the guidance published by Walsall Council, available on the School Admissions section of the Walsall.gov.uk website.
- 4.2 All in-year applications are processed in line with the School Admissions Code 2021. The Local Authority will notify the Academy when an application has been received. The Academy will then consider the application and advise the Local Authority whether a place can be offered.
- 4.3 Where a place is available, the Academy will admit the child and will arrange an induction meeting. This meeting will include a discussion of the Academy's expectations, pastoral support, uniform requirements and a provisional start date. The Academy may also contact the child's previous school to request academic, safeguarding and attendance information to ensure an informed and supportive transition.
- 4.4 Where a place cannot be offered because the year group is full, the application will be refused and the child's details will be added to the waiting list, which is ranked using the oversubscription criteria in this policy. Parents/carers have the right to appeal against any refusal.
- 4.5 Where a child is considered under the Fair Access Protocol, admissions may take place outside the standard arrangements. These placements have priority and may exceed the Published Admission Number if required to ensure a suitable school place is secured without delay.

5. ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

- 5.1 This section sets out the Academy's statutory admissions arrangements. These arrangements form part of the Academy's Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State through The Mercian Trust. Any changes to these arrangements must be determined by the Trust Board and, where required, approved by the Secretary of State.
- 5.2 Shire Oak Academy complies with all requirements of the School Admissions Code, the School Admission Appeals Code, and the law on admissions as they apply to maintained schools. The Academy participates fully in Walsall Local Authority's co-ordinated admission scheme for Year 7 entry.
- 5.3 Applications for Year 7 places must be made using Walsall Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF). Parents/carers should list Shire Oak Academy as one of their school

preferences. The timetable for applying each year is set and published by Walsall Council, and includes:

- Publication of admission arrangements in September
- Open evenings or school visits during September/October
- The deadline for submitting the CAF in October
- The national allocation date of 1 March

- 5.4 The Academy will consider all applications submitted by the deadline. Where fewer applications are received than the number of places available, all eligible applicants will be admitted. Where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the oversubscription criteria set out below will be applied.
- 5.5 The Academy may not refuse admission on the basis of ability, behaviour at a previous school, special educational needs, disability or any other non-permitted reason outlined in the Admissions Code.
- 5.6 The Secretary of State may direct the Academy to admit a named pupil. The Academy will comply with any such direction.

6. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Where the Academy receives more applications than the number of places available, the following oversubscription criteria will be applied in order:
- (a) **Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** - Where Shire Oak Academy is named in a child's EHCP, the Academy must admit the child. These children are admitted before the oversubscription criteria are applied.
 - (b) **Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children** - This includes children who are or have been in the care of a local authority, and children who were previously in state care outside England and were adopted.
 - (c) **Siblings** - Children with a sibling attending the Academy at the time of admission. A sibling includes a full brother or sister, a half-brother or sister, a stepsibling or any child permanently residing in the same household.
 - (d) **Children of Staff** - Children of members of staff who have been employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time of application, or who have been recruited to fill a post where there is a demonstrable skills shortage.
 - (e) **Distance** - Children who live closest to the Academy, measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the Academy's main entrance. Walsall Local Authority calculates this distance using GIS (Geographic Information System) software.
 - (f) **Tie-break** - In the event that two or more applicants meet the same criteria for the final place, the tie-break will be by distance as measured above. If two applicants live an identical distance from the Academy, the place will be allocated using an independently verified random allocation process.
 - (g) **Twins and multiple births** - If one child from a multiple birth is allocated a place, the Academy will admit the other child(ren) even if this results in the Published Admission Number being exceeded.

7. OPERATION OF WAITING LISTS

- 7.1 Shire Oak Academy operates waiting lists for all year groups where applications exceed places available. For Year 7, the waiting list is maintained by Walsall Local Authority until 31st December each year and thereafter by the Academy.
- 7.2 Parents may request to join the waiting list following an unsuccessful application. A child's position on the waiting list is determined solely by the oversubscription criteria in this policy, and not by the date an application was made. Waiting lists are re-ranked whenever new applications are added or when circumstances change.
- 7.3 Where places become available, they are allocated to the highest-ranked child on the waiting list. Waiting lists remain open until the end of each academic year. A parent must make a new application if they wish to remain on the list the following year.

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPEALS

- 8.1 Parents/carers have the right to appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel where an application for admission is refused. Appeals are heard in accordance with the [School Admission Appeals Code](#).
- 8.2 The Appeals Panel is independent of the Academy and The Mercian Trust. The decision of the Panel is binding on all parties.
- 8.3 For Year 7 admissions, appeals are normally heard during the summer term following allocation in March. Appeals relating to in-year admissions or Sixth Form admissions will be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.
- 8.4 Information about submitting an appeal is available on the Academy's website or from the Trust's Central Governance Team – governance@merciantrust.org.uk.

9. ADMISSION TO THE SIXTH FORM

- 9.1 Shire Oak Academy welcomes applications to its Sixth Form from both internal and external students. Admission into the Sixth Form is based on academic suitability for the chosen programme of study, behaviour and commitment to Sixth Form expectations, and the availability of places on courses.
- 9.2 Students must meet the published entry requirements, which are reviewed annually and published on the Academy's website. As a guide, applicants must achieve at least five GCSEs at grade 4 or above, including English and Mathematics. Some subjects require higher grades; for example, A-Level Mathematics normally requires at least a grade 6 in GCSE Mathematics.
- 9.3 Where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available, priority will be given first to looked after and previously looked after children, then to internal candidates, followed by external applicants ranked according to their suitability for the chosen courses and the distance from home to school.
- 9.4 Application for the Sixth Form can be made via the website link [HERE](#) and applicants who are refused a place may appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. Appeals should be submitted via the Trust's Central Governance Team - governance@merciantrust.org.uk.

10. ANNUAL PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 The Mercian Trust undertakes consultation on its admission arrangements in accordance with the statutory requirements of the School Admissions Code. Consultation will be carried out when there are material changes to the arrangements or at least once every seven years.

- 10.2 Following consultation, the Trust Board will determine admission arrangements by 28th February each year. Determined arrangements will be published on both the Academy and Trust websites and sent to Walsall Local Authority.
- 10.3 The Academy will also provide copies of the determined arrangements to local primary schools and ensure parents and stakeholders can access the policy easily.

11. PUBLICATION AND AVAILABILITY OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 Shire Oak Academy will publish its admission arrangements annually once they have been determined. The published arrangements will include the school's contact details, oversubscription criteria, explanation of in-year admissions, number of applications in the previous year, and arrangements for appeals.
- 11.2 A copy of the arrangements is available on the Academy website and upon request from the main office, free of charge.

12. DATA PROTECTION, EQUALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

- 12.1 Shire Oak Academy handles all admissions information in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Applicant data will be held securely and retained only for as long as necessary in accordance with the Trust's Records Retention Schedule.
- 12.2 The Academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all applicants in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The Academy will not discriminate against any applicant on the basis of disability, special educational needs, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or any other protected characteristic.
- 12.3 Records of applications, offers and admissions will be retained for a minimum of ten years and may be inspected by the Secretary of State.