



The Shared Learning Trust

THE VALE
ACADEMY

The Vale Academy Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026

Title: Admissions Policy 2025/2026
Reviewed by: The Board of Trustees
Approved:
Review date: Autumn 2025

Background to The Vale Academy

The Vale Academy is a member of The Shared Learning Trust, including The Chalk Hills Academy, The Stockwood Park Academy, The Linden Academy and The Rushmere Park Academy.

The Vale Academy is a co-educational, mixed-ability primary school for children situated within the Central Bedfordshire Council Educational Authority, located at its site in Wilbury Drive, Dunstable.

The Vale Academy has an agreed admission number of 75 for the Reception Year R intake in 2025-2026

Admission to The Vale Academy 2025-2026

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools and academies to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs that names their school. Schools must also admit children with an EHC (Educational Health and Care) plan that names the school.

Where numbers of applications for year R, or other year groups, exceed the published admission numbers the following oversubscription **rules** will apply in consecutive order:

Over subscription criteria

Rule 1. 'Looked after children' or children who were 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 Trust to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in 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, in England (section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

A 'previously looked after child' is a child who was looked after (in England), but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements or special guardianship order, as well as a child who appears to the Trust Board to have been in state care outside of England care (i.e. in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society), but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted.

An adoption order is an order under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by s.14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Rule 2: Children of staff

This refers to children of staff employed by The Shared Learning Trust for a place in any of their academies.

Rule 3: Children who have siblings currently at The Vale Academy

Siblings are defined as meaning two or more children who have at least one parent in common and/or who reside at the same house.

Rule 4: Children who live in the Catchment Area.

The Vale Academy will draw its students from the Academy's catchment area. Details of these catchments are published on the Local Authority and Shared Learning Trust websites.

Rule 5: Shortest Distance

Children who live closest to the academy measured in a straight line from the main front entrance of the academy and the pupil's home address.

In any situation where the application of the above (admission) rules results in a situation where there are more children with an equal right to admission to the academy than the number of available places, a distance tie-break will be used, giving priority for admission to the child living closest to the school. The tie break will be the distance from the school, measured in a straight line, using an approved computerised mapping system. Those living closer to the academy will be accorded the higher priority. The home address will be measured from a point at the address identified in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer to the school gate on Wilbury Drive. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.

Specialist Resource Provision

The Shared Learning Trust (TLST), in conjunction with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) opened a specialist provision for children with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) at The Vale Academy in the autumn term 2023.

Those considered appropriate for admission based on EHC Needs assessment will be referred through the CBC SEND Team. The decision to admit will be taken by an appropriate Team Manager following consultation undertaken in compliance with S39 (6) Students and Families Act 2014.

Please contact your SEN Office at Central Bedfordshire Council to request consultation.

Application Form

For admissions in 2025-2026, applications can be made on the common application form provided by the Local Authority in which you live.

Applications for normal admissions at Reception for children living within the Central Bedfordshire Catchment area should be made to the Central Bedfordshire Local Authority.

Applications for normal admissions at Reception for children living within the Luton Catchment area should be made to the Luton Local Authority, who will in turn pass these onto the Central Bedfordshire Local Authority for processing

The national closing date for primary school applications is 15 January 2025.

In Year Admissions

In-Year admissions are applications to enter a year group that has either already started at the academy or is has expanded providing additional year group places. The Shared Learning Trust is responsible for co-ordinating all in-year applications for children wishing to access a Trust academy.

In year applications, which are outside the normal admission round naming The Vale Academy as preference should be made on the form provided by the Local Authority and this should be forwarded direct to Central Admissions Dept, c/o The Vale Hills Academy.

Late applications

Application forms received after the closing date will not be considered in the initial allocation of places).

Where parents have submitted a transfer form before the closing date, but then seek to change their preference after the closing date, this late expression of preference will be treated as a “late” application and will not be considered in the initial allocation of places.

Proof of residence

All applicants will be required to provide proof of address/residence. The Vale Academy regards a pupil’s home address as where she or he spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday including nights) with his or her parents or carer. The address of a childminder or family member who looks after the child before or after school cannot be used. The Governing Body reserves the right to seek verification from the Local Authority in which the home is situated.

Fair Access Protocol

Priority may be given to the admission of challenging pupils in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol exercised by the Local Authority, such placements take place outside the usual coordinated admission arrangements; this includes the admission of children above the planned admission number.

Admission numbers for 2025-2026 will be defined by year group as shown below:

Year Group	Planned admission number (PAN)
Year R	75
Year 1	75
Year 2	75
Year 3	75
Year 4	75
Year 5	75
Year 6	75

Parents will be notified of the admission number for future years, with details published through the Local Authority and Federation web sites.

Where fewer applications are received

The Vale Academy will consider all applications for places where fewer than the published admission number apply; the academy will offer places to all those who have applied.

Notwithstanding the above paragraph, The Vale Academy may refuse admission to particular applicants in cases where fewer than the published admission number have applied. The ability to refuse applications applies to applicants who have been permanently excluded from two or more other schools and the ability to refuse admission runs for a period of two years from the date of the last exclusion.

Exclusions, which took place before the child concerned reached compulsory school age, do not count for this purpose and this provision does not apply to:

- Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) or EHC Plans.

- Children who were reinstated following a permanent exclusion
- Children who would have been reinstated following a permanent exclusion had it been practicable to do so.

Twins

In the normal admission round The Vale Academy will admit over PAN to ensure twins/multiple birth children are not split if only one child is allocated an available place. If in such cases the PAN is exceeded, further admissions will be delayed until the roll returns to PAN.

Offer of places

For Reception applicants within the normal admissions round letters notifying applicants of the outcome of their application or transfer request, will be sent by second-class post in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Council co-ordinated admissions arrangements. Details of the outcome of applications relating to Reception Year (Starting School) places will be notified by 16th April 2025.

Applicants to whom places are offered will be required to inform the Governing Body in writing of their decision whether to accept or reject the offer within 14 days of receipt of the offer for Reception year places.

If it has not been possible to offer an applicant a place and if the applicant has selected, as one of his or her three preferences in their application form, another primary school/ academy within the Trust, it will, where possible, seek to try to offer the applicant a place at this other primary school (provided there are places available within the published the admission number for this other primary school's admission arrangements).

For in year admissions for any year group, including Reception letters notifying applicants of the outcome of their application or transfer request, will be sent by first-class post by the academy.

False Information

Here it is reasonably believed by The Vale Academy that an offer of a place has been made on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

A statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) is a statement made by the local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996, specifying the special educational provision required for a named child. The Vale Academy will admit any child with a SEN or Educational Health Care Plan, where it is appropriately named, in the child's SEN as the appropriate school to meet the child's needs.

Admission of Children Outside of Their Normal Age Group

Parents seeking a place for their child outside of the chronological age group should submit their written case to the Trust. Parents should include information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development; and whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group. If the child has been born prematurely, parents should include these details in their application. Applications will be discussed with the headteacher(s) of the preferred school(s) and other relevant professionals. The Trust will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and parents will be informed of the reasons for the decision in writing.

Summer Born Children

Parents of children who are summer born (those born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group and be admitted to the reception year for the September following their fifth birthday rather than Year 1. The Vale Academy will require parents to

make their request in writing to the Admissions and Appeals Officer setting out the reasons for the request. The Academy will consider any such requests on a case-by-case basis taking into account the best interests of the child concerned and will communicate the decision in writing to the parent.

Appeal procedure

Applicants who are unsuccessful in being offered a place at The Vale Academy will be notified of their right to appeal to an Admission Appeals Panel. Parents can lodge an appeal by writing to the admissions clerk and setting out their grounds for appeal within 20 school days of receipt of the refusal letter.

Appeals in relation to applications during the normal admission round, will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal being lodged.

The Admission Appeal Panel will decide the following in relation to an appeal:

Whether The Vale Academy admission arrangements (including the area's co-ordinated admission arrangements) comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code, the School Admission Appeals Code and relevant admissions law as amended from time to time and in force at the time of the appeal (including part 3 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998);

- a. Whether the arrangements were correctly and impartially applied;
- b. Whether the admission of another student would prejudice the efficient education and use of resources within the academy.

The Appeals Panel is independent of The Vale Academy and will exercise its discretion, balancing the degree of prejudice to The Vale Academy against the appellant's case for the child being admitted, before arriving at a decision.

The Vale Academy may, if it considers it appropriate, enter into an agreement with the Local Authority or any other external organisation for it to recruit, train and appoint appeal panel members, and also arrange for the appeals panel process to be administered and clerked independently from The Vale Academy.

Full details of the Admission Appeals Panel procedure will be sent to parents with the decision letter.

Waiting list

In addition to the right to appeal, unsuccessful applicants will be offered an opportunity to be placed on the waiting list. Parents who wish their child to be included on the waiting list must inform The Vale Academy in writing by July. The order of placement on the waiting list will be determined in accordance with the over-subscription criteria set out above, not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list.

If vacancies occur places will be offered from the waiting list using the over-subscription criteria set out above with no account being taken of the length of time on the waiting list.

For new intake names will be held on the waiting list until 31 July 2025, however, applications received in the summer term 2024 will remain on the waiting list until July 2026. Parents will need to reapply for a place at their preferred school after this date if they wish their child's name to be carried forward on the waiting list.

For all other year groups, unsuccessful applications received from the start of the autumn term 2025 until the end of the spring term 2026 will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2026. Applications

received from the start of the summer term 2025 to the end of the academic year will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2026

Contact us

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