



The Southwater Infant Academy Admissions Policy 2026 – 2027

The Southwater Infant Academy Trust is the Admission Authority for the Academy. This means that it is the Southwater Infant academy Trust that sets and applies the Admissions Policy for the Academy. The Academy takes part in the co-ordinated admission scheme with West Sussex County Council and the County Council offers places at the Academy for September 2026 admission on behalf of the Southwater Infant Academy Trust.

When parents are seeking a place for their child to start school for the first time, the application process is co-ordinated by The Pupil Admissions Team at West Sussex County Council. Families are contacted by them during the Autumn of the year before children are due to start school. Applications should be submitted to The Pupil Admissions Team by the deadline of 15 January 2026. Notification of which school has been allocated will be sent out on 16 April 2026.

All parents should apply for a school online at www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions. If you have no option but to apply on a paper form, please telephone West Sussex County Council on 03330 142 903 to request one.

There will be an admission number of 90 places available in the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2026.

In the event that there are more applicants than places, the Southwater Infant Academy Trust will allocate places using the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority:

Oversubscription Criteria

Any child with a statement of special educational need (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming the school will automatically be admitted to a school, under Section 324 or the Education Act 1996.

- 1) Looked after children (children in public care), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted; and previously looked after children. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order.
- 2) Children who need a place at the school on exceptional and compelling social, psychological or medical grounds;
 - Parents/carers must provide written supporting evidence from an appropriately qualified person (usually a doctor or social worker). The evidence should state

clearly why the school is the only one that can meet the child's needs. A letter from parents is not normally considered sufficient evidence.

- 3) Children who have brothers or sisters already at The Southwater Infant Academy and who will still be there when the child starts (brothers or sisters may be half or step-siblings but must be living permanently at the same address);
- 4) Children who live in The Southwater Infant Academy catchment area and have brothers or sisters already at Southwater Junior Academy, who will still be there when the child starts (brothers or sisters may be half or step-siblings but must be living permanently at the same address);
- 5) Other children who live in The Southwater Infant Academy catchment area;
- 6) Children who live within the catchment area for Castlewood Primary School and have brothers or sisters already at Southwater Junior Academy who will still be there when the child starts (brothers or sisters may be half or step-siblings but must be living permanently at the same address);
- 7) Other children who live within the catchment area for Castlewood Primary School;
- 8) Children who live outside The Southwater Infant Academy and Castlewood Primary School catchment area, and have brothers or sisters already at Southwater Junior Academy who will still be there when the child starts (brothers or sisters may be half or step-siblings but must be living permanently at the same address);
- 9) Other children who live outside the catchment areas for Southwater Infant Academy and Castlewood Primary School.

In the case of oversubscription in any of the above categories, priority is given to applicants who live nearest the academy measured by a straight line from the academy to home, using Ordnance Survey address point data from a central point in each building.

In line with Paragraph 1.7 of the School Admissions Code (2014), published by the Department for Education (DfE), the Southwater Infant Academy Trust is under a duty to consider all applications for an oversubscribed school against its published oversubscription criteria. Parents not offered a place at the Academy will be offered another school by the County Council.

Admission Appeals

If we do not offer a child a place at this academy, it is because to do so would prejudice the education of other children by allowing the numbers of children in the Academy to increase.

Legislation relating to Infant Class Sizes must be adhered to. This means that classes for Reception, Year 1 and 2 must not contain more than 30 pupils with one teacher. In allocating places in these year groups, the Academy and West Sussex County Council must comply with this legislation as it is a statutory requirement and every effort must be made to keep over-sized classes to a minimum.

Where parents are refused the schools of their preference, they are advised of their right of appeal and offered the opportunity of having their child's name placed on the waiting list. The waiting list is ordered according to the oversubscription criteria for the academy. This means that a child's name can go down as well as up on the list. The

waiting list for community, controlled schools and academies is held and managed by the Pupil Admissions Team at West Sussex County Council until the 31 August each year. They will offer a place to the child at the top of the waiting list when a place becomes available. After this the Academy Trust will hold the waiting list until December 31 each year.

Where the Southwater Infant Academy Trust is unable to offer a place because the Academy is oversubscribed, or because this would breach infant class size rules, parents have the right to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel. The deadline for receipt of an appeal is within 20 school days of being told that your application for a place was refused. Your appeal will be heard within 40 school days of the deadlines for making an appeal. Appellants will receive at least 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing. Decision letters are sent within 5 school days of the hearing wherever possible.

Further information can be found at www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions or by telephone on 033 301 42903.

Deferred Entry

By law, children must start their full-time education in the term following their fifth birthday. In West Sussex your child may start either full or part-time in the September following their fourth birthday. When you have received the offer of a place at the academy, you may wish to take the opportunity to discuss the academy's induction arrangements and your child's start date with the academy. You can defer admission until the start of the spring or summer term so long as your child has not reached compulsory school age. However, you must inform the academy of this decision.

Should you choose to defer your child's start until the term following their fifth birthday; the academy will hold the place your child has been offered provided your child is still joining the academy in the reception year. If your child was born between 1 April and 31 August you can decide not to take up an academy place until September 2027; however, a place will not be held in a Reception class and in most cases your child may need to join Year 1 upon their admission to the academy. Parents wishing to defer to Year 1 must approach the academy in June 2027 to apply for a place but should be aware that a place may not be available. For further advice on this matter, please contact the Pupil Admission Team or academy office.

Admission outside my child's normal age group

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group. An application should be made to The Southwater Infant Academy. The decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The right of appeal does not apply if a place is offered at the academy but it is not in the preferred age group.

In Year Admissions

Applications for an academy place after the start of the academic year or for any other year group, are processed by The Southwater Infant Academy. Please contact the academy office on 01403 733254 or by e-mail to office@southwaterinfants.co.uk

An application form must be completed and returned to The Southwater Infant Academy.

Southwater Junior Academy

The Southwater Infant Academy and The Southwater Junior Academy operate as two separate academies on a shared site. There is however close cooperation between the two academies.

The offer of a place at The Southwater Infant Academy does not guarantee a place at The Southwater Junior Academy at the end of Year 2. Parents will be asked to apply for a place by the Pupil Admissions Team at West Sussex County Council.

Further Information

All parents are advised to read the Southwater Infant Academy Admission Policy in conjunction with the Local Authority booklet "Information for Parents". Please also refer to this booklet for further information on 'Admission of children outside their normal age group' and 'Deferred entry'.

For further information please contact either:

West Sussex County Council
The Pupil Admissions Team
Telephone: 033 301 42903
E-mail: admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk

The Southwater Infant Academy
Admissions Officer
Mrs Sharon Ashbolt
Telephone: 01403 733 254
E-mail: office@southwaterinfants.co.uk