



The Fernwood School

High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All

ADMISSION POLICY

2026-2027

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Governing Body Admissions Committee.

Approved:	January 2025
Next review:	January 2026
Status:	Statutory



Admission number of 300

The Fernwood School is an outstanding Academy and a Department for Education Leading Edge School.

The published admission number for Year 7 in September 2026 is 300.

All applications for places are made on the applicant's home local authority common application form which is available from the local authority. Although the School will decide admissions, under law the home local authority co-ordinate all admissions in its area and will communicate all admission decisions to parents.

Ordinary Applications for Year 7 in 2026

For entrance to the school in September 2026 the closing date for application is 31st October 2025, preceding admission to secondary school. Offers of places will be made on 1st March 2026 (National Offer Day) or the next working day.

Late applications for the normal Year of Entry

Nottingham City Council and the Governing Body may be willing to accept applications which are received late but before the date set by the Local Authority (before 5pm on 30 November 2025) for good reason for example:

- a family returning from abroad
- a lone parent who has been ill for some time
- a family moving into Nottingham from another area
- other exceptional circumstances

Each case will be treated on its merits.

Any preferences received by the Nottingham City Council up to the date set by the Local Authority, with good reason for being late, and where appropriate, with the agreement of the Governing Body will be included in the first cycle of allocations and will be notified on the national offer day.

All other late applications for secondary school places received by Nottingham City Council after the specified date will be dealt with after the offer day.

Other local authorities might have different policies when dealing with late applications. We would advise that you contact your home local authority to find out what their policies are.

Applications outside the normal year of entry

Details of how to apply for places in any year group, made during the school year from September 2026 onwards, will be made available on the school's website nearer the time. If the respective year group total is below the published admission number for that year group, the child will be offered a place unless paragraphs 3.8 and 3.12 of the School Admissions Code are applicable. If the respective year group total is full, the child will be only offered a place if there are very exceptional circumstances and if the governors decide that the education of pupils in that year group will not be detrimentally affected by the admission of an extra pupil. Parents will have 14 days to accept the offer of a school place.

If a child is not allocated a place, parents have a statutory right to appeal (see 'Appeals' below). Appeals should be lodged within 20 school days of the date of the decision letter

Local Authorities are required to have Fair Access Protocols in order to make sure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, who live in the home local authority area, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools that are already full.



Parents may make requests for the admission of their children outside of normal chronological age groups. Circumstances where this may be appropriate include where a child is gifted and talented or has experienced ill health. Any such requests will be processed in accordance with the arrangements set out in the School Admissions Code.

Time Limits for Acceptance of an Offer of a Place

With regards to in-year admissions, when a place has been offered, the school will write to the parent(s) seeking written confirmation that they will take up the place. If this confirmation is not received within 14 days, the school will withdraw the offer of a school place and offer to the child ranked highest on the waiting list.

Oversubscription Criteria

As required by law children with a statement of special education needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan that names The Fernwood School will be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available. If the School is oversubscribed (i.e. where the number of applications for admission exceeds the number of places available) the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below, to decide which applicant to admit:

1. Places will first be allocated to a “Looked After Child” or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order. A Looked After Child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions in accordance with section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application to a school. 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 section 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).
2. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who, at the closing date for applications, live within the catchment area and have a sibling already attending the school whom is expected still to be on roll on the proposed date of admission of the applicant pupil.
3. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who, at the closing date for applications, live within the catchment area.
4. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who live outside the catchment area who, at the closing date for applications, attend one of the designated feeder schools, and have a sibling already attending the school (i.e. The Fernwood School) and whom is expected still to be on roll on the proposed date of admission of the applicant pupil.
5. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who live outside the catchment area who, at the closing date for applications attend one of the designated feeder schools.
6. Places will then be offered to children of staff at the school in either or both of the following circumstances:-
 - a) where the member of staff has been employed at the Academy for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.
7. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who live outside the catchment area, who, at the closing date for applications, have a sibling already attending the school whom is expected still to be on roll on the proposed date of admission of the applicant pupil.



8. Places will then be allocated to other pupils who live outside the catchment area.

Exceptional Circumstances

The above criteria (2-8) may be overridden and priority given to an applicant for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a specific medical or social need that makes it essential that they attend The Fernwood School rather than any other school.

Each case will be considered on its merits by the Governors who will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this criterion. The evidence must relate specifically to The Fernwood School and must clearly demonstrate why Fernwood is the only school that can meet the child's needs. It should include:

- Specific professional evidence from a registered health professional such as a doctor that justifies why only The Fernwood School can meet the child's individual medical needs, and/or
- Specific professional evidence from a local authority social worker that outlines exceptional family circumstances that justifies why only The Fernwood School can meet the child's individual social needs; and
- If The Fernwood School is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate

Tie Breaker: Proximity to school

In the event of there being more applicants meeting any of the above criteria than remaining places available, proximity to the school will be used as a tie breaker, with those living nearest being given priority. Distance will be measured 'as the crow flies' from the applicant's residence to the main school gate on Goodwood Road.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

Any offers of a place found to be made on the basis of inaccurate information can be withdrawn. Such examples would include fraudulent or intentionally misleading applications (e.g. a false claim to residence in the catchment area). As stated above the failure of a parent to respond to an offer of a place within 14 days will also lead to the withdrawal of that offer.

Waiting list

If, after the offer of available places has been made, the school is over-subscribed, all unsuccessful applications will be placed on the waiting list which will be administered by the governors of the school in partnership with the local authority for the duration of the co-ordinated admissions scheme. Once the coordinated scheme is closed, the waiting list will remain open but will be administered by the governors of the school. A waiting list will also be in operation for any other years where the academy receives more applications than places available. The waiting list will remain open whilst the number of places in the year group is full, or until the end of the academic year. Where the number of students in year 7 falls below 300 students, the person whose name appears first on the Year 7 Group waiting list will be offered a place. A child's position on this waiting list will be determined by the application of the school's published over-subscription criteria. For other year groups the published admission number in operation at the time of entry to the school will apply, namely 300 for years 8, 9,11 and 305 for year 10.

Parents of children who are on the waiting list will be contacted at the start of each half term to establish if they wish to remain on the waiting list.

Parents are welcome to ask what position they currently hold on the list. However, because the School constantly receives applications for admission throughout the year, the waiting list is continually being reordered. Parents need to be aware that their position on the list may rise and fall over time and therefore a higher position on the list is not necessarily a good indicator of the likelihood of a place being offered. Length of time on the waiting list will not be a factor in offering a place.



Children who are the subject of a direction by a Local Authority to admit or who are allocated to the School in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocols, will take precedence over those children on a waiting list.

Independent Appeals

Parents have the right to an independent appeals panel in the event that their child is declined admission to the school. Repeat applications in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances. Parents wishing to appeal should contact the school to request an appeals form. Appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the appeals timetable published on the school's website.

Definitions of terms used in these arrangements:

Residence

This is defined as the child's permanent place of residence which is deemed to be the residential property at which the child normally and habitually resides with the person or persons having parental responsibility for the child at the time of completion of the application form. If a child's parents live at separate addresses, whichever of the two addresses the child permanently spends at least 3 school nights i.e. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday will be taken as the place of residence. Addresses of other relatives or friends will not be considered as the place of residence even when the child stays there for all or part of the week. Proof of permanent residence (minimum 12 months tenancy agreement from the date of application in the case of rented accommodation) and other evidence from the court regarding parental responsibilities in these matters may be required. Where a child is resident at two addresses for an equal amount of time, the child's permanent place of residence will be taken as the address shown on the child benefit letter.

Measuring distance 'as the crow flies'

For applications in the normal year of entry which are managed under the co-ordinated admissions arrangements, those outside of the normal year of entry or those applications held on the waiting list, distance is independently measured and the school governors use this information to rank order applications. Distances are measured in a straight line (by a computerised geographical information system) from a point on the school site to a point at the pupil's home, i.e. as the crow flies, both identified by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

Where two or more pupils are equal in all respects and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, a method of random allocation by drawing lots will be used to allocate places (supervised by someone independent of The Fernwood School).

Feeder schools

The feeder schools for The Fernwood School are Fernwood Primary, Middleton Primary and Southwold Primary schools.

Sibling

For admission purposes the governing body considers a sibling connection to relate to any of the following:

- a brother or sister who share the same parents;
- a half brother or sister, where two children share one common parent;
- a step brother or sister, where two children are related by a parent's marriage or civil partnership;
- adopted or fostered children or children living in the same household under the terms of a child arrangements or special guardianship order.



Where applications are received in respect of twins, triplets or children of other multiple births, the governing body will endeavour to offer places in the school, admitting above the planned admission number where necessary. If this is not possible, the parent/carer will be asked which child(ren) should take up the place(s). The parent/carer will still have a right of appeal against a refusal of a place.

Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' to include; all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or a young person. Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parent can acquire parental responsibility.

Catchment area

A map of the school's defined catchment area can be found on the school's web site or obtained from the School Office.