The Belham Primary School

Admissions Policy
2026-27

THE BELHAM
PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Belham Primary School Admissions Policy 2026-2027

Policy Purpose

- To provide clear and transparent information to support parents in applying for a place at The Belham Primary School.

- To ensure that the school's admissions procedures are accountable and in line with current legislation, in particular the School Admissions Code.

- To reflect the school's commitment to providing an inclusive education for pupils in the local community, irrespective of ability.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher has delegated the role of administration of admissions to the Admissions Lead – currently Ms Eloise Hunter

.

The Local Governing Body has delegated the role of the Appeals Committee to an independent committee of individuals who receive training to ensure that they carry out their duties impartially.

The School

The Belham Primary School is a free school and part of The Charter Schools Educational Trust. It opened in September 2015. The school is funded directly by the Department for Education.

We are our own Admissions Authority and are responsible for our own admissions arrangements. We are required to consult on a periodic basis and regularly publish our admissions arrangements.

The published admissions number (PAN) for The Belham Primary School is **60.** All applicants will be admitted if fewer than 60 applications are received.

Applying for a Reception place for entry in September 2026

If you're a Southwark resident, you must apply online for a primary school place via www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions

If you do not live in Southwark, you must complete the admission application for the borough in which you live even if you'd like to apply for a school in Southwark.

We are happy to offer help and advice to families when applying for Reception (starting school) and welcome visits to the school on Open Days to find out more, details of which will be published on the school website. For admission into our Reception classes, you can find more information about the process on the Southwark at Applying for a primary school place - Southwark Council for further information.

Late Applications

Families submitting a late application after the application deadline must complete and submit an online application. All late applications will be processed directly by Southwark Admissions.

Late applications will be considered **after** all on time applications have been fully processed, unless exceptional circumstances merit earlier consideration.

Children below compulsory school age

Parents and carers can request that their child attends on a part-time basis until they reach compulsory school age, or that the date that their child is admitted is deferred until later in the academic year, or the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

In accordance with Paragraph 2.17 of the School Admissions Code 2021 [“SAC”], families are able to:

- Defer their child's entry to school until later in the same academic year (but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age); or
- Take up their child's Reception place part time in the same academic year, until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Where entry is deferred until later in the same academic year, the child's school place will be held and not offered to another child.

Please see our separate **Appendix related to Admission of Summer Born Children**.

Admissions and oversubscription criteria

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the number of places available, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), where The Belham Primary School is named on the EHCP, criteria will be applied in the order below:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after. It also includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted [see note (a)]

2. Children who will have a sibling attending the school at their time of entry [see note (b)].

3. Children who have a specific psychological, medical or social need which the school is best placed to meet, backed up by professional advice and agreed by the Headteacher and an Admissions Panel [see note (c)].

4. Children of permanent staff members [see note (d)].

5. Children living nearest the school measured by straight line route from home to the main school entrance on Maxted Road [see note (e)].

Notes

a) 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 (see definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. All references to previously looked after children in the School Admissions Code 2021 mean such children who were adopted (or subject to child arrangements orders or special guardianship orders) immediately following having been looked after and 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.

This includes children who were adopted 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).

Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence orders in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

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).

A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of 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."

(b) Siblings include half brothers and sisters and stepbrothers and sisters who share the same permanent home. It also includes adopted and foster brothers and sisters who share the same permanent home.

The home address is where the parent/carer lives and the child permanently resides unless otherwise directed by a Court Order. This will also apply to informal care arrangements. Where a child spends time with both parents/carers in separate homes and both have parental responsibility, the school will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent. This will then be treated as the home address. Siblings attending in Year 6 who will be transferring to secondary school will not be regarded as a sibling under this criterion.

(c) Evidence of psychological, medical or social needs including the reasons why a particular school would best meet those needs and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. This must be substantiated by written evidence from relevant qualified professionals e.g. a child or educational psychologist, a child psychiatrist, a general practitioner, an orthopaedic consultant or social worker and agreed by the Headteacher and an Admissions Panel (with governor representation). Any supporting evidence must be provided at the time of application and must be less than 6 months old at the time of application.

(d) Children of permanent staff who work at The Belham Primary School where:

a) The member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or

b) The member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage

'Children of permanent staff' includes the natural, step, foster or adopted child living in the same family unit and at the same home address as the staff member making the application.

Verification and supporting evidence from the Headteacher at the school must be provided at the time of application to substantiate that the permanent staff member is employed as per the requirements set out above. Where supporting evidence has not been provided, priority will not be given under this criterion.

e) The distance is determined using the computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This system measures the distance from each applicant's home to the designated main entrance of the school on Maxted Road by the shortest straight line route in metres. A centroid (centre point), supplied by Ordnance Survey (OS), determines the start point of the home address. If a child lives in a block of flats where a communal entrance is used, the centroid for the block and not the individual flat is used for calculation purposes. When dealing with multiple applications from a block of flats to the same school, lower door numbers will take priority. In the event that the distance is the same for more than one applicant, the school will use random allocation as a tie-break.

The home address is the address where the child resides. Where a child spends time with both parents or carers in separate homes and both have parental responsibility, the school will need to establish where the majority of school nights (Sunday to Thursday) are spent and treat that as the home address.

Multiple births – if only one place is available at the school and the next child who qualifies for a place is one of multiple birth siblings, we will go over our published admissions number to support the family when possible to do so.

Parents are advised that websites such as Google Maps will not give an accurate measurement and cannot be relied on for school admissions purposes. The school finder facility on Southwark Council's website gives approximate distances to schools based on postcodes alone and cannot be relied on to identify the school which is the closest to an actual address.

Tie break

Where two applications are equal in any given criterion, places will first be offered to children living nearest to the school measured by a straight line as described under criterion (v) of the oversubscription criteria. However if there is still a tie break, lots will be drawn to decide which child is offered a place.

Proof of address

Any offer of a school place will be conditional until proof of address has been provided within 15 days of the date of the offer of the place. Original copies of the following documentation will be required:

- Council tax bill; and
- One other proof of address such as a recent bank statement, TV licence or credit/store card statement

Occasionally, if the school has reason to suspect that a family does not live at the address stated on their application an investigation will be carried out. Should the school discover that a parent has stated a fraudulent address the offer of a school place will be withdrawn.

Operation of waiting lists

Where in any year, the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This waiting list will be maintained by the school once the local authority has relinquished control. Applicants will remain on the schools waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.

Children's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out above. Where places become vacant, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. Parents may keep their child's name on the waiting list for as long as they wish; however their position on the list may alter depending on additional applicants.

Please note looked after children or previously looked after children allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

In-Year Applications

Applications for places outside the normal round of admissions (in-year admissions) will be allocated in accordance with the school's published admission criteria and processed as per Southwark's agreed protocol. Please read the following carefully to ensure that you follow the correct procedure depending on your circumstances.

1. **Transferring your child from one Southwark school to The Belham Primary School**

   If your child is currently attending a Southwark school, and you plan to apply for a place at The Belham Primary School, you must complete Southwark Council's in year application form. You must then return the completed in-year application form directly to the school, via email to our Admissions Lead, Ms Eloise Hunter at: info@thebelhamprimaryschool.org.uk

   On receipt of your application you will be notified of the outcome in writing within 15 school days.

2. **Making a new in year application to any Southwark school, including The Belham Primary School.**

   If your child is currently not attending a Southwark school (new arrivals into the borough and overseas applicants), and you'd like to apply for an in-year place at The Belham Primary School, you must complete Southwark Council's in year application form. You must then complete on the In Year Admissions form on the Southwark admissions website. If you have named The Belham Primary School as your preferred school, we would request that you also notify our Admissions Lead, via email at: info@thebelhamprimaryschool.org.uk

   Families wishing for their child to transfer from another Southwark school to Belham Primary School must speak to their child's current headteacher in the first instance who

will be able to provide them with further details on the school to school transfer process. Please visit Southwark's in year webpage at https://www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-admissions/in-yearadmissions which provides further information on the LA's co-ordinated in year admissions process.

Please do not return your application or supporting documents by post as Southwark Council and the school will not be able to accept these.

For more information please visit: www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-andeducation/school-admissions/in-year-admissions

Fair Access Protocol

The school participates in the local authority's Fair Access Protocol to allocate places to vulnerable and other children in the accordance with the School Admission Code 2021. Admitting pupils under the protocol may require the school to admit above the planned admission number for the relevant year group.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

The admissions of pupils with an EHC Plan are dealt with by a completely separate procedure. The procedure is integral to the making and maintaining of EHC Plans by the pupil's home local authority. Details of this separate procedure are set out in the SEND code of practice. Pupils with an EHC Plan naming the school will be admitted without reference to the above criteria, but on consideration of the evidence presented in the paperwork submitted.

Arrangements for Appeals Panels

Parents will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of The Belham Primary School. The Appeal Panel will be independent of the school. The Belham Primary School will comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and the School Admissions Appeals Code of Practice. The determination of the Appeal Panel will be made in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021 on School Admissions Appeals and is binding on all parties. The school will prepare guidance for parents about how the appeals process will work and provide parents with a named contact who can answer any enquiries parents may have about the process. Appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the appeal being lodged, or before the end of the summer term - whichever is sooner.

Step one

The panel must first consider whether the school's published admissions arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code. They must also decide whether they were correctly applied in the individual's case.

Step two

If the panel decides there is good reason for turning down the application, the appellant has the chance to state why they are appealing against the decision:

- explain why the school is the best place for the child
- tell the panel about any special circumstances that might justify the child being awarded a place
- submit additional evidence or documentation that might be relevant to the appeal, such as a medical note from a doctor to support an application on the basis of social or medical need

Step three

If the panel decides that the appellant’s case is the stronger, it will uphold the appeal and the child will be awarded a place at the school. If it finds that the Admissions Authority’s case is stronger, it will uphold the decision not to offer the child a place.

The panel's decision is binding - both on the appellant and the school's Admissions Authority, and can only be overturned by the courts.

The panel will let the appellant and the Admissions Authority know their decision by post within seven days. If the appeal is successful the child will be offered a place at school. If the appellant is unsuccessful the child's name can, on request, be placed on a waiting list.