Denefield School
Admissions Policy 2027 - 2028

Approved by Trust Board	February 2026
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Review cycle	Annual
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Type of policy	Statutory
Policy owner	Headteacher
Location of policy	Website

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Denefield Admissions Policy 2027-2028

Status: Statutory

Purpose and background

The Trust Board is legally required to determine the school's admission arrangements. These arrangements take account of all relevant legislation and the West Berkshire Schools' coordinated admission scheme. In particular, this policy is based on the following statutory documents:

- School Admissions Code 2021
- School Admissions Appeal Code 2021

Policy objectives

The aims are for admission arrangements to work for the benefit of all parent/carer and children in the area, to be as simple as possible for a parent/carer to use, and help them to take the best decision on the school for their children. Parents/carers are encouraged to use the on-line application form provided by the Local Authority (LA).

Definitions

The **normal admissions round** is the period during which parents/carers can apply for state-funded places at the school's normal point of entry. For Denefield, this is for places for Year 7 students in September 2027.

Looked after children are children who, at the time of making an application to a school, are:

- In the care of a local authority
- Being provided with accommodation by a local authority in exercise of its social services functions

Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they:

- Were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 or the Children Act 2002, or
- Became subject to a child arrangements order, or
- Became subject to a special guardianship order

This includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care due to being adopted.

Practice and procedures

1. Secondary school normal admission point

September 2027 (autumn term) for a child whose 12th birthday falls between 1 September 2027 and 31 August 2028.

2. Admission numbers

The school's admission number for entry to Year 7 in September 2027 will be 200.

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If applications from students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) which specifically name Denefield are received prior to the closing date for the receipt of admissions then offers will be made to such applicants in preference to normal admission categories. These offers will be taken into account in the calculation of the number of places available for other applicants.

If applications from students with EHCPs which specifically name Denefield are received after the closing date for the receipt of admissions then offers will be made to such applicants even although this may lead to the school being temporarily oversubscribed.

In the event of a parent/carer being unable to secure a place for their child under these in-year admissions procedures, the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol will be invoked.

An offer of a place will be withdrawn when a parent/carer has failed to respond to an offer of a place within a reasonable time (reasonable time is defined as 21 working days from the offer being made) or when a place has been offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.

The Sixth Form admission process will be applied as detailed at section 11 below. The admission number for Year 12 is 30 (i.e., over and above those students attending the school who progress from Year 11 to Year 12).

3. Co-ordinated admission scheme

Denefield's Trust Board is the admissions authority for the school. Since 2010 Local Authorities are required to produce a scheme for coordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area and to exchange information on applications with their neighbours. It is intended that admissions to Denefield Year 7 are administered by West Berkshire Council according to the coordinated scheme. All Year 7 applications continue to be considered on an equal preference basis against the over-subscription criteria for each of up to three preferred schools, NOT considered on the basis of first preferences before other preferences. The admissions timetable is detailed in appendix 1 of this document.

The scheme does not affect the duty of the Trust Board of Denefield to set and apply its own admission arrangements.

4. Oversubscription criteria

Where the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of students with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, places are allocated according to the over-subscription criteria as outlined below in order.

A. Looked after children and all previously looked after children

Looked After children and children who were previously looked after. Evidence will be required to support an application.

B. Catchment area students

Children whose permanent home address (see note 1 below) is in the school's designated catchment area (as shown on the maps in Appendices to the Parent's Guides). Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings in catchment. The home address is taken to be the address at the

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closing date for applications in the normal admissions round (31 October 2026). Where parental responsibilities are equally shared, the home address will normally be considered to be with the parent with whom the child spends the majority of time and nights Monday to Friday; this will normally be expected to be with the parent/carer that receives the child's benefit, where this benefit is still available. Where there is any doubt about the split of the residence then the relevant address used will be that at which the school and Local Authority are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week.

It is the child's normal permanent home address where he or she lives with his or her parent/carer that is used to decide in which school's catchment area the child lives. Temporary addresses cannot be used to obtain school places, e.g., temporary addresses whilst retaining a previous permanent home will not be accepted. If parents/carers are in the process of moving from the address at which they currently live, and want to use the new address for the school place allocations, evidence that they have moved and are living in the new address will need to be provided by 1 January 2027. Confirmation received after this date will not normally be taken into account until immediately after allocation dates and waiting lists adjusted accordingly. At all other times changes of address will be considered immediately on receipt of evidence. Any child offered a school place based on fraudulent or intentionally misleading information concerning a catchment area permanent home address will have their place withdrawn and a new application will be required, by which time preferred schools may be full. This may also occur after the child has been admitted to a school.

Note 1: Guidance on definition of permanent home address is provided in appendix 2. Parents/carers are encouraged to read this section when making an application.

Criteria C to E apply to children whose permanent home address is not within the preferred school's catchment area

C. Siblings
Students with a brother or sister including step/foster sibling and children of the parent's/carer's partner living in the same family unit. Children living at the same address in a family unit are therefore deemed to be siblings even if there is no actual relationship between them. Children who are siblings but living at different addresses to each other will not be treated as siblings for the purpose of the admissions criteria. **A sibling is considered to be one who is already on the roll of Denefield School, and in relation to admissions at Denefield's first point of entry, will continue to attend compulsory education at the school during the following academic year.**

D. Children of staff
The children of a member of staff who has been employed at Denefield for a minimum of two years, or who has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

E. All other applicants

Note: Priority is <u>not</u> given to students attending local primary schools.

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5. Tie breaker
Priority will be given within any of the above over-subscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to Denefield. Distances will be measured using the West Berkshire Admissions Geographical Information System taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

Where 2 or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places a random allocation system will be used to set the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness, the School Admissions Team (West Berkshire Council) will administer the random allocation system overseen by the Head of the Education Service. Simply, the applicants' names will be drawn in order and that order will be applied to their ranked order in admission list for the school.

In the case of multiple births, the parent/carer will be approached to decide which sibling or siblings will receive the available places.

6. Waiting lists
Waiting lists will be maintained for the school and year groups where necessary for children not offered a school place. Position on the list will be determined by applying the over-subscription criteria. West Berkshire Council will hold waiting lists until 31 July 2028 when parents/carers must confirm in writing their wish to be placed on a newly constructed waiting list. Names will be removed from the lists if requested or if the offer of a place that becomes available is not accepted. Positions on waiting lists may change due to new applications or revised applications in respect of a change of preferred schools, and precedence is given to those subject to a direction or an admission in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol. The reasonable time criteria of responding within 21 days of an offer being made, as set out in section 2 on admission numbers, applies to the waiting list. The waiting list will be adjusted to take account of late, or in-year, applications.

7. Late applications
Late applications are considered as detailed in the coordinated and in-year admissions scheme.

8. In-year applications
Denefield will admit students outside the normal admissions round, unless admitting the child would prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources. This 'point of prejudice' (POP) number will be determined in advance, and may be higher, lower or the same as the published admission number (PAN) that applied to the year group in question when they were in Year 7. The POP number for each year group will be published on the school's website, and may vary from year group to year group according to:

- the number of teaching groups and size of teaching classes, including options groups at Key Stage 4;
- the availability of academic support, especially for students at Key Stage 4 who may have studied different subjects or syllabuses;
- the number of students with EHCPs or other special educational needs or disability;

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- support required for social, emotional, mental health or behavioural needs of the year group.

In addition, where Denefield receives an in-year application and the school has good reason to believe the child may display challenging behaviour[1], the school will refuse admission and refer the child to the Fair Access Protocol.

Denefield uses the local authority's in-year coordinating process, and will aim to notify West Berkshire school admissions the outcome of any in-year application within 10 school days.

The administration of applications outside the normal admission round is detailed in the coordinated and in-year admissions scheme, which can be found on West Berkshire Website.

9. Admission outside normal age group

Requests from parents/carers for school places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully whether for gifted and talented students or for those who have experienced problems, e.g. having missed education due to ill health, etc. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, cases will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the student's interests between the parents/carers, schools concerned (both old and preferred) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by Denefield. Those refused places outside the normal age group will be informed of their statutory right of appeal.

10. Appeals

During the normal admissions round, any parent/carer not offered a school place at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. This can be for a place at one or more of your preferred schools and against an alternative school place that has been allocated by West Berkshire Council. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application. Appeals must be lodged by the dates set out in the coordinated and in-year admissions scheme for the normal admissions round or within 21 days from the date of the offer or refusal letter.

11. Admission to the Sixth Form at Denefield

The school offers a wide range of courses based on grades achieved at GCSE and it is considered that acceptance is based on a student's capability of benefiting from a course as published in the Sixth Form prospectus. Admission to the Sixth Form and any particular course will depend on students being appropriately qualified to start that course. Although admission will not be dependent on interview, a course guidance meeting may be advised.

Admission to the Sixth Form will respect parental preference as long as the school offers the course and the prospective student has appropriate pre-requisite qualifications for the course.

[1] Behaviour can be described as challenging where it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil behaviour **or** it is of such severity, frequency or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil's / other pupils' education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment.

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The school will not admit students into Year 12 or Year 13 who have already completed a two year post 16 educational pathway or who would be 18 or over at the start of their entry to Denefield.

12. Oversubscription

The highest priority is children who are looked after and children who were previously looked after, and who meet the criteria as set out in the Sixth Form prospectus.

In the case of a tie breaker being necessary, priority will be given to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to Denefield. Distances will be measured using the West Berkshire Admissions Geographical Information System taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

Where 2 or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places a random allocation system will be used to set the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness, the School Admissions Team (West Berkshire Council) will administer the random allocation system overseen by the Head of the Education Service. Simply, the applicant's names will be drawn in order and that order will be applied to their ranked order in admission list for the school.

In the case of multiple births, the parent/carer will be approached to decide which sibling or siblings will receive the available places.

13. Management of the policy

School: This policy is implemented and managed by the Headteacher on behalf of Denefield.

Trust Board: The Trust Board will review and update this policy annually in line with all relevant legislation.

Appendix 1
Secondary Schools Normal admissions round timetable

31 October 2026	**Closing date for applications**
1 March 2027*	**Offers and refusals issued to Parents/Carers**
20 March 2027	Parents/Carer acceptance of offer
31 March 2027	Closing date for appeals

***or the next working day where the national offer day falls on a weekend or bank holiday.

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