



SECKFORD FOUNDATION
FREE SCHOOLS TRUST

**POLICY
DOCUMENT**

Admissions Policy 2017 (Beccles Free School)

Document Owner:	Trust Board
Responsible Trust Committee:	
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APPROVED Signature (Principal):	DATE ()
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Other relevant policies and documents

- Admissions Policy (Ixworth Free School)
- Admissions Policy (Saxmundham Free School)
- Equalities Policy (Students)
- Students Out of Chronological Year Group Policy

Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust

'Free School(s)' = schools within the Trust

Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the proposed admissions policy for the Beccles Free School for 2017-18.

About Beccles Free School

From 2017, Beccles Free School will be a school for 600 students (120 students for each of the Years 7 to 11).

Our vision is for all our students to:

- achieve their potential through a culture of high academic, personal and social expectations and aspirations;
- have their needs met and be recognised as individuals through high quality inclusion and pastoral care systems;
- learn in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment in which every child matters and in which parents / carers and the wider community are part of the learning journey;
- enjoy an all-round education beyond academic study, so that each can discover his or her latent talents.

We have aspirations and expectations for our students that they make above average progress and achieve to the very highest level in all that they do. We are inclusive and have that aim for all students relative to their starting points.

General

1. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will act in accordance with, and will ensure that, an Independent Appeal Panel is trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code published by the Department of Education ("the Codes") as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to maintained schools. For this purpose reference in the Codes or legislation to

“admission authorities” shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust.

2. Notwithstanding the generality of paragraph 2 of this policy, the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will participate in the coordinated admission arrangements operated by the LA and the local Fair Access Protocol.
3. Notwithstanding any provision in this policy the Secretary of State may:
 - Direct the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust to admit a named student to the Beccles Free School who is a looked after child or on application from an LA. This will include complying with a School Attendance Order¹. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult with the Seckford Foundation Free School Trust;
 - Direct the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust to admit a named student to the Beccles Free School if the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust has failed to act in accordance with this policy or has otherwise failed to comply with applicable admissions and equalities legislation or the provisions of the Codes;
 - Direct the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust to amend its admission arrangements where they fail to comply with the Schools Admissions Code or the Admission Appeals Code;
4. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust shall ensure that parents and relevant children² will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the Trust. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of the Seckford Foundation Free School Trust. The arrangements for appeals will comply with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department of Education as it applies to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

¹ LAs are able to issue school attendance orders if a child is not attending school. These are legally binding upon parents. Such an order might, for instance, be appropriate where a child has a place at a Free School but his/her parents are refusing to send him/her to school. The order will require a parent to ensure his/her child attends a specified school.

² 'Relevant children' means children who are above the compulsory school age, or will be above compulsory school age by the time they start to receive education at the school.

Applying for a place

5. Applications should be made through the use of the common application form (CAF) which is available from the admissions team at Suffolk County Council:
 - a. By post at: Admissions Team, Constantine House, Constantine Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2DH
 - b. Online at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions
 - c. By phoning to request an application form: 0845 600 0981 (9am - 5pm)
 - d. Through the Local Authority brochure, “Admissions to Schools in Suffolk 2017-18”.
6. Applications should be made to the Local Authority by the published closing date (31 October 2017).

Relevant area

7. Subject to paragraph 8, the meaning of "Relevant Area" for the purposes of consultation requirements in relation to admissions arrangements is that determined by the LA for maintained schools in the area in accordance with the Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999.
8. If the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust does not consider the relevant area determined by the local authority for the maintained schools in the area to be appropriate, it must apply to the Secretary of State by 1 August for a determination of the appropriate relevant area for the Beccles Free School, setting out the reasons for this view. The Secretary of State will consult the Beccles Free School and the LA in which the school is situated in reaching a decision.

Requirements to admit students

9. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will:
 - Admit all students with a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan (EHC Plan) naming the Beccles Free School;
 - Adopt admission oversubscription criteria that give highest priority to "looked after children"³ (children in care) and previously looked after children (children who were 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 after³) in accordance with the relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code.

Oversubscription criteria, admission number, consultation, determination and objections

10. The admission arrangements will include oversubscription criteria, and an admission number for each relevant age group⁴. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will consult on its admission arrangements and determine them in line with the requirements within the School Admissions Code.
11. Objections to the admission arrangements laid out in this policy can be made to the Schools Adjudicator whose decisions are binding and enforceable. The Schools Adjudicator must consider whether admission arrangements referred to him comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions. As the admissions authority, the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust must revise admission arrangements immediately to give effect to the Adjudicator's decision. An Adjudicator's determination is binding and enforceable.
12. Local authorities must use their power to refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements at schools in their area (for which they are not the admission authority) contravene admissions law and/or the Code.

13. Anyone who considers that any maintained school or Academy's arrangements are unfair or unlawful, or not in compliance with the Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the Schools Adjudicator. Further information on how to make an objection can be obtained from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator: <http://www.schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk>
14. The Secretary of State may refer the admission arrangements of any school to the Schools Adjudicator at any time if he considers that they may not comply with the requirements of the Admissions Code.

³ 'Previously looked after children' includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (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 order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

⁴ 'Relevant age group' means normal point of admission to the school, for example, Year 7.

Procedure for admitting students to Beccles Free School

Admission numbers:

15. Beccles Free School has the following agreed admission number for the year 2017-18:
 - a. 120 students in Year 7
 Please refer to Suffolk County Council's "Admissions to Schools in Suffolk" booklet for the process for the normal admissions round for further information: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions>
16. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will consider all applications for places at the school. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will offer places to all those who have applied.

Procedures where the school is oversubscribed:

17. Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of students with statements of Special Educational Needs where Beccles Free School is named on the statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:
 1. A "looked after child" or a child who was previously looked after⁵ (children who were 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 after³) but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order⁴. A "looked after child" is a child who is;
 - (a) in the care of a LA, or

- (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions ("looked after children" as defined in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Children with a sibling attending Beccles Free School at the time of application. A Sibling is defined in these arrangements as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.
 3. Other children by distance from Beccles Free School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the school as the crow flies. Distances are measured between the two full UK postcodes of the student's home⁶ and the school postcode using a website that calculates the distance up to three decimal places between the two points. Random allocation⁷ will be used as a tie-break in category '3' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same. Should a sibling who is from a multiple birth be offered the last intake place for that year, their siblings will automatically be offered a place too, even if that makes the intake over the Published Admission Number.

⁵ *An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is as 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. 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)*

⁶ *A student's home is defined as the address where the student is ordinarily resident for the majority of the school term time with a parent who has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 and a parent includes a person who is not a parent but who has responsibility for her / him. This could include a student's guardians but will not usually include other relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles etc unless they have all the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a student has in relation to the student and her / his property. We may need proof of this address. We will not treat your child as ordinarily resident if you rent or own a second home in the catchment area or if you use another address to give the impression that your child lives nearby so that you have a higher priority for a place at the school. Where a child lives with separated parents who have shared responsibility, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Both parents must provide evidence in writing to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.*

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week with both parents, evidence of the main contact address will be required to support the application. Both parents must agree in writing which address is to be used as the 'ordinarily resident' address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

⁷ Where two or more students 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 school).

Operation of waiting lists:

18. Subject to any provisions regarding waiting lists in Suffolk County Council's coordinated scheme, Beccles Free School will operate a waiting list for each year group. Where in any year the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the beginning of the final term of the school year. This will be maintained by the Trust and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.
19. A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the over subscription criteria set out in paragraph 17. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the over subscription criteria.
20. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will maintain and hold those names detailed on the waiting list up to the end of the term after the beginning of each school year.

Arrangements for admitting students to other year groups, including to replace any students who have left the school:

21. During 2017 the Trust will coordinate admissions for in-year applications and for applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry.
22. Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. Decisions to admit or otherwise will be on the basis of the circumstances of each case. On receiving the decision, parents will be informed of their statutory right to appeal. This right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.
23. Subject to any provisions in Suffolk County Council's coordinated admission arrangements relating to applications submitted for years other than the normal year of entry, the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will consider all such applications and if the year group applied for has a place available, admit the child unless one of the permitted reliefs apply. If more applications are received than there are places available, the over subscription criteria in paragraph 17 shall apply. Parents whose application is turned down shall be entitled to appeal.

Right to Appeal:

24. If the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust informs a parent of a decision (via Suffolk County Council for normal year admissions) to refuse their child a place at Beccles Free School for which they have applied, it must include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents will be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they must set out their grounds for their appeal in writing.
25. The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust will not limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.
26. Beccles Free School will use the independent appeals service provided by the Local Authority. Independent Appeals Panels are appointed in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Appeals should be made, in writing, to Education Appeals Office, PO Box 579, Ipswich, IP1 2BX within 20 school days from the date of notification that the application was unsuccessful.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Trust Board will review this policy on an annual basis and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy.