



Sunshine
Academy

Admissions Policy Including Nursery

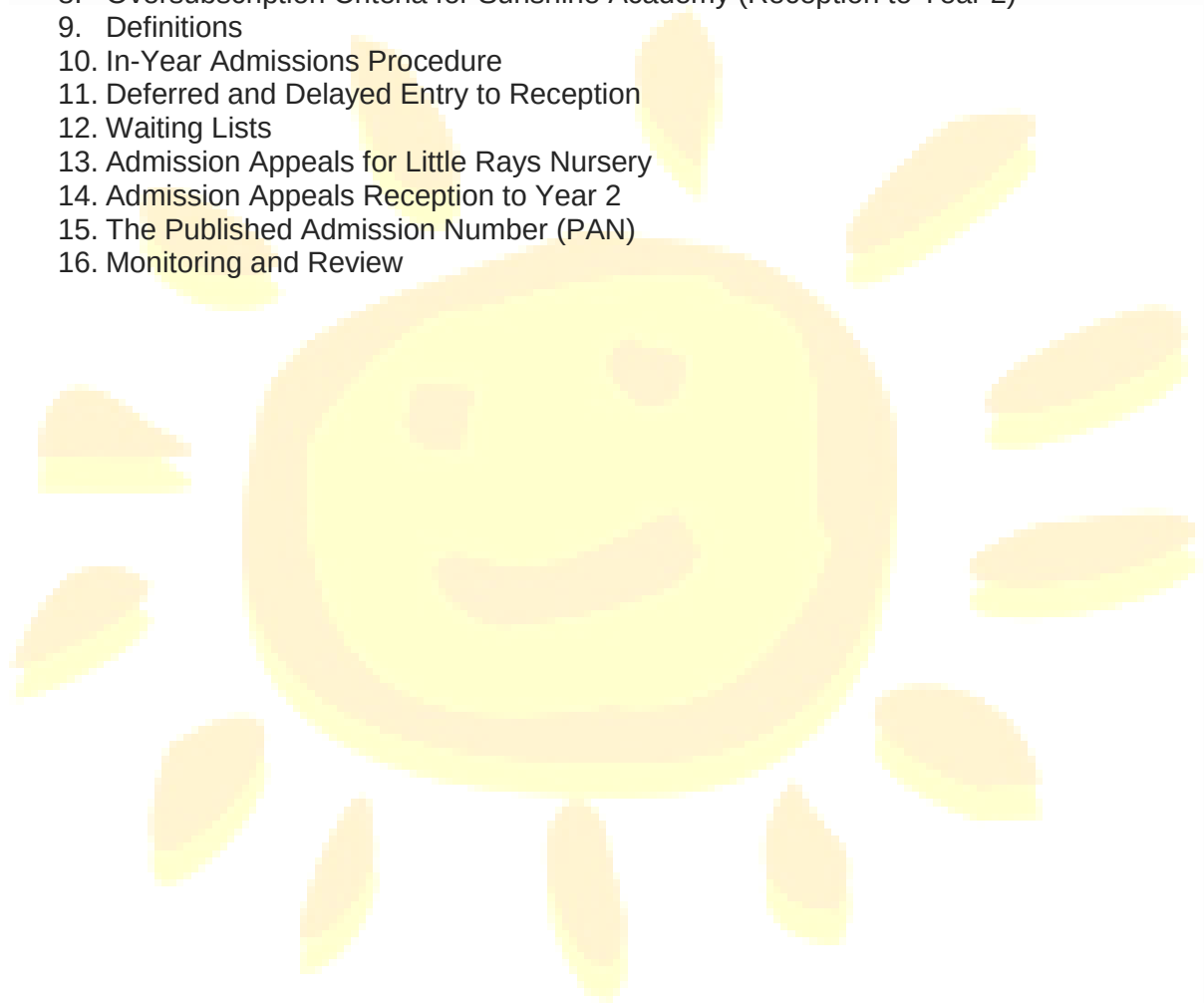
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1. Introduction

Sunshine Academy is part of the Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust. As an academy, we are our own admissions authority and are responsible for determining our own admission arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code and admissions law. This Admissions Policy conforms to the regulations set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended), the Education Act 2002, and the statutory School Admissions Code 2021. We work in partnership with Walsall Local Authority to coordinate admissions, but the responsibility for determining admission arrangements rests with the academy trust's governing body.

2. Aims and Scope

Sunshine Academy is an inclusive school, welcoming children from all backgrounds and abilities. All applications to the school will be treated on merit and in a sensitive manner. This policy covers admissions to:

- **Little Rays Nursery** (for 3-4 year olds)
- **Reception to Year 2** (for children aged 4-7)

The only restriction we place on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available, we will apply the oversubscription criteria set out in this policy to determine whether a child is offered a place.

A child's level of ability is irrelevant to this school's admissions policy, as are any special needs the child may have. We are committed to ensuring fair access to education for all children.

3. Admissions Authority and Consultation

Admissions Authority: As an academy, Sunshine Academy (through the Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust governing body and Local Governing Body) is the admissions authority for the school. We are responsible for determining our admission arrangements.

Consultation: We will consult on our admission arrangements at least once every seven years, and whenever we propose changes to our arrangements. Consultation will take place in accordance with the School Admissions Code and will include:

- Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen
- Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions
- All other admission authorities within the relevant area
- Walsall Local Authority
- Any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority.

Determination: Our admission arrangements are determined (formally approved) by **28 February** each year for the following September intake.

Objections: Anyone can object to our admission arrangements by submitting an objection to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May each year.

4. How Parents/Carers Can Apply for Admittance to Little Rays Nursery at Sunshine Academy

Applications for a nursery place at Little Rays Nursery are made directly to the school by completing a paper application form available from the school office.

Eligibility

Children can access a part-time nursery place following their third birthday, providing there is sufficient room in the nursery. Eligible families can also access 30 hours of nursery provision. Eligibility criteria is available on the school website or the DfE website at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Registration Process

- All parents are requested to register their interest as soon as possible by contacting the school office. This assists the school in making future plans.
- Registration does not guarantee that a place will be available when the child reaches nursery admission age.
- The date of registration will be noted but does not give any priority in the allocation of places.

Nursery Provision

Sunshine Academy has a 52-place nursery:

- 26 children in the morning session (8:45am - 11:45am)
- 26 children in the afternoon session (12:15pm - 3:15pm)

The actual number of places available may vary depending on the uptake of 30-hour provision.

We offer a staggered intake in Autumn Term, Spring Term, and Summer Term once the child turns 3.

If the Nursery is Full

If the intake is full, unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria (see Section 6). No further applications will be accepted if no places are available.

Prior to a Child Starting Nursery

Before children are admitted:

- Fully completed Admission Forms are required for each child. The information on the forms is essential to each child's welfare at all times, particularly in case of emergency.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate must be seen by the school and recorded on the admission form.
- Parents/carers will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing. In the event of non-admission, the reason for the decision will be provided.
- Parents/carers will be required to accept their child's place by return form or email to the school office within 10 school days.
- If your child is to attend 30-hour provision, an eligibility code must be provided to school and renewed each term.

Important Note About Reception Admission

Attendance at Little Rays Nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception at Sunshine Academy. When your child is ready to move into Reception, you must apply for a place through Walsall Local Authority (see Section 5).

5. How Parents/Carers Can Apply for Admittance to Sunshine Academy for Reception to Year 2

Reception Applications (Normal Point of Entry)

Sunshine Academy does not offer places directly to children for Reception. **Even if your child attends Little Rays Nursery, they will not automatically move to Reception.** You must complete an online application with Walsall Local Authority.

Application Process

1. **When to Apply:** Applications for Reception places open in September and must be submitted by the national closing date of **15 January** in the year your child is due to start school.
2. **How to Apply:** Complete an online application via Walsall Council's website at: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>
3. **School Preferences:** You can name up to three schools, ranked in order of preference, and give reasons for your preferences.
4. **Support Available:** In November each year, Sunshine Academy sends a letter to all parents of nursery children reminding them to apply for Reception places. Support is available in school to complete the online application if needed.
5. **Notification:** You will be notified of the outcome of your application on **National Offer Day** (16 April, or the next working day).

When Children Start Reception

In this area, children enter Reception at the start of the academic year in which they turn five. There is one admission date per year, in early September when the autumn term begins.

In-Year Applications (Reception to Year 2)

For applications to any year group outside the normal admission round (including mid-year moves and applications to Years 1-2), please see Section 9.

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names Sunshine Academy will be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to other applicants. Parents of children with EHCPs should contact Walsall Council's SEND Team or the local authority that issued the EHCP if they wish their child to attend Sunshine Academy.

6. Transition to Junior School (Year 3)

Sunshine Academy is an infant school and children leave at the end of Year 2. When your child completes Year 2, they will need to transfer to a junior or primary school for Year 3. Field Road Academy is our main feeder school and part of the Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust.

Important: Attendance at Sunshine Academy does not guarantee a place at any particular junior or primary school. You must apply for a Year 3 place through the normal admissions process.

When to Apply

Applications for junior school places (Year 3 entry) must be submitted to Walsall Local Authority during the autumn term of your child's Year 2 year.

- **Application period:** Typically opens in early September and closes in mid-January
- **National Offer Day:** 16 April (or the next working day)

How to Apply

1. **Complete an online application** via Walsall Council's website at: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>
2. **Name up to three schools** in order of preference. You can apply for:
 - Junior schools (Years 3-6)
 - Primary schools with junior places (Reception to Year 6)
 - Schools in Walsall or in other local authority areas
3. **Consider your options carefully:**
 - Research schools in your area
 - Attend open days and visit schools
 - Check each school's admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria
 - Consider the distance from your home and transport arrangements

Support from Sunshine Academy

We are committed to supporting families through the transition process:

- In the **autumn term of Year 2**, we will send all parents a reminder letter about applying for junior school places, including key dates and how to apply
- We will provide information about local junior schools and their open days
- Support is available in school to complete the online application if needed
- We work closely with local junior schools to ensure a smooth transition for all children

Transition Arrangements

Once your child has been offered a Year 3 place:

- We will liaise with the receiving school to share information about your child's progress and needs
- Your child may have the opportunity to visit their new school before starting in September
- We will provide transition activities in the summer term of Year 2 to prepare children for the move to junior school

Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

If your child has an EHCP, the process for transferring to junior school is different. You should:

- Contact Walsall Council's SEND Team well in advance (ideally by the autumn term of Year 2)
- The SEND Team will work with you to identify an appropriate junior school
- The EHCP will be reviewed and amended to name the new school

Further Information

For more information about applying for junior school places, please:

- Visit the Walsall Council website: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>
- Contact the school office
- Speak to your child's class teacher or the Headteacher

7. Oversubscription Criteria for Little Rays Nursery

Please note: Admission to nursery is non-statutory and places are offered at the discretion of the school based on available capacity.

If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated using the oversubscription criteria below, in the following order of priority:

1. **Children who are 3 or 4 years old and will move to Reception in September** of the current or following academic year.
2. **Looked after children and previously looked after children** (see Section 8 for definitions).
3. **Children who have a sibling already in attendance at Sunshine Academy** (Reception to Year 2) at the time of application and who will still be attending at the proposed admission date (see Section 8 for sibling definition).
4. **Children for whom a place at the school is essential on medical or social grounds**, as supported in writing by a medical practitioner or social worker. Applications will be subject to verification by the Director of Children's Services. The supporting evidence must demonstrate why only Sunshine Academy can meet the child's needs and why no other school could do so.
5. **Date of registration:** The child's name is on the waiting list. Priority will be given based on the date when the child's name was added to the waiting list (earliest date = highest priority).
6. **Distance:** Distance between the home address and the school, as measured in a straight line, with priority given to those living closest to the school.

Tie-breaker

If the final place is offered to a child with siblings (e.g., twins or triplets) who also qualify for a place, we will admit those siblings even if this means exceeding our Published Admission Number.

Where the distance criterion is identical for two or more children, random allocation will be used as a tie-breaker. This will be supervised by an independent person not connected with the school.

8. Oversubscription Criteria for Sunshine Academy (Reception to Year 2)

The Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception is **60**.

If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated using the oversubscription criteria below, in the following order of priority:

1. **Looked after children and previously looked after children** (see Section 8 for definitions).
2. **Children who have a sibling already in attendance at Sunshine Academy** at the time of application and who will still be attending at the proposed admission date (see Section 8 for sibling definition).
3. **Children for whom a place at the school is essential on medical or social grounds**, as supported in writing by a medical practitioner or social worker. Applications will be subject to verification by the Director of Children's Services. The supporting evidence must demonstrate why only Sunshine Academy can meet the child's needs and why no other school could do so.
4. **Distance:** Distance between the home address and the school, as measured in a straight line, with priority given to those living closest to the school. Distance is measured using the Local Authority's computerised mapping system.

Tie-breaker

If the final place is offered to a child with siblings (e.g., twins or triplets) who also qualify for a place, we will admit those siblings even if this means exceeding our Published Admission Number.

Where the distance criterion is identical for two or more children, random allocation will be used as a tie-breaker. This will be supervised by an independent person not connected with the school.

9. Definitions

Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

Looked after children are children who are in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority in accordance with Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989.

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 Adoption and Children Act 2002), or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order (under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

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 are also included. 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.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as:

- A brother or sister
- A half-brother or half-sister
- A step-brother or step-sister
- An adopted brother or sister
- Children living in the same household as part of the same family unit
- Children who have a sibling already in attendance at Sunshine Academy (**Nursery, Reception, Year 1 or Year 2**) at the time of application and must still be attending at the proposed date of admission.

Note: Attendance at Little Rays Nursery does not count as a sibling connection for the purposes of admission to Reception or other year groups.

Home Address

The home address is the child's permanent place of residence at the time of application. This must be the address where the child normally lives with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Where a child lives with parents who are separated, the home address will be considered to be where the child spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday) during term time. Parents may be required to provide evidence of the child's home address.

We may seek further evidence and carry out checks if there are concerns about the validity of an address. If a place is offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application (for example, a false address), the offer may be withdrawn.

Distance Measurement

Distance is measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the main entrance of the school using Walsall Local Authority's computerised mapping system.

10. In-Year Admissions Procedure Applications for Reception to Year 2 (Outside Normal Admission Round)

Walsall Local Authority coordinates the in-year admission process for applications to all Walsall primary schools and academies.

Parents/carers who wish to apply for admission to Sunshine Academy outside the normal admission round (including mid-year transfers and applications to Years 1-2) should submit an online application through the School Admissions pages of the Walsall Council website at:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>

Applications may not be made directly to the school. Any supplementary information forms required by the school must be returned to Sunshine Academy.

Assessment of Applications

On receipt of an application for in-year admission, Walsall Local Authority will:

1. Assess whether the application meets the criteria for consideration under the Walsall Primary Fair Access Protocol (where appropriate, a referral will be made to the Fair Access Panel)
2. Assess the application in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria (Section 7)
3. Write to the applicant to indicate one of the following outcomes:
 - **Offer:** Where the child is eligible for a place, they will be offered a place
 - **Refusal:** Where it is not possible to offer a place, the letter will contain details of how the parent may appeal against the decision and, where there is a waiting list, their child's name will be added to it
 - **Alternative offer:** If it is not possible to offer a place at Sunshine Academy and the child is currently without a school place, a place will be offered at an alternative Walsall school which has places available

Children with EHCPs

Parents of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) must contact Walsall Council's SEND Team or the local authority that issued their EHCP if they wish their child to move to Sunshine Academy.

Applications for Schools Outside Walsall

Parents who wish to apply for places at schools outside of Walsall should contact the relevant local authority directly.

11. Deferred and Delayed Entry to Reception

Deferred Entry

Parents offered a place in Reception for their child have the right to defer the date their child is admitted, or to take the place up part-time, until the child reaches compulsory school age. Compulsory school age is the beginning of the term following the child's fifth birthday. For children born between:

- **1 September and 31 December:** Compulsory school age is reached at the start of the spring term (January)
- **1 January and 31 March:** Compulsory school age is reached at the start of the summer term (April)
- **1 April and 31 August:** Compulsory school age is reached at the start of the autumn term (September) following their fifth birthday

If parents wish to defer entry or take up a place part-time, they should discuss this with the Headteacher as soon as possible after receiving their offer.

Important: The place must be taken up within the same academic year for which it was offered. The school will hold the place and it will not be offered to another child.

Delayed Entry for Summer-Born Children (Admission Outside Normal Age Group)

Parents of summer-born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that their child is admitted to Reception a year later than usual, i.e., in the September following their fifth birthday rather than their fourth birthday. This means the child would be admitted outside their normal age group.

How to Request Delayed Entry

Parents who wish to request delayed entry should:

1. **Submit a request in writing** to the Headteacher at Sunshine Academy as early as possible, ideally by **31 December in the year before the child would normally start school**"
2. **Include supporting information**, such as:
 - Why you believe it is in your child's best interests to be admitted outside their normal age group
 - Any relevant professional evidence (e.g., from educational psychologists, health visitors, GPs)
 - Information about your child's development and whether they were born prematurely
 - Whether they have previously been educated outside their normal age group
3. **The decision:** The Headteacher and Local Governing Body will make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. We will consider:
 - Your views as parents
 - The views of the Headteacher
 - Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development
 - Whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group
 - Whether the child was born prematurely
 - The views of relevant professionals
4. **Outcome:** You will be informed of the decision in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

5. **If the request is agreed:** You must still apply for a Reception place in the usual way for the September when you want your child to start school (i.e., the following year). Your application will be processed alongside all other applications and the oversubscription criteria will be applied if necessary. **Agreeing to the request does not guarantee a place.**
6. **If the request is refused:** You must decide whether to:
- Apply for a Reception place for the current year (the normal year of entry), or
 - Apply for a Year 1 place the following year (but your child will miss Reception)

Right of Appeal

There is no right of appeal against a decision not to allow a child to be admitted outside their normal age group. However, if you apply for a place and are refused, you have the right to appeal against the refusal of a place.

12. Waiting Lists

Reception Waiting List

If Sunshine Academy is oversubscribed for Reception places, a waiting list will be maintained by Walsall Local Authority until the end of the autumn term (31 December) in the year of admission.

The waiting list will be maintained in the order of the oversubscription criteria set out in Section 7. This means that a child's position on the waiting list may change as other children are added or removed.

Late applications (received after the national closing date of 15 January) will be added to the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria, not the date the application was received.

Parents will be contacted if a place becomes available.

In-Year Waiting Lists

For in-year applications (including Years 1-2), if a place cannot be offered, your child's name will automatically be added to the waiting list unless you request otherwise.

Waiting lists for in-year applications will be maintained for one school term. After this time, if you still wish your child to be considered for a place, you will need to submit a new application.

Nursery Waiting List

For Little Rays Nursery, if a place cannot be offered, your child's name will be added to the waiting list and maintained in accordance with the oversubscription criteria in Section 6.

The waiting list will be reviewed at the start of each term (autumn, spring, and summer) when new places become available.

13. Admission Appeals for Little Rays Nursery

Please note: Admission to nursery is non-statutory education. While we operate a fair and transparent admissions process, there is no statutory right of appeal for nursery places. However, if your child does not receive a place in Little Rays Nursery and you wish to challenge the decision, you may submit a written request for review to the Chair of Governors.

Review Process

1. **Submit a written request** to the Chair of Governors (via the school office) within **20 school days** of being notified that your child does not have a place.
2. **Include in your letter:**
 - Your child's full name and date of birth
 - The reasons why you believe your child should be admitted to Little Rays Nursery
 - Any supporting evidence (e.g., medical or social grounds)
3. **Review meeting:** A review panel will be convened within **14 days** of receiving your letter. You will be given **10 school days' notice** of the review meeting date.
4. **The review panel** will consist of:
 - Chair of Governors (or another governor not previously involved in the decision)
 - A representative from the Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust (if appropriate)
 - An independent clerk

Note: The Headteacher and Early Years Leader will not sit on the panel but may be asked to provide information about the decision.
5. **Decision:** The panel will review the decision and inform you of the outcome in writing within **5 school days** of the review meeting.

Important: Submitting a request for review does not guarantee that your child will be allocated a place. The panel will only overturn the original decision if they find that the admissions criteria were not applied correctly or that the decision was unreasonable.

14. Admission Appeals for Reception to Year 2

If we do not offer your child a place at Sunshine Academy for Reception or any other year group (Years 1-2), this will be because to do so would prejudice the education of other children by exceeding the Published Admission Number or class size limits.

Your Right to Appeal

You have the right to appeal against the decision to refuse your child a place. Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel, which is not connected to the school. The appeal panel's decision is binding on all parties.

How to Appeal

1. **Submit an appeal:** Full details of how to appeal, including the appeal form and deadline, will be included in your refusal letter. You can also find information on Walsall Council's website at:
<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions/appeal-an-admissions-decision>
2. **Appeal deadline:** You must submit your appeal within **20 school days** of receiving the refusal letter (for Reception applications made in the normal admission round) or within **20 school days** of receiving the refusal letter for in-year applications.
3. **The appeal hearing:** You will be given at least **10 school days' notice** of the appeal hearing date. You are entitled to attend the hearing and present your case in person. You may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

4. **The appeal panel:** The panel consists of three independent members who have no connection to the school. The panel will consider:
 - Whether the admission arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code and were correctly applied
 - Whether admitting your child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources
 - Your reasons for wanting your child to attend Sunshine Academy
5. **The decision:** The panel will inform you of their decision in writing within **5 school days** of the hearing. The decision is final and binding.

Further Information

The Department for Education has published guidance for parents on school admissions appeals, which can be found at: www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/appealing-a-schools-decision

15. The Published Admission Number (PAN)

The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of children the school can accommodate in each year group.

Reception to Year 2

The Published Admission Number for Reception is **60** per year group.

We keep this number under review, and the governing body will consult on any proposed changes in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

Nursery

We have a 52-place nursery:

- 26 children in the morning session
- 26 children in the afternoon session

The actual number of places available may vary depending on the uptake of 30-hour provision.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Local Governing Body and reviewed annually, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our school or in the local area.

Any proposed changes to the admission arrangements will be subject to consultation in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

Our policy takes due note of guidance provided by Walsall Local Authority and the local Admissions Forum, and is compliant with the School Admissions Code 2021.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Walsall Council's Coordinated Admissions Scheme
- Walsall Primary Fair Access Protocol
- Sunshine Academy's SEND Policy
- Sunshine Academy's Equality Policy

Further Information

For more information about school admissions in Walsall, please visit:

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools-in-walsall/school-admissions>