



ADMISSION POLICY FOR PLUME, MALDON'S COMMUNITY ACADEMY **FROM SEPTEMBER 2024**

General Principles

The main principle of admission to Plume Academy is to maintain the character of the academy as a comprehensive school, providing for the needs of young persons within the 11 - 18 age range who live in Maldon and the surrounding areas, and who are able to benefit from the educational provision offered by the academy. There is, however, no guarantee of a place for applicants living in our priority admission area as defined below.

The academy will endeavour to provide places for applicants who live inside as well as outside of our priority admission area whose parents/carers wish them to attend Plume Academy. This is provided that they can be accommodated within the agreed admission limits and that the academy can provide an education appropriate to their needs.

Students will be admitted at the age of 11+ **without** reference to ability or aptitude using the following criteria. The number intended to admit in **September 2025** will be **295**.

Plume Academy participates in the Local Authority coordinated scheme and all deadlines within that should be adhered to by applicants.

Admission to Plume Academy is not dependent on any 'voluntary' contribution.

As required by the Regulations of 2005, top priority will be given to applications on behalf of children in public care (Children in Care)

Definitions of priority admission area

Applicants living within the priority admission area, as defined by the catchment area outlined on the Essex County Council website, at the time of application and determination will be given priority admission to the academy providing an application form is received by the stipulated closing date.

Sibling

By sibling we mean:

- children living at the same address who have one or both parents/carers in common;
- children living at the same address who are related by a parent's/carer's marriage;
- children living at the same address whose parents/carers are living as partners at this address; or
- siblings who are adopted.

*Please note that 'cousins' are not included in our definition of sibling.

Home address

Proof of residence will be required by the coordinated scheme and the offer of a place may be withdrawn if the appropriate proof of residency is not met.

Where a child lives part of the week with one parent/carer and part with another member of the family, the '**home address**' will be considered to be the residence where the child spends at least three nights of the academy week during term time. Again, proof of residence will be required.

Oversubscription

Where applications for admissions exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked After Children (LAC)¹, previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and Children Previously Looked after from outside England (IPLAC)²
2. Children residing in the priority admission area as defined by the catchment area outlined on the Essex County Council website, with a sibling attending the academy at the time of the application, with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will still be attending Plume Academy at the start of the new academic year.
3. Children of staff who have been employed for a period of two years or more at the time of application, or those filling a recognised skills shortage area.
4. Children residing in the priority admission area as defined by the catchment area outlined on the Essex County Council website.
5. Children residing outside the priority admission area, as defined by the catchment area outlined on the Essex County Council website, with a sibling attending the academy at the time of the application, with a reasonable expectation that the sibling will still be attending Plume Academy at the start of the new academic year.
6. Children residing outside the priority admission area as defined by the catchment area outlined on the Essex County Council website.

Tie-breaker

In the event of oversubscription in any category above, priority will be determined by the proximity of the child's home to Plume Academy using a straight line distance as calculated in accordance with the Local Authority booklet.

Children with an **Educational Health Care Plan** naming Plume Academy may override the above.

Waiting lists

The academy will maintain a waiting list after 1 September of each academic year and is required to do so for the first term of Year 7. Applications for inclusion on a waiting list must be made on

¹ School Admission Code (September 2021) Sec 1, paragraph 1.7 [page 10]. 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 the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

² School Admission Code (September 2021) Sec 1, paragraph 1.7 [page 10]. 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

the academy's appropriate form and they will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria described above.

The academy also has to admit any student who is the subject of a 'direction' by the Secretary of State or allocated according to the local Fair Access Protocol. Any such students take precedence over any working waiting list.

We maintain waiting lists for all 'full' year groups.

Mid-year admissions

Admissions for all other year groups will be dealt with in accordance with this policy. The academy will administer all applications for admission outside the normal round of admissions. Please contact the academy for an application form.

In line with the School Admission Code (September 2021), upon receipt of an in-year application, Plume Academy, the admission authority, will notify the parents/carers of the outcome of their application in writing within 15 school days.

In line with the School Admission Code (September 2021) paragraph 2.31 '*where an applicant is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements should be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school*'. Therefore, an applicant must be able to start at Plume Academy within 10 school days from the offer date. Places cannot therefore be reserved or start dates delayed for extended periods of time.

Once an offer of admission has been made, Plume Academy will require the parent/carer to accept the offer of a place at the school within 10 school days and the student will be required to start within this specified period. If the applicant does not respond or is unable to start within 10 school days, the parent/carer will be given notice that the offer of admission will be withdrawn. This is to enable places to be offered to other applicants on the Waiting List who can start within this specified period.

Mid-year admissions – returning from Home Education

Essex County Council have provided advice and guidance on the county's protocols for those children returning from Home Education as outlined in their 'Fair Access Protocol for In-Year admission to secondary schools in Essex for children without a local school place or alternative provision'.

The Fair Access Protocol [FAP] states that the child must return to the original school and if necessary, alternative provision or a managed move should then be considered.

Where a child was removed by a parent to be home educated from any schools within 3 miles in walking distance or accessible by public transport within 75 minutes (one way), in the event of the parent requiring a school place again, the school from which the child was last withdrawn will offer to take the child back on roll and assume responsibility for education provision. This will be the case in all circumstances where the child still lives within the parameters described above.

Under the protocol, all secondary schools may wish to refuse an application and refer to Hard to Place pupils who have demonstrated previously high levels of challenging behaviour where it is evidenced that the pupil meets one or more of the agreed thresholds outlined in the FAP.

Appeals

If a place at Plume Academy is not offered, parents/carers have the right to appeal to an independent panel. Appeal papers will normally be sent out with offer letters to all those parents/carers who were offered an academy lower on their preference list than their first choice academy, and the closing date on the appeal application form must be adhered to.

Parents/carers who wish to appeal the decision of the admission authority to refuse their child a place at the Plume Academy may apply in writing to the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel at the address below. Parents/carers have 20 school days from the date of their refusal letter to submit their written appeal and should explain clearly the reason(s) for their appeal.

Appeal paperwork and guidance can be obtained from:

The Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel
The Statutory Appeals Office
PO Box 11
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX
Tel: 01245 430447
Email: statutoryappeals@essex.gov.uk (for enquiries only)
Website: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

For Year 6 into Year 7 admissions, all appeals submitted before the notified deadline should be heard by the same panel as it is difficult to slot in late applications. Appeals submitted before the notified deadline will be heard before 6 July or the first working day afterwards if 6 July falls on a weekend.

Admission of children outside of their normal age group

The Department of Education guidance states that *"in general, children should be educated in their normal age group, with the curriculum differentiated as appropriate, and that they should only be educated out of their normal age group in very limited circumstances."* Therefore, the decision to place a child/young person outside their chronological year group lies with the Head Teacher / Joint Heads of Academy.

As an admission authority, Plume Academy supports the Department of Education view that children should be educated in their normal age group, and whilst we must, in line with the School Admissions Code (2021) [2.18-2.20], make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned, we will always strongly advocate that admissions should be considered for the relevant chronological year group. We note, however, that admission authorities are not required to honour a decision made by a previous admission authority.

This Admissions Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Chair of Trustees on 16 December 2024