

# Admissions Policy

## September 2023 intake

### 1. Introduction

The policy below outlines the procedures, timelines and appeals process in line with the statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) in the School Admissions Code 2021, ("the Code") and the School Admissions Appeals Code 2022, ("the Appeals Code"). The school follows the guidance outlined in the Code for Fair Access Protocols and admissions priority for children adopted from state care outside of England.

The governing body of Al-Noor Voluntary Aided School performs the role of its admission authority. It will abide by decisions of the Schools Adjudicator and revise its admissions arrangements to give effect to them within two months of the decision (or by 20<sup>th</sup> February following the decision, whichever is sooner) unless an alternative timescale is specified by the Adjudicator.

Al-Noor Voluntary Aided Primary School has two classes in each year group and admits boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven years. The School opened in 2018 with Reception and year 1. It is introducing subsequent year groups on an annual basis until all year groups are present by September 2023. The School does not have a nursery.

Al-Noor Voluntary Aided School is its own Admissions Authority and is responsible for its admissions policy. The school coordinates with the London Borough of Redbridge for the administration of admissions applications.

In September 2023 the School will have the following year groups:

- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6

The School has a published admission number (PAN)<sup>1</sup> of 60 places for the Reception class, its first year group of admission. If a year group is undersubscribed, all applicants for that year group will be admitted. If a year group is oversubscribed, the school may refuse admission of another child where the admission would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

30 places in Reception are available for Muslim children (see the definition below) and the remaining places are open to any other applicant. In the event that the School receives more applications than places for Muslim children, children who do not receive a place under the Muslim faith category will

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<sup>1</sup> The maximum number of places agreed and available in a year group

be added to the applications for the other non-faith places and all of these will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria (see below). In the event that the non-faith category is oversubscribed but there are places available in the faith category for Muslim children, places will be offered with priority assigned according to the oversubscription criteria, until all places are filled.

Al-Noor Voluntary Aided Primary School is legally designated as a Muslim school. The School offers high quality education within an Islamic ethos embracing diversity, nurturing compassion for all, promoting good citizenship and encouraging collective work for the common good with all members of society. The School's vision statement is set out below.

*Individuals, families and communities that truly understand and accept their purpose of being in this world, confidently living and working together for a just, responsible and compassionate society.*

## **2. APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION**

Applications for admission to Reception year in September 2023 (known as admission "in the normal admission round") must be made to the Local Authority of the child's area of residence by completing and submitting their Local Authority's Common Application Form (CAF) which is accessible via the Local Authority's admissions page on its website.

The relevant website page of the Local Authority also contains detailed instructions on deadlines and other rules that must be adhered to when completing a CAF. This must be referred to carefully as missing or incorrect information may invalidate an application or reduce the chances of an applicant obtaining a place in the school of the applicant's choice.

Parents must ensure that they complete all parts of the form to provide all the information required in the CAF before submitting it, for example, details of siblings. Failure to do so by the application deadline will result in the child being placed into the next category that applies.

For children applying for one of the places reserved for Muslim pupils and/or for places under category 3 of the oversubscription criteria below, parents must, in addition to the Local Authority online CAF, complete and submit a supplementary information form (SIF) and submit it directly to the School before the Local Authority admissions application deadline. Applications where an online CAF has been completed and submitted but the SIF has not been completed and submitted to the School will be placed in the non-faith category, which may reduce the chance of obtaining a place.

The SIF is available for download from the School's website ([www.al-noorprimary.org.uk](http://www.al-noorprimary.org.uk)).

The CAF and the SIF must be completed carefully as missing or incorrect information may invalidate your application or reduce your chances of obtaining a school place. In line with the Local Authority's procedures, places that have been found to have been obtained using false information will be withdrawn.

### **Definition of Muslim applicants**

Applications will be accepted under the Muslim faith category, where at least one parent confirms on the School's Supplemental Information Form (SIF) that they satisfy the following criteria:

*"Any person who professes that there is no God worthy of Worship but Allah, that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is God's last Messenger and who believes in His Books, Messengers, in the Day of Judgment, who establishes the five daily prayers, pays alms to the poor (Zakah), fasts and who dedicates his worship exclusively to God".*

The parent must also arrange for an Imam to declare on the Supplementary Information Form that, to the best of his knowledge, the child for whom the admission application is being made, is brought up in accordance with the Muslim Faith detailed above.

### **The Child's Main Home Address**

The address given on the application form must be the child's main home address on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and where the child is expected to live in September 2023 and beyond. This will usually be the address at which Child Benefit is claimed, or if there is no entitlement to Child Benefit, then the address at which the child is registered with a GP. A business address or the address of a parent with whom the child does not live, a relative or a child minder, a landlord's tenant's address, nor future addresses are acceptable. Second homes with a short-term lease, will not be accepted as a normal permanent place of residence.

Where a child lives for part of the week with each parent separately, their main home address will be deemed to be the address at which the child lives for 51% or more of their time from Monday to Friday during school term times. Where there is a dispute over which address is the child's main home address, the address at which Child Benefit is claimed or if there is no entitlement to Child Benefit, then the address at which the child is registered with a GP will be deemed to be the main home address.

### **Age at Date of Admission**

The School admits "rising five" children, which means that children will normally be admitted to Reception year at the School, in the September following their fourth birthday. A child does not however reach compulsory school age until the first prescribed day on or following their fifth birthday. The prescribed days are: 31<sup>st</sup> December, 31<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Following the offer and acceptance of a place in the Reception class, parents can defer the date that their child takes up the place, or decide that their child will attend school part-time, until their child reaches compulsory school age or (for children born between 1 April and 31 August) until the beginning of the summer term of that academic year, without their child losing that place.

### **Admission of Summer Born Children outside of their Normal Age Range**

Parents of children born between 1 April and 31 August who have been allocated a place in Reception Year from September, but who want to defer their child's admission to the start of year 1 in the following September after the child has reached compulsory school age, will be unable to keep their child's place open, and will need to re-apply for admission in the usual way the following year.

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside of his or her normal age range into Reception year instead of year 1, however there is no automatic right to this. In these circumstances, parents are required, by the deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> January, to make the usual application for a school place in their child's normal age group *and at the same time*, submit a request, in writing to the school's governing body, for admission out of the normal age group. The governing body will make a decision, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and notify parents of the reason for the decision.

Where the request is agreed by the School, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn by parents before a place is offered. The parents must then make a new application as part of the main admission round of the following year, by 15<sup>th</sup> January.

There is however no guarantee that a place will be offered at the school as places cannot be reserved for future admission.

If an out of age application request is refused, the parents must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to Year 1 the following year.

Applications will be considered with all other applications in the usual way, applying the oversubscription criteria as necessary.

If an offer is not made in the desired year group, parents do not have the right to appeal and will need to decide whether to submit an application for admission outside normal age group to another school, or to seek a place in Year 1 subject to there being a place available. Please see section 5 for further details on out of normal age group applications.

### **Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan**

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), wherein the School is named, will automatically be admitted to the School without reference to the oversubscription criteria outlined below. The parents of such children must liaise with the SEND department of their local authority regarding school admission and should not submit the usual CAF or SIF forms.

## **3. ADMISSION TIMETABLE**

### **Reception**

The deadline for applications for admission to Reception year in the normal admission round is **15<sup>th</sup> January 2023**. Late applications will be accepted but will not be considered until all applications received on or before the application deadline have been processed, which will reduce the chance of obtaining a place for the child. These will be subjected to the over-subscription criteria if any places have not been filled otherwise they will be placed on a waiting list. Reception applications can reapply at any point between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December to ensure that they remain on the waiting list for the rest of the academic year.

National Offer Day for places in Reception year in the normal admission round is on or around **16<sup>th</sup> April 2023**. On that date, the Local Authority will notify parents whether their application for admission has been successful.

### **In-Year Admissions**

Applications for in-year admission must be made to Redbridge Local Authority by completing and submitting their Common Application Form (CAF), which is accessible via the Redbridge Local Authority's admissions page on its website at the following link:

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/admissions-during-the-school-year/>.

If there are no places available in the appropriate year group when an application is received, the child's name will be added to a waiting list in accordance with the procedure set out below. Please see the 'Waiting Lists' section below for more information about how such applications will be ranked.

All applicants for all in-year rounds must reapply during the month of August each year to remain on the waiting list for consideration for the following academic year.

## Waiting Lists

Once all places have been filled, the School will maintain a waiting list for each year group.

The names of all children who are unsuccessful in achieving a place in Reception year will be automatically added to the waiting list for the first term of the academic year until 31<sup>st</sup> December. After that date, the children's names will be removed unless parents reapply to remain on the waiting list for the rest of the academic year. This can be done by completing and submitting a new Common Application Form (CAF), which is accessible via the Redbridge Local Authority's admissions page on its website. A new completed SIF will also need to be submitted if applying under the faith category. SIF forms are available from the school website.

A child's position on a waiting list will be ranked solely in accordance with the order of priority set out above, and not in accordance with the date that the child's name was added to the waiting list. This means that the child's name may go up or down in ranking on the waiting list, as other children are added or removed.

For in-year admissions, where a place becomes vacant in any year group, the place will be offered to the child ranked first on the waiting list for that year group in accordance with the over subscription criteria. Where two or more children on the waiting list live an equal distance from the School, they will be jointly ranked until a place becomes available for one of them. At that time, the place will be allocated by random allocation in accordance with the tiebreaker section below.

### 4. OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA

If the School is oversubscribed after the admission of pupils with a statement of special educational needs / EHCP where the School is named in the statement / EHCP, priority for admission to each category (i.e. the 30 places reserved for Muslim children and the 30 non-faith places) will be given in order of the criteria set out below.

1. In relation to the 30 places made available for Muslim applicants: Muslim 'looked after' children or Muslim 'previously looked after' children, including 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.

In relation to the 30 non-faith places: any other 'looked after' children or 'previously looked after' children, including 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.

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). Previously looked after children are 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.

In the event of more applications than places being available, places under this category will be allocated according to the proximity of the child's main home address to the School, with those living closest to the School receiving higher priority.

State care is defined by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as being in the care of, or being accommodated by: (a) a public authority; (b) a religious organisation; or (c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

2. Children of members of staff employed directly by Al-Noor VA Primary School:
  - a. where 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: and / or
  - b. the member of staff has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

This priority applies to staff members fulfilling any role at the school on a permanent and paid basis, working full-time hours, or the equivalent of at least two days a week, part-time hours.

3. Children with a sibling attending the School at the time of the application and who will still be on the roll when the child is admitted. "Sibling" is defined in the arrangements as children who live as brother or sister on the same house, including natural brother or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.
4. All other children not falling into any of the priorities outlined above will be admitted under this priority.

Places under these criteria will be allocated according to the proximity of the child's main home address to the School, with those living closest to the School receiving higher priority.

#### **Distance from the School**

Distance will be measured from the center of the child's main home address to Al-Noor Primary School's main entrance using the shortest measured walking distance as measured by a Geographic Information System using public roads and recognised footpaths. It should be noted that when measurements involve flats in the same block, distance will be measured from the main entrance of the block.

Local authorities fix recognised routes prior to the normal admissions round and new routes are only introduced after the main allocation dates (taking into account a period within which parents can accept or decline their initial offers). The fixing of routes is not undertaken by the school.

#### **Tie Breaker**

As stated above, places will be allocated within each priority according to the proximity of the child's main home address to the School, with those living closest to the School receiving higher priority.

In using distance as a tie-breaker, should there be more than one applicant for a final place living an identical distance from the School in question, the Authority will use the random allocation facility within the Synergy "Admissions and Transfers System" pupil data base which is used for allocations.

#### **Twins and Children from Multiple Births**

Where a child who is a twin or a child from a multiple birth has obtained a place, but there are no places remaining to admit their twin or siblings from a multiple birth, the School may, at its sole discretion, choose to admit the twin or siblings from a multiple birth over and above the School's published admission number (PAN). All decisions to admit children falling within this category will be

made consistently, having regard to the resources which will be available to the School at the time of admission of those children.

## 5. APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP

All parents have a right to apply for their child to be admitted to a year group above or below their child's normal year group, however it is for the admission authority for each school to decide whether to agree to this or not. Parents do not have an absolute right to decide that their child will be educated outside their normal age group.

In order to apply, parents must submit a request in writing with reasons to the Governing Body of the School with any supporting documentation. Requests for admissions outside the normal age group should be submitted as early as possible so that all options are kept open before deadlines pass, as a formal application for admission will also have to be made.

On receipt of a request and any supporting documentation, the Governing Body will need to decide whether to agree or refuse the application. This decision will be made on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. The factors the Governing Body will consider include the following:

- The parent's views;
- The Headteacher's views;
- Information about the child's academic, social and emotional development;
- Where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of their medical professionals;
- Whether the child has previously been educated or attended a nursery outside their normal age group;
- Whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if not for being born prematurely.

Where the request is refused, the Governing Body will write to the parents confirming the refusal, clearly setting out their reasons for their decision. Parents do not have a statutory right of appeal against a decision to refuse a request for a child to be admitted outside their normal age group; however a complaint can be submitted under the School's Complaints Policy if the child's parents believe that the Governing Body did not deal with the request properly.

Where the request is agreed in principle, the Governing Body will write to the parents confirming the agreement in principle. Parents should note that an agreement in principle is not the same as an offer of a place in the desired year group; it is simply an indication that the Governing Body will accept an application for admission of the child to the desired year group. Once an application for admission to the desired year group has been submitted, it will be processed with all other applications for that year group, with the oversubscription criteria being applied where more applications are received than there are places available. The application for admission must be accompanied by the letter confirming the Governing Body's agreement in principle.

For the avoidance of doubt, this means that even where the Governing Body has agreed in principle to a child being admitted outside their normal age group, there is no guarantee that a place in the desired year group will be obtained for the child. This is particularly relevant in the case of "summer born children" for whom a place in Reception is being sought one year later than usual, as they could be left without a place in Reception at the School.

## 6. APPEALS

Where a child is not successful in obtaining an offer of a place, the child's parents are entitled to appeal to an independent admission appeal panel within a specified amount of time under the provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. On request, the School will provide information to parents about the appeals process and answer queries they may have about the appeals process.

Parents lodging an appeal must set out the grounds of the appeal by completing and returning, by the specified date, an appeals form to the School's admissions officer. The appeals form is available from the School's website.

Parents have a statutory right to appeal against the refusal of a place at the school for which they have applied. This right does not apply if they are offered a place at the school but it is not in their preferred age group for applications made outside of the normal age group.

The admissions appeal panel is independent of the School. The School, as its own admissions authority, appoints a clerk, who, acting on behalf of the school, appoints an independent panel to undertake the appeals.

The determination of the admissions appeal panel will be in accordance with the Schools Admission Appeals Code 2022 and will be binding on all parties.

### Restrictions on Infant Class Sizes

The statutory maximum number of pupils within a class in the Reception year, year 1 and year 2 is 30 pupils. Your appeal is unlikely to be allowed if it would mean the class size going over 30 pupils; this is a statutory requirement under the Infant class size regulation, unless there are certain exceptional reasons. The appeal panel can take account of personal circumstances but only in exceptional situations.

There are, however, statutory exceptions to this rule, including children with a statement of Special Educational Needs / Education and Health Care plan, which names the School, looked after and previously looked after children admitted outside of the normal admission round, children of UK services personnel admitted outside of the normal admission round and twins and siblings from a multiple birth. Children falling into these categories may be admitted over the statutory maximum class size of 30 pupils without breaching the regulations, in which case they will be an "excepted pupil" until the class size falls back to 30 pupils.

The statutory maximum class size does not apply to years 3 to 6.

## 7. FALSE INFORMATION

Places can be withdrawn after an offer has been made if the Local Authority or school determines that the offer was made on the basis of false or intentionally misleading information on either the CAF or SIF form.

For further information, please contact the School on [va.admissions@al-noorprimary.org.uk](mailto:va.admissions@al-noorprimary.org.uk).