# Merton Infant School
# Admission Policy 2025-2026

Hampshire County Council is the admission authority for Merton Infant School. The admission arrangements are determined by the County Council, after statutory consultations.

This policy will be used during 2024/2025 for allocating places in the main admission round for entry to Year R in September 2025. It will also apply to in-year admissions during 2025/26. It does not apply to those being admitted to nursery provision.

## Published Admission Number (PAN)

Each school has a published admission number (PAN)[1] for entry to Year R. The school will admit this number of children if there are sufficient applications. Where there are fewer applications than the published admission number, places will be offered to all applicants.

The PAN for Merton Infant School for 2025-2026 is **60**

## Admissions Process

The County Council will consider first all those applications received by the published deadline of **midnight on 15 January 2025**. **Notifications to parents offering a primary or infant school place will be sent by the County Council on 16 April 2025.**

Applications made after the deadline will be considered after all on-time applications have been fully processed unless exceptional circumstances merit consideration alongside on-time applications.

For the normal admission round, all on time preferences will be considered simultaneously and ranked in accordance with the admission criteria.

## Pupils with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)

Any child with an EHCP where the Special Educational Needs service has named Merton Infant School will be admitted. Where possible such children will be admitted within the PAN.

## Oversubscription criteria

When Merton Infant School is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the school, priority for admission will be given to children in the following order:

1. Looked after children or children who were previously looked after *(see definition i).*

[1] The PAN applies to the relevant year* only. For other year groups at the school, different admission limits may be applied. Please ask the school or local authority for details.

* The relevant year is the age group at which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school i.e. reception, year 3, year 7 and year 12 where the school admits external applicants to the sixth form (Section 142 of the SSFA 1998).

2. Children or families with an exceptional medical and/or social need. Each application must include supporting evidence from an independent professional such as a doctor and/or consultant for medical needs or a social worker, health visitor, housing officer, the police or probation officer for social needs. This evidence must confirm the child or family's medical or social need and why that need(s) makes it essential that the child attends Merton Infant School rather than any other *(see definition ii)*. Applicants will only be considered under this criterion if on the application form (online or paper) they have ticked the appropriate box explicitly indicating that they wish for their application to be considered under medical / social need and supporting evidence is submitted with the application.

3. Children of staff *(see definition iii)* who have, (1) been employed at Merton Infant School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, or (2) have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

4. Children living **in** the catchment area of Merton Infant School *(see definition iv)* who at the time of application have a sibling *(see definition v)* on the roll of Merton Infant School or linked junior school, Merton Junior School, who will still be on roll at the time of admission. [See 6 for additional children who may be considered under this criterion.]

5. Other children living **in** the catchment area of Merton Infant School.

6. Children living **out** of the catchment area of Merton Infant School who at the time of application have a sibling *(see definition v)* on the roll of Merton Infant School or the linked junior school, Merton Junior School, who will still be on roll at the time of admission. [Where a sibling was allocated a place at Merton Infant School or the linked junior school, Merton Junior School, in the normal admission round in a previous year because the child was displaced *(see definition vi)* from the catchment school for their address, the application will be considered under 4, above, subject to the siblings still living in the catchment area for the school from which they were displaced. In future normal admissions rounds a younger sibling will be considered to have been displaced where they were allocated a place at of Merton Infant School or the linked junior school, Merton Junior School, under this criterion as a consequence of their elder sibling's displacement and are still living in the catchment area for the school from which they were displaced].

7. Other children.

### *Definitions*

(i) Looked after children are defined as those who are (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 those who were looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order, or special guardianship order. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 or section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976. 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. 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). Previously looked after children also includes those 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 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.

(ii) ‘Medical need’ does not include common medical conditions supported in mainstream schools, such as asthma or allergies. ‘Social need’ does not include a parent’s wish that a child attends the school because of a child’s aptitude or ability or because their friends attend the school or because of routine childminding arrangements. Priority will be given to those children whose evidence establishes that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Equally this priority will apply to children whose evidence establishes that a family member’s physical or mental health or social needs mean that they have a demonstrable and significant need to attend a particular school. Evidence must confirm the circumstances of the case and must set out why the child should attend a particular school and why no other school could meet the child’s needs. Providing evidence does not guarantee that a child will be given priority at a particular school and in each case a decision will be made by the school and a panel of Local Authority senior officers based on the merits of the case and whether the evidence demonstrates that a placement should be made at one school above any other.

(iii) ‘Staff’ includes all those on the payroll of Merton Infant School who (specific to clause (1)) have been an employee continuously for two years at the time of application. ‘Children of staff’ refers to situations where the staff member is the natural parent, the legal guardian, or a resident step parent.

(iv) The catchment area is a geographical area from which children may be afforded priority for admission to a particular school. A map of the school’s catchment area is available on the school’s details page of the Hampshire County Council website www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/findaschool.

(v) ‘Sibling’ refers to brother or sister, half-brother or half-sister, adoptive brother or adoptive sister, foster brother or foster sister, stepbrother or stepsister living as one family unit at the same address. It will also be applied to situations where a full, half or adopted brother or sister are living at separate addresses. Criteria 4 and 6 include children who at the time of application have a sibling for whom the offer of a place at of Merton Infant School or the linked junior school, Merton Junior School, has been accepted, even if the sibling is not yet attending. It also includes, in the normal admissions round, children who have a sibling on roll in Year 2 at the Merton Infant School at the time of application, who are successful in gaining a place at the linked junior school, Merton Junior School, on the national notification date.

(vi) ‘Displaced’ refers to a child who was refused a place at the catchment school in the normal admission round having named it on the application and was not offered a higher named preference school. To identify the child’s catchment school please use https://maps.hants.gov.uk/SchoolCatchmentAreaFinder. Note that some addresses are in catchment for more than one school and in this case, ‘displaced’ refers to a child who was refused a place at any of their catchment schools.

## Tie-breaker

In the event of any of the above criteria being oversubscribed, straight line distance will be used to prioritise applications; applicants living nearer the school have priority. Distances will be measured from the Ordnance Survey home address point to the school address point using Hampshire County Council’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Distances to multiple dwellings will give priority to the ground floor over the first floor and so on. On individual floors, distances will be measured to the stairs leading to the communal entrance. Where two or more applicants are equidistant, random allocation will be used to allocate the place. An explanation of the random allocation procedure is available on the County website:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions/arrangements

## Additional Information

### Permanent Residence

The child's permanent residence is where they live, normally including weekends and during school holidays as well as during the week and should be used for the application. The permanent residence of children who spend part of their week with one parent and part with the other, at different addresses, will be the address at which they spend most of their time. Where a child's time is evenly divided between the parents, parents must agree which address they would like to be considered for the purposes of the application. In the event of a dispute, in the absence of a relevant court order, the admission authority will make a judgement about which address applies, taking into account the address registered with the child's current school, nursery, preschool or childminder, the address registered for child benefit and the address registered with the child's GP.

### Multiple births

Where a twin or child from a multiple birth is offered the last place available within the PAN, any further twin or child of the same multiple birth will also be offered a place, if the parents so wish, even though this may raise the number in the year group above the school's PAN.

### Waiting lists

Waiting lists will be established for each year group where more applications are received than places available. For main round admissions to Year R, the waiting list will be maintained centrally by the local authority until 31 August 2025. At all other times, and for other year groups, waiting lists will be operated by schools on behalf of the local authority.

Any places that become available will be offered to the child at the top of the list on the day the place became available. The waiting list is ordered according to the criteria of the admission policy with no account being taken of the length of time on the waiting list or any priority order expressed as part of the main admission round. Fair Access admissions and school closure arrangements will take priority over the waiting list.

The waiting list will be reviewed and revised –

- each time a child is added to, or removed from, the waiting list;
- when a child's changed circumstances affect their priority;

For entry to Year R, the waiting list will remain open until 31 August 2026, at which point all names will be removed. For all other year groups, waiting lists will remain open until 31 August of each year. Parents who want their child to be considered for a place at the school in the following school year must submit a new in-year application in the August preceding the new school year. Schools will send a decision letter within the first 10 days of the new term.

### Appeals

All applicants refused a place have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel constituted and operated in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code.
For information about the appeal process, including how to lodge an appeal, please visit: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions/guidance/appeals.

### Starting school

Pupils born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 (inclusive) are entitled to full-time schooling from September 2025. Parents can choose to defer their child's admission

until later in the school year (but not beyond the start of the term after they reach compulsory school age). Children can also attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Parents must discuss their child's starting arrangements with the school once an offer has been secured.

Children with birthdays between:

- 1 September and 31 December 2020 (inclusive) reach compulsory school age on 31 December 2025 and must be in full-time education at the start of the spring term 2026.
- January and 31 March 2021 (inclusive) reach compulsory school age on 31 March 2026 and must be in full-time education at the start of the summer term 2026.
- 1 April and 31 August 2021 (inclusive) reach compulsory school age on 31 August 2026 and must be in full-time education at the start of the new school year in September 2026.

Parents of summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) who are particularly concerned about their child's readiness for school can request to delay their child's entry to Year R for an entire school year until September 2026. This is called decelerated admission. In making such a request, parents would be expected to state clearly why they felt decelerated admission to Year R was in their child's best interests. It is recommended that parents considering such a request contact the local authority in the autumn term 2024 to ensure that an informed decision is made. Guidance on decelerated admission for summer born children, including how to make a request, is available on the County website at www.hants.gov.uk/ad-summerborn.

**Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group. To do so, parents should include a request with their application, specifying why admission outside the normal age group is being requested and which year group they wish their child to be admitted. Decisions will be made based on the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child.

**Legislation**

This policy takes account of all Equalities legislation, together with all relevant regulations and the School Admissions Code (published by the DfE in 2021).