PIONEER LEARNING TRUST
Pursuing Excellence and Equity

Pioneer Learning Trust Admissions Policy

This paper sets out the admission arrangements for all schools within the Pioneer Learning Trust for the academic year beginning September 2025.

Published Admissions Number

Each academy/school has a published admissions number (PAN), which is the number of places they are able to offer for the point of entry to the school, i.e. Year R for Primary Schools. The table below sets out the PAN for each academy/school in the Pioneer Learning Trust:

School	Published Admissions Number (PAN)	Additional Notes
Chantry Primary Academy	90	Places offered for the Visual Impairment (VI) provision are in addition to PAN * Governors have agreed a bulge of an additional 6 pupils in the 2025 Year 5 cohort to give a PAN of 96 (plus VI)
Southfield Primary School	60	Governors have agreed a bulge of an additional 4 pupils in the 2025 Year 5 cohort to give a PAN of 64
Whitefield Primary Academy	60	Governors have agreed a bulge of an additional 4 pupils in the 2025 Year 5 cohort to give a PAN of 64

Chantry Primary Academy has a 15 place provision for pupils with Visual Impairments from across Luton, the only provision of its kind in the area. Although the school is a 3 form entry school, pupils admitted to attend the Visual Impairment Provision will be registered as an additional and separate class group over and above the PAN for each year group. Pupils in this class group will be integrated into year group classrooms appropriate to their age.

Both Chantry Primary Academy and Whitefield Primary Academy also provide 8 full time equivalent places per school in their inclusive provisions supporting pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) for pupils within the West and North Partnerships of Luton schools.

Luton Borough Council will undertake the processing of applications for all schools and academies within the Trust.

The admissions timetable will be set out annually in Luton's Co-ordinated Admission Schemes.

Luton operates a catchment area system. Parents can look up their catchment school by going to www.luton.gov.uk/admissions and have the right to express a preference for any school.

Luton Council oversees and co-ordinates the effective working of admission arrangements. Pupils are admitted to Luton schools, without reference to ability or aptitude, up to the published admission number for each school. If the number of places in a particular year group at a school is not sufficient to meet the number of applications from parents, the following criteria are applied (in the order of priority given below) to determine how places will be allocated.

Priority may also be given to the admission of pupils in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocols for primary schools.

PIONEER LEARNING TRUST'S ADMISSIONS POLICY

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the Plan. Thereafter, the following priorities will apply:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order1, including those who appear to the relevant school to have been in state care2 outside of England and ceased to be in 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 (section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

2. Brothers and sisters of pupils attending the school being applied for, when the pupil starts at a school or academy within the Trust.
3. Pupils living in the catchment area of the school or academy concerned.
4. On medical grounds supported by a medical certificate.
5. Children of staff employed by the Trust at the school being applied to.
6. On the shortest distance, measured in a straight line, between the main entrance[1] of the school/academy site and the pupil's home address[2], with those living closer to the school/academy being accorded higher priority.

The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria. If the school/academy is unable to agree a place for all applicants meeting a specific criterion, the distance criterion (priority 6) will be used as a tiebreaker.

For admissions where one twin/child of multiple birth qualifies for a place and the other sibling(s) do not qualify for a place, both twins/multiple birth children will be promoted to the sibling criterion. This approach will also apply to siblings in the same year group who live together at the same address.

In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, witnessed by a Council officer, independent of the Admissions Team.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Pioneer Learning Trust schools and academies will continue to use the equal preference system that has been adopted by all Luton schools.

'Equal preference' system

Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the schools' admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 150 places and there are 300 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

WAITING LISTS

Where it is not possible to agree all applications for a school in the Trust, a waiting list will be devised. Waiting lists are organised in the order of priority of the academies' admissions criteria. Waiting lists are not based on the date the application was added to the list.

For the new Reception intake (Years R) the names will be held on the waiting lists until 31 July 2026, however, applications received in the Summer term 2026 will remain on the waiting list until July 2027. Parents will need to reapply for a place at their preferred school after this date if they wish their child's name to be carried forward on the waiting list.

For all other year groups, unsuccessful applications received from the start of the Autumn term 2025 until the end of the Spring term 2026 will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2026. Applications received from the start of the Summer term 2026 to the end of the academic year will be placed on a waiting list until 31 July 2027.

Should this admissions policy continue to operate for 2026 and subsequent intakes, dates in the waiting list procedure will reflect those given above, only the year will be updated.

[1] Main entrance of the School means the door used to access the School's main reception.

[2] The home address is measured from a point at the address identified in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer.

HOME ADDRESS

For the purposes of allocating places in the normal admissions round (i.e. the initial allocation of places for Year R) where a school is oversubscribed, the pupil's catchment area will be determined by their home address as at the closing date for applications.

Children who gain a place at a school because their parents/carers have given the Council a false home address will have their place withdrawn.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered in the initial allocation of places, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Where parents have submitted a transfer form before the closing date, but then seek to change their preference after the closing date, this late expression of preference will be treated as a 'late' application and will not be considered in the initial allocation of places.

YEAR N ADMISSIONS

Children who gain a place in a nursery in a Trust school/academy are **not** guaranteed admission to the main school. Parents/carers must apply for a statutory school place using the Council's Application Form for Luton Residents.

DEFERRED ENTRY

Pioneer Learning Trust schools admit children into Reception classes in the September prior to the child's fifth birthday. Parents/carers can choose to defer their child's entry to school or take up the place part-time until he or she is of compulsory school age, providing this place is taken up within the same academic year.

Therefore:

- Children born between 1/9/20 – 31/12/20 can defer their place until January 2026.
- Children born between 1/1/21 – 31/8/21 can defer their place until April 2026.

Parents/carers cannot defer their child's entry beyond the dates given above. Parents/carers of children born between 1/4/21 – 31/8/21, who would like their child to start Year 1 in September 2026 would need to reapply for admission at a later date. These applications would be treated as an 'in-year' admission request and a place would only be offered if there were vacancies in the year group.

Parents/carers wishing to defer their child's entry to school must put their request in writing to the Academy, ideally within 21 days of being offered a place by the Council.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF THEIR NORMAL YEAR GROUP

Parents seeking a place for their child outside of the chronological age group should submit their written case to the Headteacher. Parents should include information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development and whether they have previously been educated outside of their normal age group. If the child has been born prematurely, parents should include these details in their application. Applications relating to the Starting School (Year R) admissions round will also be discussed with relevant local authority professionals. Decisions will be made based on the circumstances of each case and parents will be informed of the reasons for the decision in writing.

IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

In-Year admissions for Years R-6 are applications to enter a year group that has already started at the academy. Luton Borough Council will co-ordinate in-year applications for schools/academies within the Pioneer Learning Trust, therefore, parents who are seeking a place should complete the Council's in-year Application Form and return this directly to the Council.

PUBLICATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

The Council will publish information booklets for parents on the admissions process. An interpreter service is available to assist parents/carers. Assistance can also be provided for hearing or visually impaired parents. Each School/Academy's published admission numbers are listed at the beginning of this policy.

RELEVANT AREA

The current relevant area for admissions consultation purposes is all admission authorities within the Borough of Luton, neighbouring Councils and all admission authorities within a three-mile radius of Luton.

DEFINITIONS

Siblings

The term 'siblings' includes both natural, adopted and step brothers and sisters. It also includes fostered siblings, where foster care has been arranged by Children and Family Services. Other family relationships such as cousins will not be considered under this criterion.

Medical Grounds

This refers to the health of the child for whom a place is being requested and for whom the requested school is the most suitable in the area to meet the child's medical needs. It must relate to a recognised medical condition for which the child is receiving treatment. Medical evidence must be provided to substantiate the claim. The medical evidence will be sent to the Health Authority for advice in determining whether the child should be prioritised on medical grounds with regard to admission to the school.

Home Address

The Trust regards a pupil's home address as where she or he spends the majority of the school week (i.e. Monday to Friday, including nights) with her/his parent or legal guardian. The address of a childminder or family member who looks after the child before or after school cannot be used. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against official documentation.

Children of Staff

The Trust regards children of staff as someone employed to work for the Trust on a permanent contract for at least 15 hours per week, who meets one of the following criteria at the time of application:

(a) has been in post continuously for a least two years
or:
(b) is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Children of staff that have given notice of resignation will not be considered under this criterion.

For the purposes of satisfying these criteria, a member of staff is defined as a permanent member of the teaching staff, or a permanent member of the non-teaching staff.

The staff member must be the child's parent or legal guardian and the child must be living permanently with the member of staff.

Catchment Areas

Details of catchment areas can be found on the Council's website at www.luton.gov.uk/admissions.
Catchment area lists are also available from the Council by telephoning the Admissions Helpline on 548016.