

Downham Market Academy Admissions Policy 2026-27

Approved by Local Governing Body	February 2025
Review cycle	October 2025

Downham Market Academy

1 Introduction

1.1 These arrangements are established in accordance with Annex 1 of the Academy's Supplemental Funding Agreement.

1.2 The Academy provides for pupils aged 11-19 and has a single Normal Point of Entry, at the start of the Year 7 school year. Applications for admission at the normal point of admission will be co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council in accordance with its common application procedures and Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 below. Arrangements for late admission into Year 7 and for admission to other year groups will be co-ordinated by the Academy's Headteacher in accordance with paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 below.

2 Admission Number

2.1 The Academy's Published Admission Number is set at 240. At least 240 pupils will be admitted each year to Year 7 at the Normal Point of Entry provided sufficient eligible applications have been received. Where fewer than 240 applications have been received, all applicants will be admitted.

3 Ordinary Applications for the Normal Point of Entry

3.1 Application for admission to Year 7 should be made to the local authority in whose area the applicant is normally resident by the closing date of 31 October of the preceding year.

3.2 Applications will be co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council who will consult as required with the Academy's leadership team

3.3 Places will be offered to all successful applicants by Norfolk County by 1 March. Where the Academy is oversubscribed, places will be awarded on the basis of the oversubscription criteria set out in Paragraph 6 below.

4 Late Applications for the Normal Point of Entry

4.1 Applications received after the closing date and before the Normal Point of Entry will be dealt with by Norfolk County in accordance with its procedures for late applications, after places have been awarded to ordinary applications.

4.2 Where the Academy is oversubscribed as a result of late applications, these applications will be judged according to the oversubscription criteria.

4.3 Places will be offered to successful applicants by 1 March or as soon as possible thereafter and in any case before 1 September.

5 Acceptance of Offer of a Place

5.1 Where an offer is made, the applicant should be notified that they have four weeks in which to accept the offer. Where an offer is not accepted by the applicant in writing within four weeks, the Academy reserves the right to withdraw the offer and the offer of a place to be made to the next applicant on the waiting list.

6 Oversubscription Criteria

6.1 Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school will be admitted. Those children with an Education, Health & Care Plan that does not name the school will be referred to the relevant EHCP Coordinator to determine an appropriate place.

6.2 Any remaining places will be allocated according to the following criteria, in order of priority:

- i) Children in Care, also known as Looked After Children (LAC), and children who were looked after but ceased to be so by reason of adoption, a resident order or a special guardianship order. Children who appear to the Admission Authority to have been in state care (i.e. in the care of or accommodated by a public authority, religious organisation or any other provider whose sole/main purpose is to benefit society) outside of England but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted only.
- ii) Children of staff who have been employed at the Academy for at least two years at the time of application or have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- iii) Children who live in catchment area, attend **feeder**¹ primary schools within the catchment area and who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission.
- iv) Children who live in the catchment area with a sibling at the school at the time of the admission.
- v) Children who live in the catchment area who attend the **feeder** primary schools within it.
- vi) Children who live in the catchment area
- vii) Children who live outside the catchment area, who attend **feeder** primary schools within it and who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission.
- viii) Children who live outside the catchment area who have a sibling at the school at the time of admission
- ix) Children who live outside the catchment area who attend **feeder** primary schools within the catchment area
- x) Children who live outside the catchment area, but nearest the school as measured by a straight line

6.3 A map of the Academy's defined catchment area is available on Norfolk County Council's [website](#).

6.4 Where places are oversubscribed within any of the above groups, priority will be given to children living nearest to the Academy as measured by a straight line between the Academy's main entrance and the front door of the dwelling (e.g. house or flat) at which the child is normally resident².

6.5 A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case the child must be normally resident in the same family unit at the same address.

6.6 In the event of a tie break, a random allocation will be used. This will be carried out by an independent panel.

7 Waiting List

7.1 Where the Academy is oversubscribed for the Normal Point of Admission, all unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list which will be administered by Norfolk County Council up to the Normal Point of Admission and thereafter by Senior Leaders at the Academy, their position in the waiting list determined by application of the

¹ Downham Market Academy Feeder schools are as follows: Nelson Academy; Holy Cross Church of England Primary School; Southery Academy; Magdalen Academy; Wimbotsham & Stow Academy; Hillcrest Primary School; St Martin At Shouldham CE VA Primary Academy; Denver CE VC Primary School; Hilgay Riverside Academy.

² "The child's normal residence is a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent(s) and where s/he/they live/s together with the child. To avoid doubt, where a child lives with a parent with shared responsibility for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined by:

- 1) Confirmation of the registered address to which Child Benefit is currently being paid, or, if child benefit is not received then the address from which the child in question is registered with a doctor.

- 2) If 1) above is not applicable then the parent with whom the child spends the greater proportion of the school week from Sunday evening to Thursday evening."

oversubscription criteria.

7.2 When a vacancy arises it will be offered to the next applicant on the waiting list. Paragraph 5 will apply in respect of acceptance of any places offered in this way.

7.3 Parents of children remaining on the waiting list at 31 December in the case of Year 7 or 31 August in any case will be contacted to clarify whether they wish to remain on the list.

8 Within-Year Applications for Admission

8.1 Throughout the period September to December inclusive during Year 7, and at the start of the school year for all other year groups, the Academy will continue to offer places to applicants until the roll reaches the PAN.

8.2 At other times – that is, for applications received during the course of the academic year – where the PAN has not been reached in the relevant year group, the Headteacher will determine the maximum number of pupils that can be admitted to that year group for the remainder of the year, taking into account the size of teaching groups, the efficient use of available resources and any Fair Access Protocol agreed by the Academy with Norfolk County Council.

8.3 If the Year Group is oversubscribed a waiting list will be created. If a place becomes vacant it will be allocated according to the criteria outlined in 6.2 above.

8.4 Information from previous schools will be requested for all applicants.

8.5 Should this information cause concern to the Headteacher, they will seek further advice on admission. Where the Headteacher does not wish to admit a child with challenging behaviour outside the normal admissions round, even though places are available, it will refer the case to the local authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. A letter will be sent withdrawing the place, and offering the opportunity to appeal against this decision. This will not apply to a looked after child, a previously looked after child or a child with a statement of special educational needs naming the school in question, as these children will be admitted.

9 Our Admissions Process for In Year School Application

Parents/carers must complete the online In Year School Application form the school website. Contact the Academy on 01366 389100, or hello@dma.tela.org.uk when the offer letter from the school is received.

Complete the Admission Form and other relevant forms which we will send out. Please note it is not possible to obtain a copy of the Admission Form from the website.

Attend the necessary admission meeting at the Academy. We will contact you with details about the arrangements for this meeting.

10. Admission of children outside their normal age range

10.1. Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group for example where their child is gifted and talented or where their child has had problems with education due to ill health.

10.2. Parents should submit a written application for admission outside of a child's normal age group to the Chair of the Local Governing Body, by submitting this to the College office. The Local Governing Body will review the application and will take into account the parent's views, the reasons for the request including any evidence and information submitted about the child's academic, social and emotional development and, where relevant, medical history and views of a medical professional where provided. The Local Governing Body will also take into account the views of the Head of Academy.

10.3. If the request would mean the child is admitted to Year 7 it is recommended that the parent also ensures an application is made through the main admissions process by October 31st so that it can be dealt with as part of the main admissions round. Please note that an agreement for a child to be educated outside of their normal age group is not a guarantee of an offer of a place at the school.

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

11 Admissions to Athena Sixth Form College

The Academy maintains an open admissions policy to Athena Sixth Form College with defined academic entry requirements as outlined on the website:

The Academy will not admit external applicants unless it is undersubscribed by pupils progressing from its own Year 11 and in such circumstances it will apply the same academic entry requirements as it does to pupils already on roll in the Academy, with looked-after children given highest priority.

The same academic entry criteria will be used for internal and external applicants.

Where there are places unfilled and an applicant narrowly misses the entry criteria, they and/or their parents may write to the Headteacher, asking for their case to be reconsidered, stating any mitigating circumstances, as soon as possible following publication of results and by the end of August at the latest. The Headteacher and Senior Leader with responsibility for Athena Sixth Form College must then meet to assess the application. The assessment will focus on whether the student is likely to cope with the demands of the 6th form course, given their previous academic profile, their willingness to undertake extra study as necessary and the appropriateness of their choices. Once a decision has been made, which must be by 1 September or the next working day at the latest, the student and their parents must be informed by telephone and subsequently in writing.

Should a student and/or parent disagree with the decision, they may still pursue an appeal under an independent panel. Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the Headteacher will apply the oversubscription criteria within this policy.

12 Appeals

Where an applicant is refused admission at the Normal Point of Entry in Year 7 or for any in year application, a right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel arises. Details of the right of appeal will be communicated to the parent at the relevant time.

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Document Control

New Version Number	Key changes from previous version	Date of ratification
1	New policy following catchment area consultation December 2024	February 2025