



SECKFORD  
EDUCATION TRUST

**POLICY  
DOCUMENT**

## Admissions Policy 2020 (Saxmundham Free School)

<b>Document Owner:</b>	Trust Board
<b>Responsible Trust Committee:</b>	Trust Board
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<b>APPROVED Signature (Trust Board):</b>	DATE ( )
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## Other relevant policies and documents

- Admissions Policy (Beccles Free School)
- Admissions Policy (Ixworth Free School)
- Equalities Policy (Students)
- Students Out of Chronological Year Group Policy

## Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Education Trust

'Free School(s)' = schools within the Trust

## Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the proposed admissions policy for the Saxmundham Free School for 2020-21.

## About Saxmundham Free School

In 2020, Saxmundham Free School will be a school for 600 students (120 students for each of the Years 7 to 11).

Our vision is for all our students to:

- achieve their potential through a culture of high academic, personal and social expectations and aspirations;
- have their needs met and be recognised as individuals through high quality inclusion and pastoral care systems;
- learn in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment in which every child matters and in which parents / carers and the wider community are part of the learning journey;
- enjoy an all-round education beyond academic study, so that each can discover his or her latent talents.

We have aspirations and expectations for our students that they make above average progress and achieve to the very highest level in all that they do. We are inclusive and have that aim for all students relative to their starting points.

## General

1. The Seckford Education Trust will act in accordance with, and will ensure that, an Independent Appeal Panel is trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code published by the Department of Education ("the Codes") as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to maintained schools. For this purpose reference in the Codes or legislation to "admission authorities"

shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust.

2. Notwithstanding the generality of paragraph 2 of this policy, the Seckford Education Trust will participate in the coordinated admission arrangements operated by the LA and the local Fair Access Protocol.
3. Notwithstanding any provision in this policy the Secretary of State may:
  - Direct the Seckford Education Trust to admit a named student to the Saxmundham Free School who is a looked after child or on application from an LA. This will include complying with a School Attendance Order<sup>1</sup>. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult with the Seckford Education Trust;
  - Direct the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust to admit a named student to the Saxmundham Free School if the Seckford Education Trust has failed to act in accordance with this policy or has otherwise failed to comply with applicable admissions and equalities legislation or the provisions of the Codes;
  - Direct the Seckford Education Trust to amend its admission arrangements where they fail to comply with the Schools Admissions Code or the Admission Appeals Code;
4. The Seckford Education Trust shall ensure that parents and relevant children<sup>2</sup> will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the Trust. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of the Seckford Education Trust. The arrangements for appeals will comply with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department of Education as it applies to Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.
5. It is important for a school to have relevant information about a new pupil in order to put necessary arrangements in place for their successful transition to the School and to ensure that any potential risks can be identified and mitigated. The Trust may therefore choose to maintain an Admissions Registration Roll for the School, listing pupils who have made an application to join the School but are not yet physically in attendance. This will enable relevant information on a pupil to be obtained so preparations for the pupil's arrival can be made. The receipt of any such advance information will not affect the offer of a place at the School but the School does reserve the right to delay notification of an Admission decision if all the necessary and relevant information has not been received to put a successful Admissions Plan in place for that pupil.

<sup>1</sup> LAs are able to issue school attendance orders if a child is not attending school. These are legally binding upon parents. Such an order might, for instance, be appropriate where a child has a place at a Free School but his/her parents are refusing to send him/her to school. The order will require a parent to ensure his/her child attends a specified school.

<sup>2</sup> 'Relevant children' means children who are above the compulsory school age, or will be above compulsory school age by the time they start to receive education at the school.

## Applying for a place

5. Applications should be made through the use of the common application form (CAF) which is available from the admissions team at Suffolk County Council:
  - a. By post at: Admissions Team, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX
  - b. Online at: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions)
  - c. By phoning to request an application form: 0345 600 0981 (Local rate 9am - 5pm)
  - d. Through the Local Authority brochure, "Admissions to Schools in Suffolk 2020-21".
6. Applications should be made to the Local Authority by the published closing date (31 October 2019).

## Relevant area

7. Subject to paragraph 8, the meaning of "Relevant Area" for the purposes of consultation requirements in relation to admissions arrangements is that determined by the LA for maintained schools in the area in accordance with the Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999.
8. If the Seckford Education Trust does not consider the relevant area determined by the local authority for the maintained schools in the area to be appropriate, it must apply to the Secretary of State by 1 August for a determination of the appropriate relevant area for the Saxmundham Free School, setting out the reasons for this view. The Secretary of State will consult the Saxmundham Free School and the LA in which the school is situated in reaching a decision.

## Requirements to admit students

9. The Seckford Education Trust will:
  - Admit all students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) naming the Saxmundham Free School;
  - Adopt admission oversubscription criteria that give highest priority to "looked after children"<sup>3</sup> (children in care) and previously looked after children (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, immediately following having been looked after<sup>3</sup>) in accordance with the relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code.

## Oversubscription criteria, admission number, consultation, determination and objections

10. The admission arrangements will include oversubscription criteria, and an admission number for each relevant age group<sup>4</sup>. The Seckford Education Trust will consult on its admission arrangements and determine them in line with the requirements within the School Admissions Code.

11. Objections to the admission arrangements laid out in this policy can be made to the Schools Adjudicator whose decisions are binding and enforceable. The Schools Adjudicator must consider whether admission arrangements referred to him comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions. As the admissions authority, the Seckford Education Trust must revise admission arrangements immediately to give effect to the Adjudicator's decision. An Adjudicator's determination is binding and enforceable.
12. Local authorities must use their power to refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements at schools in their area (for which they are not the admission authority) contravene admissions law and/or the Code.
13. Anyone who considers that any maintained school or Academy's arrangements are unfair or unlawful, or not in compliance with the Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the Schools Adjudicator. Further information on how to make an objection can be obtained from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator: <http://www.schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk>
14. The Secretary of State may refer the admission arrangements of any school to the Schools Adjudicator at any time if he considers that they may not comply with the requirements of the Admissions Code.

<sup>3</sup> *'Previously looked after children' includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children's Act 2002 (section 46 adoption orders). 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.*

<sup>4</sup> *'Relevant age group' means normal point of admission to the school, for example, Year 7.*

## Procedure for admitting students to Saxmundham Free School

### Admission numbers:

15. Saxmundham Free School has the following agreed admission number for the year 2020-21:
  - a. 120 students in Year 7Please refer to Suffolk County Council's "Admissions to Schools in Suffolk" booklet for the process for the normal admissions round for further information: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions>
16. The Seckford Education Trust will consider all applications for places at the school. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, Seckford Education Trust will offer places to all those who have applied.

### Procedures where the school is oversubscribed:

17. Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of students with Education, Health and Care Plans where Saxmundham Free School is named on the statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:
1. A "looked after child" or a child who was previously looked after<sup>5</sup> (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, immediately following having been looked after<sup>3</sup>) but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order<sup>4</sup>. A "looked after child" is a child who is; <sup>[SEP]</sup>
    - (a) in the care of a LA, or
    - (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions ("looked after children" as defined in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
  2. Children with a sibling attending Saxmundham Free School at the time of application or where a sibling has already been offered a place at the school at the time of application, and where their sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission. The term "sibling" includes: natural, half, step, and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.
  3. Other children by distance from Saxmundham Free School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the school as the crow flies. Distances are measured between the two full UK postcodes of the student's home<sup>6</sup> and the school postcode using a website that calculates the distance up to three decimal places between the two points. Random allocation<sup>7</sup> will be used as a tie-break in category '3' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same. Should a sibling who is from a multiple birth be offered the last intake place for that year, their siblings will automatically be offered a place too, even if that makes the intake over the Published Admission Number.

<sup>5</sup> *An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. <sup>[SEP]</sup>A 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. 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)*

<sup>6</sup> **Ordinarily Resident** – *by ordinarily resident we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place at that school; we consider this to be a fraudulent*

*application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.*

*In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. This address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.*

*If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.*

*<sup>7</sup> Where two or more students are equal in all respects and it is therefore not possible to differentiate between them, a method of random allocation by drawing lots will be used to allocate places (supervised by someone independent of the school).*

#### Operation of waiting lists:

18. The school will hold a waiting list of all those unsuccessful in their application.
19. Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in our admissions oversubscription criteria. The order of children on a waiting list can go up or down, for example, due to withdrawals or additional applications. If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list you must let us know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list, particularly if you move into or out of the school's catchment area. Having your child's name on a waiting list will not affect your right to appeal for a school place in any of the schools you have applied for. If a place becomes available, we will offer it to children on the waiting list in priority order. We do offer places on the basis of date on which names were placed on the list. We also maintain waiting lists for all "full" year groups.
20. Applications received in the Summer Term for the following school year will carry over to the following school year and be added to the waiting list if it has not been possible to allocate a place prior to September. In all other situations a parent or guardian will need to make a fresh application if they wish their child to be considered for a place in the new school year.

#### Arrangements for admitting students to other year groups, including to replace any students who have left the school:

21. During 2020 the Trust will coordinate admissions for in-year applications and for applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry.
22. Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. Decisions to admit or otherwise will be on the basis of the circumstances of each case. On receiving the decision, parents will be informed of their right to complain. This right to complain does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.
23. Subject to any provisions in Suffolk County Council's coordinated admission arrangements relating to applications submitted for years other than the normal year of entry, the Seckford Education Trust will consider all such applications and if the year group applied for has a place available, admit the child unless one of the permitted reliefs apply. If more applications are received than there are places available, the over subscription criteria in paragraph 17 shall apply. Parents whose application is turned down shall be entitled to appeal.

#### Right to Appeal:

24. If the Seckford Education Trust informs a parent of a decision (via Suffolk County Council for normal year admissions) to refuse their child a place at Saxmundham Free School for which they have applied, it must include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents will be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they must set out their grounds for their appeal in writing.
25. The Seckford Education Trust will not limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.
26. Saxmundham Free School will use the independent appeals service provided by the Local Authority. Independent Appeals Panels are appointed in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code. Appeals should be made, in writing, to Education Appeals Office, PO Box 579, Ipswich, IP1 2BX within 20 school days from the date of notification that the application was unsuccessful.

#### Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Trust Board will review this policy on an annual basis and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy.