Admissions Policy – St Michael's CE Middle School, Colehill

1. Introduction

a. Initio Learning Trust is the admission authority and responsible for the admission arrangements of the School. This document sets out the admission arrangements of the School for the academic year 2027/2028.

b. The published admission number (PAN) for entry into year 5 is 150. The published admission number (PAN) for entry into year 5 is 15. Where there are more applications for admission than places available at the School, then places will be offered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria at section 3 of this policy.

c. Where a child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) which names the School, then that child will be admitted to the School and the number of available places in the PAN will reduce correspondingly.

d. When applying to start school in Year 5 in September 2027 you must apply to your home Local Authority ("LA"). All applications for admission must be received by your home LA by the closing date of 15 January 2027. The home LA will make a single offer of a place on 16th April 2027 (or next working day).

2. Religious Character of the School

a. The School is designated with a religious character. The School's religious authority is the Diocese of Salisbury. The School must have regard to its religious authority when setting the terms of its admission arrangements.

b. Recognising its historic foundation, the School will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the churches at parish and diocesan level. The School aims to support children and their families by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

3. Oversubscription Criteria

Where the School is oversubscribed (there are more applicants than places available) places will be allocated in accordance with the following criteria and in the following order. Please read the explanatory notes for further guidance.

a. Looked After Children or Previously Looked After Children – A child who is in the care of an LA, or was in the care of an LA but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement, or special guardianship order. This includes 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.

b. Vulnerable Children
A child is eligible in this category where the child has an identified social or medical need.

c. Children living in the Catchment Area with a sibling at the School
A child living inside the Catchment Area is eligible for this category where they have a sibling attending the School on the date of application and the sibling will still be attending the School at the time of admission.

d. Children living in the Catchment Area

e. Children living outside the Catchment Area with a sibling at the School
A child living outside the Catchment Area is eligible for this category where they have a sibling attending the School on the date of application and the sibling will still be attending the School at the time of admission.

f. Children living outside the Catchment Area who meet the faith criterion
A child living outside the Catchment Area is eligible for this category where the child is a regular practising Christian at a Recognised Church or Religious Group.

g. All other children

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If there are not enough places to satisfy all the applications under any one criterion, priority will be given to those living nearest the School. The School will adopt the measurement system of Dorset Local Authority to determine the distance from the School to the Home address**.** Where two or more applicants live an equal distance from the School and it is not possible to differentiate between them, priority will be determined by random allocation through the drawing of lots supervised by someone independent of the School.

Oversubscription Criteria : Explanatory Notes

Catchment Area means the geographical area from which children will be afforded priority for admission to the School. A map indicating the Catchment Area is annexed to this Admission Policy and available to view on the Dorset Council website.

Vulnerable Children

(i) Medical need means where written evidence has been provided from a senior clinical medical officer or the child's general practitioner / specialist showing that the child's condition would make it detrimental to the child's health not to admit him/her to the School. This may include written evidence where the parent has a medical need and/or disability which would make it detrimental for the child to attend a different school. Evidence to be relied upon must be submitted with the

Supplemental Information Form and sent to the School on or before 15th January 2027.

(ii) Social Need means where the child is of confirmed refugee status. Written evidence of this status from the home LA must be submitted with the Supplementary Information Form and sent to the School on or before 15th January 2027.

Sibling means brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, foster brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom admission is sought is living in the same family unit as that sibling and at the same address.

Faith Criterion Requirements

(i) **Regular practising Christian** means a child who attends a **Recognised Church or Religious Group** **regularly** prior to application.

(ii) **Regularly** means monthly for 12 months prior to application.

(iii) **Recognised Church or Religious Group** means a church that is the same denomination as (or is in fellowship with or partnership with) a member of:
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (see ctbi.org.uk); the Evangelical Alliance (see eauk.org); the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (see www.fiec.org.uk); Affinity fellowship of Churches (see www.affinity.org.uk).

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

Home address means the place where the child resides for the majority of the school week (Sunday to Thursday) with the person/s who legally has care of the child (child care arrangements are excluded). The School may require documentary evidence of house ownership or tenancy together with evidence of the child's residency at the property.

4. Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

a. Where seeking priority under the vulnerable children (3b) or faith criterion (3f) parents must fully complete the relevant part of the SIF and provide the required supporting evidence. Where relying on the faith criterion (3f) the SIF must be signed off by the relevant Church representative. Where relying on the vulnerable children criterion (3b) you must supply evidence to support the application.

b. The SIF must be returned to the School office on or before 15th January 2027. The SIF is on the School website or a paper copy may be requested from the School office.

5. Appeals

a. Where an application is unsuccessful the parents/carers have the statutory right to bring an appeal against that decision to an independent appeal panel. Details of how to appeal will be included in the letter advising that the application has been unsuccessful.

b. The admission appeal timetable is published on the School's website by 28th February each year.

6. Important Information

a. Admission of children outside their normal age group

It is Trust policy that children attending Initio Learning Trust schools including summer-born children will normally be placed with their own age group, and be educated for the majority of the time with their age peer group as evidence suggests that this is usually in the best interests of the child.

However, parents are entitled to request admission for their child outside their normal age group and decisions will be taken on the basis of the circumstances of each case.

The procedure for application is set out in Appendix 1. This applies to all children with the exception of those holding or undergoing assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan who should contact their local authority Special Educational Needs Team for advice.

b. Multiple Birth Applications

Where there are multiple birth applications the PAN will be exceeded or increased provided it is practicable at the point of allocation in order to ensure that multiple birth siblings can be allocated places at the School.

c. Waiting Lists

If the School is oversubscribed for September 2027 entry a waiting list will be maintained for the entire academic year. The position of the child on the waiting list will correspond with the oversubscription criteria; it will not be based on length of time on the waiting list. The right of appeal at Section 5 remains. You may request your child's name be removed from the waiting list at any time. If a place is offered but refused then the child's name will be removed from the waiting list.

7. Withdrawal of an Offer

The School may withdraw an offer in certain circumstances, for example where it has been offered in error, has been made on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, or a parent has not responded to an offer of a place within a reasonable period of time.

8. In Year Admissions

a. Applications for in year admission may be submitted at any time during the school year.

b. The School is part of the LA's in-year co-ordination scheme. Any person wishing to apply for a place at the School in-year will need to contact the LA for an application form. Further details in respect of in-year applications is available from the School office or from the School website.

c. The LA will liaise with the School on receipt of any in-year application so that it may be processed in accordance with the School's admission arrangements.

9. Further Information

a. Important information published by the LA applies to some aspects of school admissions. If you are considering applying for a place at the School you are advised to refer to your home LA's website.

b. If you have any questions in relation to these admission arrangements please contact the School office.

c. The School will handle all personal data in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Appendix 1 - Admission of children outside their normal age group

Introduction

This document sets out the process and criteria for considering requests for Initio Learning Trust schools. It applies to all children with the exception of those holding or undergoing assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan who should contact their local authority Special Educational Needs Team for advice.

It is Trust policy that children attending Initio Learning Trust schools will normally be placed with their own age group, and be educated for the majority of the time with their age peer group as evidence suggests that this is usually in the best interests of the child.

Parents do however from time to time seek places for children in a lower or higher age group. Such requests may be made for a variety of reasons, for example where a child has moved to the area from abroad, or has missed schooling due to illness, or has a marked talent or ability.

Also, parents of summer-born children (born 1 April – 31 August) may choose not to send their child to school until the September following their fifth birthday, when the child would normally join their own age group in year 1, but parents may request that the child is admitted outside their normal year group into reception.

The decision-making process

When requests for admission to a year group different to that determined by a child's date of birth are received, a panel will be convened at the school to consider the written application and supporting information provided by the parent/carer.

This panel will consist of:

- The head teacher of the preferred school
- A member of the Initio Learning Trust senior leadership team
- The Initio Learning Trust Inclusion lead and/or their delegate

Additional professional advisors may be included on the panel at the discretion of the head teacher.

On occasion there may be insufficient evidence for the panel to reach a decision. In this instance the panel may request additional information or a meeting with the parent/carer which may include requesting to meet/observe the child.

Process for consideration of requests

1. On initial contact from a parent/carer with either the local authority's admissions team or with the school directly, an appointment to meet with the school's head teacher will be arranged within 20 school days.

2. If, after discussion with the head teacher, the parent/carer still wishes to pursue an 'out of year' admission, they will be asked to complete an application form together with supporting evidence.

3. The application form will ask for basic information about the child as well as:

- The nature of the request

- Reasons for the request

- The child's educational history

- Indication of the child's wishes (with opportunity for the child to record their views directly where practical/age appropriate)

4. In addition they will be asked to provide supporting information/documentation which may include but is not limited to reports from health care professionals that are working with the child such as the child's Paediatrician, Health Care Visitor, Area SENCO, Speech and Language Therapist, along with statements from the child's parent/carers school and/or Preschool):

5. The parent/carer will be informed of the date that the Panel will meet within 20 school days of receipt of their written request (application form and supporting evidence).

6. The parent/carer will be informed of the decision of the panel in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.

7. In the meantime, if the child is already attending a school, they should continue to attend their current school.

Criteria for agreement to 'out of year' admissions

The panel will consider evidence relating to all aspects of the child's development and needs in coming to a decision. Issues to be considered will include:

For requests for change of year group where a child is already in school

- Whether there is evidence that the child has previously been educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth and that this has had positive benefits.

- Whether there is documented evidence that to place the child in their normal age group would be detrimental to their educational progress or likely exam performance.

- Whether there is evidence that it is in the interests of the child's social and emotional development to be educated in a year group above or below that determined by their date of birth.

For requests for delayed admission for summer born children the Panel will consider the following:

- the needs of the child and the possible impact on them of entering year 1 without having first attended the reception class;

- in the case of children born prematurely, the fact that they may have naturally fallen into the lower age group if they had been born on their expected date of birth;

- whether delayed social, emotional or physical development is adversely affecting their readiness for school;

- relevant research into the outcomes of summer born and premature children; and

- relevant advice, guidance and legislation from the Department for Education.

Right of appeal following the decision

There is no right of appeal if a parent/carer is offered a place in their preferred school and it is not in the year group they would like. However, parents/carers can make a complaint through the Trust's complaints procedure.