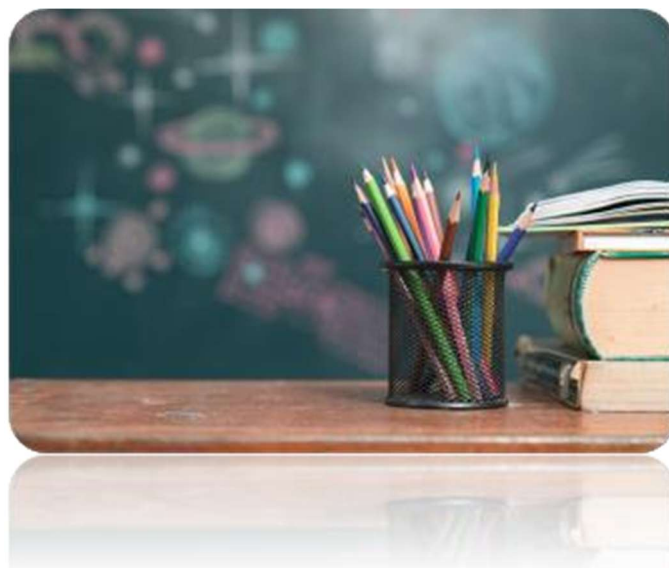


# **Service Level Agreement 2025-2026**

## **School Admissions and Admission Appeals**



# **Service Package Renewal Academic Year 2025 – 2026**

## **The Service**

This specification outlines the School Admission and School Admission Appeals services that are available from the Council to Schools during the Academic Year **2025 /26** on payment of a subscription fee.

### **1. Terms of the Subscription Agreement**

- 1.1. The Academy Trust appoints the Local Authority (LA) to provide a School Admissions and Admission Appeals Service (“the Services”) for the period 1st September 2025 to 31st August 2026.
- 1.2. The LA agrees to provide the Academy with the Services in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

### **2. Academy Responsibilities**

The Academy undertakes to:

- 2.1. Provide the LA’s School Admissions and Appeals Teams with all relevant, upto-date information it may reasonably require, within a timely manner, to enable it to carry out the obligations under this Agreement.
- 2.2. Support the preparation of appeal cases by responding in the specified time for requests for information for, and approval of, the Academy’s final appeal statement\*.
- 2.3. Adhere to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes; and
- 2.4. Adhere to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.
- 2.5. When a request is made by the LA for a school placement, a response is required with 2 school days to enable allocation in accordance with time scales specified in the school Admission code 2021, section 2.27 page 28.
- 2.6. Once a place is offered, schools must make attempts to contact the parent to agree a start date. When parents indicate their acceptance of the school place, the school must put the child on roll, on the expected first day of attendance. Schools must add the child onto both the admissions and attendance register within 5 school days without delay.

\*The admission authority must provide a presenting officer to present the decision not to admit the child and to answer detailed questions about the case being heard and about the school” Appeals Code 2022 section 2.12 pg. 14. If an academy uses an experienced presenting officer from an independent organisation to prepare and present cases, it is expected that case information provision is provided directly from the school to the commissioned service.

### **3. The Local Authority’s Obligations**

The School Admissions and Appeals Teams undertake to:

- 3.1. Commit to undertake all reasonable steps to deliver the services described in this agreement. If there are any changes beyond our control, such as changes in legislation, we will liaise with you directly;
- 3.2. Adhere to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes; and
- 3.3. Give 28 days’ notice of any proposed changes in the terms of the agreement or charges.

### **4. Quality, Standards & Performance Indicators**

Cambridgeshire County Council School Admissions Service undertakes to:

- 4.1. Take all reasonable steps to deliver the services described in this agreement. If there are any changes beyond our control, such as changes in legislation, we will liaise with you directly;
- 4.2. Adhere to all relevant legislation and the School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes; and
- 4.3. Give due notice of any proposed changes in the terms of the agreement, charges, or cancellation;
- 4.4. Fulfil its statutory duty to raise with School's Adjudicator any concerns they have about the admissions procedures and policies of schools in their area

### **5. Liaison**

The points of contact within the Authority are:

For School Admission enquiries:

Karen Beaton

Strategic Lead Attendance and Admissions

[Karen.Beaton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Beaton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

For School Appeals enquiries:

Luthfur Rahman

Education Legal Manager

## Expectations of own admission authority schools

- a. If you use your own Common Application Form – it would be helpful if you could share a copy of the form used, by emailing a copy to the admissions policy inbox ([Admissions.policies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Admissions.policies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)).
- b. Academies that process their own in year applications must forward copies of all applications received and response(s) to the applicant's request in accordance with School Admissions Code 2021. Where a place cannot be offered, the Local Authority may need to explore alternative school placements. This will also ensure that information is not being requested that is against the School Admission Code 2021.
- c. The Appeal presenting officer on behalf of an Academy or Trust as the representative of your school should have in depth knowledge of the school and be able to answer the questions asked during a panel by both parents and panel members. It is not for the Local Authority to provide key documentation.
- d. The Local Authority Appeals Manager may request to join hearings to observe how the appeals process is working and will not take part in the panel.
- e. Pathfinder Legal Services are the external body that will be clerking the appeal hearings.
- f. There are strict statutory deadlines for hearings to be heard and therefore documentation will be sent out in a timely manner to adhere to these obligations and any late submissions may affect the outcome of an appeal.
- g. If the allocated Presenting officer for the academy fails to attend the planned panel meeting, as per the Code, the appeal hearing will go ahead in their absence.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- 1. If you wish to take up the following services, you need to notify us by no later than 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.
- 2. A purchase Order number will be required when subscribing to these services so that invoices can be raised.
- 3. VAT will be charged for any School Admission/Appeals services supplied after the date of conversion to Academy status.

# Service Package

## . Transitions:

### **School Admissions Service Elevated Transitions (the point of entry to a School i.e., Reception and Year 7 for September 2026)**

Under statutory requirements the LA must coordinate the transition from nursery to primary, infant to junior and primary to secondary allocation of school placements.

The process involved includes;

- Providing a common application form and process; and
- collecting evidence of current residential address; and
- allocate all school places in accordance with the schools own over subscription criterion, up to their published admission number; and
- determination of a child's catchment area; and
- the calculation of the home to school distance measurements; and
- determination of whether the child has an Education Health Care Plan; and
- determination of whether the child is a Child in Care or was previously in Care; and
- indicating whether there are any older siblings already on roll at the school; and
- maintain waiting lists until 31<sup>st</sup> December in accordance with 2.15 Admissions code 2021 and own admissions authority schools take over control from the 1st of September; and
- ensuring that Infant Class Sizes are adhered to for Key Stage One allocations; and
- Co-ordination with other Local Authorities, based on parental preferences; and
- responding to applicants on National Offer days; and
- investigating and withdrawing offers if fraudulent application is made – all confirmed cases followed through with Legal Manager; and
- give an applicant the right to appeal if unsuccessful in obtaining any parental preferences.

The school would still be required to:

- rank children under their own over subscription criterion, any church criteria, medical need, staff criterion, confirmation of the attendance of siblings; and
- carry out any confirmation checks not routinely undertaken by the LA; and
- inform the Schools Admissions Team of any status change for children on their roll.

## Service package

### • Summer Born Service - Reception delay

Parents of children who are born between 1st of April and 31<sup>st</sup> of August, may request their child be considered for a place outside of their normal chronological year group. For example, a child might be due to start reception in September 2026, but the parent may wish for the child to start in September 2027.

This is called a 'delayed entry'.

[Research published by the Department of Education in 2023 \(gov.uk\)](#) found that 9 in 10 requests for a summer born delay were agreed with more than a quarter of local authorities adopting a policy of accepting all requests.

The local authority can process all requests for summer born delays in the year of entry prior to the allocation process for the start of the academic year.

The process involved includes;

- Online information provision to support parents make an informed decision.
- Online application form for parents to submit delay requests.
- Oversight of applications to ensure criteria met.
- Monitoring of overall applications and ensuring that application for reception place submitted for the following academic year.

The LA take a permissive approach to summer born requests. The DfE is supportive of the right of a parent to make a request that their summer born child is admitted out of their normal year group.

If you want to opt out of this service package, you will be required to:

Manage and respond to any parental requests received to delay outside of the normal round of allocations.

Respond to any referrals made by the parents to the school's ombudsman.

**Free of Charge**



## Service Package

### • Processing in Year Applications:

#### **School Admissions Service**

**In-Year** (*those applications received outside the normal transitions round*) .

It covers the coordination of all admission applications received for children moving school during the academic year and all tasks relating to this process (as provided in Service Package 1 above).

Where a place cannot be offered, waiting lists will be implemented and actioned in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021, 2.29 pg. 29. Schools will be able to see all information on the schools' portal where there is a waiting list for a year group.

In cases where a Voluntary Aided and Foundation school subscribed to this Service Package prior to conversion, charges will be raised proportionately for the remainder of Academic Year 2025/26.

# Service Package

## . Transition Appeals

### Admission Appeals Transitions

This service is provided by the LA and will provide the coordinated administration of appeals, for those families who are refused a place at your school as part of the transitions process.

It includes:

All administrative work undertaken in preparation for the Appeal hearing in compliance with the School Admissions Appeals Code:

- Written communication with parents;
- Collation and circulation to all parties of all information relevant to the appeal and provide information to parents on the appeal process;
- Timetabling and scheduling of appeal hearing dates;
- Organise panel members;
- Arrange the attendance of panel members at the hearing;
- Requesting school statement;
- Communication with schools – notifying them of the appeal;
- The provision of a legal clerk at the hearing, who will provide legal advice and guidance throughout.
- Communication with the school and parents after the hearing, to advise of the outcome of the appeal – this will only be through formal letter sent out by the legal clerk;
- Admission appeal hearings will be conducted on a virtual basis, using Microsoft Teams, in line with the appeal regulations.

### Legal Services

- provide independent clerking by Pathfinder Legal Services who are independent of the Admissions Team
- annual training of panel members;
- communicate with and training of panel members following any changes to the Codes;
- read and consider case papers prior to hearing;
- issue decision letters to appellants and school;
- provide appropriate follow up communication with the appellants; and
- assist with responses to complaints lodged with the Education Funding Agency.

Hearing dates will be set, and it is expected that the school will be available or provide a presenting officer for that date as schedules are very tight and statutory time scales which must be adhered to (see below). Dates and time slots are set with more than just one school being heard.

The deadline for appeal requests is revised each year in accordance with the School Admission Appeals Code, published by the Department for Education (DfE) 2022.

The current deadlines for appeal requests are:

- Primary Academy 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026
- Secondary Academy 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026

This will enable the Appeals Officer to ensure all appeals are heard within the statutory deadlines, 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.



# **Service Package**

## **• In year appeals**

### **Admission Appeals In Year**

This service provides the coordinated administration of appeals, for those families who are refused a place at your school during the academic year.

The service is the same as that detailed in Service Package – Transition Appeals.

If you choose to process your own in-year admission applications, but request that we coordinate your appeals you will be expected to follow the process above.

Hearing dates will be set, and it is expected that the school will be available or provide a presenting officer for that date as schedules are very tight and statutory time scales must be adhered to. Dates and time slots are set with more than just one school being heard.

