

PRIORY WITHAM ACADEMY

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS for 2026

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN (age 2 to 4 years)

1 The admission authority for Priory Witham Academy is The Priory Federation of Academies Trust (“the Trust”). These admission arrangements were determined by the Trust on 16 December 2024. They form part of the Trust’s admission policy. Pre-school settings are not covered by the government’s statutory guidance in the School Admissions Code but the Trust has generally followed this guidance where appropriate. This is to ensure compatibility with the academy’s admission arrangements for other age groups.

NUMBERS OF PRE-SCHOOL PLACES

2 Priory Witham Academy will provide the following number of pre-school places in the school year 2026/27 and, subject to any changes approved or required by the Secretary of State, for subsequent years.

- a) 40 pre-nursery places at any time for children who are 2 years old until the beginning of the term before their 3rd birthday
- b) 32 nursery places for children turning 3 years old, from the beginning of the term before their 3rd birthday until the end of the school year before their 4th birthday
- c) 39 pre-reception places for children turning 4 years old, from the beginning of the school year during which they are 4 to the end of that school year.

3 The academy admits more children than the number of pre-school places available because many children attend for part of the school week. It is not possible to state how many part-time or full-time children are admitted to each stage of the pre-school provision. This is because the number of places available at any time depends on how many children have already been admitted, how long they stay and whether they attend full-time or part-time. The academy also has to stay within permitted staffing ratios.

APPLICATIONS FOR PRE-SCHOOL PLACES (ages 2 to 4)

Process of application

4 You make applications for pre-school places directly to the academy. This is because admissions to pre-school education are subject to separate admission arrangements from those for the rest of the academy. The academy offers free (funded) places (15 or 30 hours

per week) for eligible children, and paid-for places. You can find a more detailed document giving the full range of types of places available on the academy's website (<https://www.priorywitham.co.uk/page/?title=Admissions&pid=33>) and as a printed copy from the academy.

5 Accepting a place in any part of the pre-school provision does not guarantee a place in the Reception Year (age 5) at Priory Witham Academy or at any other school. A separate application must be made for a school place in the Reception Year, using the local authority's coordinated scheme, when the child is about to reach compulsory school age.

6 The number of places available in any age group in the academy's pre-school provision depends on how many children of that age are already enrolled at the academy at the time of admission. Applications for places for pre-school provision can be made at any time after a child's birth. Children take up pre-nursery places after they are 2 years old. Children take up nursery places at the beginning of the term in which they reach the age of 3. Children take up places in the pre-Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they reach the age of 4.

Operation of waiting lists

7 If a place in the right age group is available when you apply, we will admit your child. If a place is not immediately available, your child's name is placed on a waiting list (sometimes called a reserve list). The academy will keep a waiting list for the whole year in each of the age groups in which it provides pre-school places.

8 If a parent of a child already on the academy's roll wishes to increase the number of hours, and those hours are not immediately available, then the child will need to go onto the waiting list for the additional hours. The child remains on roll with her or his current provision, but need to be considered alongside other applicants for the additional hours.

9 A child's position on a waiting list is determined only by the oversubscription criteria, irrespective of the time the child has been on the waiting list, except in the case of the second of two twins (see paragraph 25). Children can move up or down the waiting list because each waiting list will be reordered in accordance with the oversubscription criteria every time there is a new applicant or a child leaves the waiting list. You will need to inform the academy of your new address and any other new contact details if you move house while on the waiting list.

Admission criteria for pre-school places

10 Priory Witham Academy will consider all applications for pre-school places at the academy. Where the number of applications is less than or equal to the number of pre-school places available at the relevant time in each age group, we will offer places to all those who have applied.

11 Where the number of applications is greater than the number of places available, Priory Witham Academy will first accept all pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan (as defined in the *Children and Families Act 2014*) that names the academy.

Oversubscription criteria for pre-school places

The terms used in the following paragraph are explained in detail in a set of definitions at the end of these arrangements.

12 After the admission of pupils with EHC plans that name the academy, we will consider applications for the remaining places against the criteria set out below.

The criteria below will be applied in the order in which they are set out. If applying any criterion would result in the age group being oversubscribed, the subsequent criteria will be applied, in order, to decide which applicants will be admitted.

- a. looked after children, previously looked after children
- b. children where recognised professional opinion, including medical reasons, shows that a child's circumstances present a particularly strong case for taking in the child, and that opinion is accepted by the academy.
- c. **for two-year olds only** children who are eligible for disadvantage funding from Lincolnshire local authority because of their personal circumstances
- d. siblings of pupils who are on the roll of the academy at the time of the application
- e. children of a member of staff of the academy who has been employed at the academy for two or more years at the time of the application, or who has been appointed to a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
- f. children who live nearest to the academy measured by the straight-line distance from the child's home address to the academy's main entrance.

In the event that two or more applicants under criterion 12f live the same straight-line distance from the school, the place or places will be allocated at random by an independent person

CHILDREN OF UK MILITARY PERSONNEL

13 The Trust aims to support the military covenant by removing any disadvantage to UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces) moving to the area or Crown Servants returning from overseas to live in the area. The Trust will not refuse a place to a child of relocating service personnel or returning Crown Servants solely because the family does not yet have an intended address or does not yet live in the area. For all applications, the Trust will:

- a) process an application in advance of a move to the area provided it is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date
- b) use the address where the child will live when applying the oversubscription criteria, as long as the parents provide some evidence of their intended address, or a Unit or quartering address where the parent requests this.

Evidence of an intended residential address, such as a tenancy agreement or mortgage statement, will be required.

- 14 For late applications and in-year applications the Trust will also consider whether:
- a) an application from that address would normally succeed in an oversubscribed year
 - b) any child on the waiting list has a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria
 - c) the admission of another child would seriously prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources.

APPEALS

15 You do not have the same right of appeal in a pre-school setting as the parent of a child of statutory school age. The Trust has, however, provided an appeal route for those parents whose child is refused a place. Appeals related to pre-school admissions are heard by a panel set up by the academy's local governing body. Details of how to make an appeal will be provided when a parent is informed of a decision to refuse their child a pre-school place at the academy.

FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

16 The academy and Trust will participate fully in the Lincolnshire local authority's *Fair Access Protocol*, which makes sure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable children, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This can involve admitting children to schools or year groups that are already full. Children allocated a place under the *Fair Access Protocol* take precedence over those on a waiting list or awaiting the outcome of an appeal.

CONCERNS ABOUT APPLICATIONS

17 As the admission authority for the academy, the Trust has the right to investigate any concerns it has about an application. The Trust may withdraw an offer of a place if it is found within one year that parents have made a fraudulent claim or provided intentionally misleading information, such as a false address. The Trust reserves the right to check any information provided so it can apply the oversubscription criteria accurately and fairly.

CHANGES TO APPLICATIONS

18 Where a child's circumstances change, for example a change of address or when a sibling joins the school after an application has been made, the new information will be taken into account by the academy. Parents need to contact the academy so that the application can be amended to include the new information.

DEFINITIONS

Looked after children and previously looked after children

19 *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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.*

20 *Previously looked after children are 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), including those children who appear to the Trust to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.*

21 *Previously looked after children includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).*

22 *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.*

23 *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).*

Admission to pre-school places on social or medical grounds

24 *When applying for a pre-school place on social or medical grounds you should supply a supporting letter from an appropriate professional such as a social worker, doctor or consultant. The supporting letter should set out the particular reasons why the academy is the most suitable school for your child and the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another pre-school setting.*

Siblings

25 *A sibling is defined as:*

- *a natural brother or sister, whether or not a resident in the same household*

- *another child normally in residence for the majority (more than 50%) of term time in the household for whom the adult in the household has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 (for example, adopted siblings, half-brothers and sisters, step-brothers or sisters, and foster brothers or sisters)*
- *any child in the household where an adult is defined as a parent for the purposes of section 576 of the Education Act 1996.*

28 *In the case of twins, the strict child/adult ratios we need to maintain mean that it may not be possible to offer two places to twins at the same time. We will offer a place to one of the twins and accept the other for the next available place in the relevant age group, irrespective of other applications. One twin could take up the place while the other waited for the second place to become available, or parents might wish both to start at the same time once both places become available. As children move from one age group to another at different times of year, the availability of places is reviewed approximately monthly. The same approach would be extended for triplets or other multiple births.*

27 *Applications from two children born separately but in the same age group will be treated as two separate applications.*

Children of staff

28 *Staff means an employee of the Priory Federation of Academies Trust who is deployed for the largest proportion of their working time at the Priory Witham Academy. If the staff member is deployed for equal amounts of time at more than one of the Trust's academies, then the staff member can select one, and only one, of these academies as the academy at which they work.*

Home address

29 *This is the address where the child lives for the majority of the school term time with a parent who has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act 1989 or where an adult in the household is defined as a parent for the purpose of section 576 of the education Act 1996. This could include a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for her or him. It will not usually include other relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts etc. unless they have all the rights, duties, powers and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and their property.*

30 *In the case of a child who normally lives during the school week with more than one parent at different addresses, or if the family has more than one home, we will take as the home address the address where you and your child normally live for the majority of the school term time. In either scenario if you can show that your child spends an equal amount of time at both addresses during school term time, you can choose which address to use on the application.*

Distance

31 *Distances are measured in a straight line and are calculated to three decimal places (for example 1.543 miles) by the Lincolnshire County Council school admissions team, using Servelec's "Synergy" system. Information about the address used for each application is*

taken from the Ordnance Survey AddressBase database, which provides 12 figure X and Y coordinates for each individual property, usually at the centre of the property. Distances are measured from this point of the child's home to the gate at the main entrance to the academy on De Wint Avenue, Lincoln).