



Pilgrims School

Admissions Policy

September 2024

Next review date: September 2025

Linked policies:

- Pastoral & SEND Policy
- Transition Policy
- Complaints Policy



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Admissions Policy

Welcome to the Admissions Policy of Pilgrims Pre Preparatory (Pilgrims). We are proud to be a non-academically selective school, valuing each child for their unique abilities and talents. Our admissions process is designed to be inclusive, fair and focused on ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

At Pilgrims we understand the importance of 'school readiness' as part of a child's educational journey. We believe that this 'school readiness' enables children to fully benefit from the rich learning experiences and opportunities available to them at Pilgrims. We are, therefore, dedicated to supporting each child's development, ensuring they are equipped with the skills, confidence and enthusiasm to engage meaningfully in their learning, irrespective of when they start their educational journey with us, ie Little Pilgrims, Kindergarten, Pre School or Main School. However, this 'school readiness' is of particular importance when a child looks to transfer from our Pre School into Main School or when a child joins us directly into Main School (Reception to Year 2). We believe that the skills a child demonstrates at this key stage can set the tone for their educational experience and can significantly influence their attitudes towards learning for years to come.

Our admissions process considers each child holistically, valuing diversity and welcoming children from all backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. We work closely with parents to understand their child's needs and aspirations, fostering strong partnerships between home and school.

Thank you for considering Pilgrims for your child's education. We look forward to welcoming you to our warm and inclusive community, where every child is valued, supported, and encouraged to shine.

1. Partnership and Expectations

We believe in fostering a strong partnership between the school, parents, and children. Mutual respect and collaboration are fundamental to upholding our core values of curiosity, kindness, and respect. Our Home/School Agreement defines the responsibilities of each party to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. This partnership sets the foundation for successful admissions and ongoing engagement throughout a child's educational journey.

2. Related Policies

At Pilgrims, we uphold a comprehensive framework of policies to ensure the well-being, safety, and equitable treatment of all members of our school community. The following related policies serve as essential components of our admissions process:

1. Safeguarding Policy: Ensures the safety and well-being of all children in our care.
2. Equal Opportunities Policy: Promotes fairness and inclusivity, regardless of background or characteristics.
3. SEND Policy: Supports children with special educational needs or disabilities, ensuring they receive appropriate accommodations.

4. Complaints Policy: Provides a transparent process for addressing concerns, including those related to admissions decisions

These related policies work in conjunction with our Admissions Policy to ensure that our school operates in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and child-centeredness. By adhering to these policies, we strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

3. Inclusion

Our goal is to create a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. We are dedicated to treating all applicants equally regardless of their background, beliefs, or characteristics. We aim to cultivate an inclusive and diverse community where every child feels valued and respected.

4. Disability and Special Educational Needs

Pilgrims is committed to accommodating the needs of children with disabilities or special educational needs (SEND) within the school's capabilities. We collaborate closely with parents to understand and address any requirements, thereby ensuring that every child can fully participate in school life.

Parents are required to inform the school of any special needs their child may have during the admission process. While we endeavour to accommodate the individual needs of each child to the best of our ability, there may be instances where we are unable to make reasonable adjustments to adequately support a child's SEND requirements within our school environment.

In such cases, where it is determined that the nature or severity of a child's SEND needs exceeds the level of support that can reasonably be provided by the school, we reserve the right to consider these factors as part of the admissions process. This includes situations where:

- The child's SEND needs necessitate specialised provision or resources beyond the scope of what the school can reasonably offer due to limitations in staffing, facilities, or expertise.
- Despite our best efforts, we are unable to make reasonable adjustments enabling the child to fully access our curriculum, participate in school activities, or benefit from the educational opportunities available at Pilgrims School.
- The admission of a child with SEND needs would significantly impact the overall well-being and educational experience of other pupils within the school community, to an extent that cannot be reasonably mitigated.

In such instances, the school may need to consider whether it is in the best interests of both the child with SEND needs and the broader school community to explore alternative settings that can better meet the child's individual requirements.

We acknowledge the importance of transparent communication and collaboration with parents throughout the admissions process. We are committed to working closely

with families to explore all available options and, once fully enrolled, support transitions to alternative settings where necessary.

5. Admission Criteria

Admission to Pilgrims is based on the following criteria:

- **Availability of Places:** We offer places based on availability in the appropriate year group, ranging from Little Pilgrims (under 2s) to Year 2 (6 to 7 years old).
- **Child's Needs:** We assess whether the school can meet the child's educational and behavioural needs, ensuring they can integrate happily into their peer group and benefit from the school's offerings.
- In cases of oversubscription, priority may be given to siblings of current pupils, as well as those with siblings in other Harpur Trust schools.

6. Registration Process & Disclosures

Parents are required to complete the registration process, including a visit with the Registrar and submission of necessary forms. Any known health issues or special needs of the child must be disclosed at registration, with updates provided as needed.

7. Pre-Enrolment

Before enrolment, children are invited to spend time in their new environment, allowing staff to assess their suitability and readiness for admission. This can include several visits so that the necessary observations and / or assessments can be made.

- **For children joining Kindergarten, Pre School and Reception,** the Early Years Foundation Stage Developmental checklists are used (see Appendix A for Pre School to Reception specific checklist). For children who already attend Pilgrims Pre School, their on-going developmental observations will determine their readiness for Pilgrims Reception prior to the end of their 'Little Pilgrims to Pre School' contract.
- **For children joining into Main School (Reception mid-year, Year 1 or Year 2),** more formal assessments are used to ascertain where they sit within the relevant year group at Pilgrims. The assessments include:
 - Literacy – phonics, reading, writing and comprehension
 - Numeracy – number, shape space and measure, using and applying and problem solving.

In addition, observations made during a child's visit(s) are based on the following:

- **Social Skills:** We assess a child's ability to interact with peers and adults, share, take turns, and follow simple instructions.
- **Emotional Well-being:** We observe how children manage their emotions, cope with separation at 'hand over' and adapt to new environments.
- **Language and Communication:** We evaluate language development, including vocabulary, listening skills, and ability to express thoughts and needs.

- **Cognitive Skills:** We look at a child's problem-solving abilities, attention span, and early literacy and numeracy skills.

Following a child's visit(s), parents are invited to attend a feedback meeting to discuss the outcomes from any assessment and observations prior to any formal offer being made.

Parental involvement is encouraged throughout the pre-enrolment process to ensure a smooth transition.

8. Enrolment

We will contact a child's current setting for further information to support the enrolment process. For children within Early Years who may attend more than one setting, it is important for ongoing contact with the other setting to provide consistency and close working relationships. In some instances, it may be beneficial for a member of our staff to observe the child in their current / other setting, with parent's prior agreement.

Upon successful completion of the pre-enrolment process, formal offers of places are made in writing (including email). Parents must accept the offer by returning the necessary forms and payment. Places may be offered subject to certain conditions, ensuring the child's best interests are always prioritised.

9. Supporting the Transition

We understand that transitioning to a new setting can be both exciting and challenging for children and their families. To support this transition, we offer:

- **Transition Visits:** Children are invited to visit their new room / classroom to familiarise themselves with the school environment and build rapport with staff.
- **Parental Engagement:** We encourage parents to actively participate in the transition process by attending information sessions, workshops, and parent-teacher meetings. This involvement fosters open communication and collaboration between home and school, including discussions about establishing routines that promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- **Personalised Support:** Our staff are trained to provide personalised support to children who may require additional assistance during the transition period. This may include extra attention, reassurance, or targeted interventions to address specific needs.

10. Monitoring Progress

Once enrolled, we continue to monitor each child's progress closely and provide ongoing support as needed. This also includes tracking attendance and punctuality to ensure that pupils are able to fully engage in their learning. If additional needs (including special educational needs or disabilities) become apparent after enrolment, the processes outlined in our Pastoral & SEND policy will be followed. These processes will involve collaborating closely with parents to more specifically determine the level of need and support required.

With reference to section 4 above, if the child is unable to fully benefit from the curriculum / provision offered, alternative arrangements may need to be considered by the school and parents. This may include reducing a child's timetable and / or session timings, as well as the number of weeks attended ie Pilgrims / Annual term in Early Years, Holiday Club in Main School. In some instance alternative setting / school may need to be considered.

11. Contractual Terms and Conditions

It is essential for parents to carefully review and understand the specific contractual terms and conditions applicable to their child's care and education. These contracts provide clarity and transparency regarding the rights and responsibilities of both parents and the school.

At Pilgrims, we have two distinct parental contracts tailored to different stages of schooling;

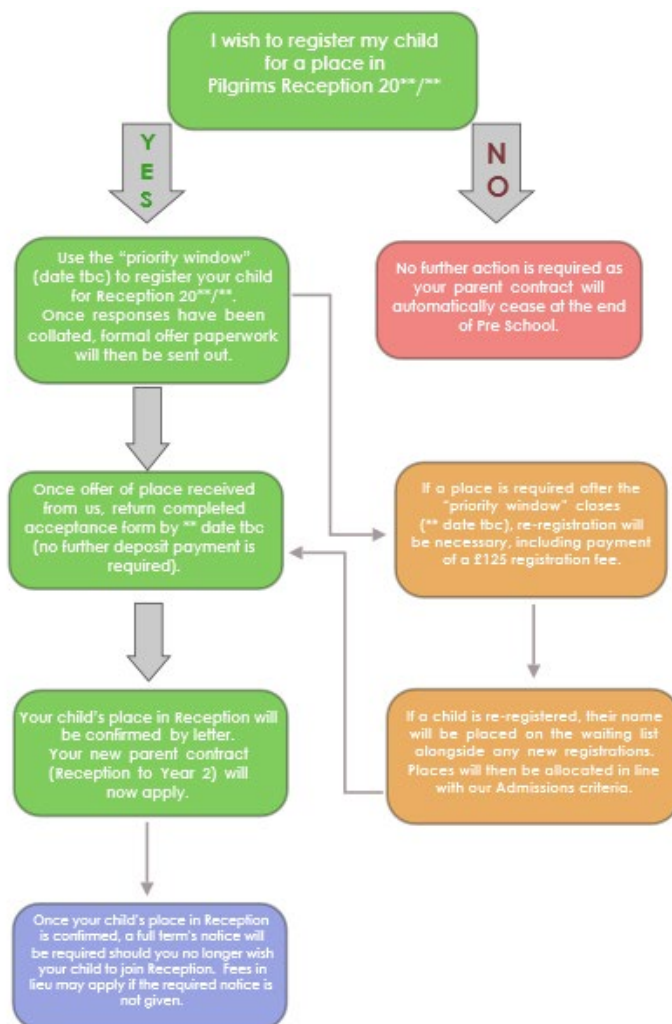
1. Little Pilgrims to Pre School: applies to parents with children attending Little Pilgrims, Kindergarten and Pre School.
2. Main School: applies to parents with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Each contract is designed to ensure that parents are fully informed about their obligations and entitlements throughout their child's educational journey. We encourage parents to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions outlined in their respective contracts to facilitate a mutually beneficial partnership between home and school.

Pre School into Reception: Priority Window applications

Parents with children currently attending Pre School are given 'priority' over places moving into Reception for the following academic year, ahead of the external children who are registered to join directly into Reception.

In the first half of the autumn term, all current Pilgrims' Pre School parents are informed of how the Main School 'priority window' operates and the timeline involved. As the first step in this process, parents will be asked to confirm their interest in their child moving up to Pilgrims' Reception (beginning of Main School). The complete 'Priority Window' process is summarised in the flow chart opposite:



End of Parental Contracts

1. Little Pilgrims to Pre School

Where a child is not moving up to Pilgrims' Reception, whether through parental choice or due to the school determining the child is not 'school ready', the parental contract will automatically cease at the end of the pertaining summer term. Parents will need to refer to the Local Authority's school admission process (see link: [Bedford LA School Admissions](#)), or that of any other school they choose.

2. Main School (Reception to Year 2)

The parental Main School contract ends at the end of Year 2 as the child leaves Pilgrims Pre Preparatory School. During the Autumn term of Year 2, parents will be required to apply for a place in Year 3 at their chosen school, whether this is;

- one of The Harpur Trust academically selective Prep or Junior Schools (links below):
 - [Bedford Girls School](#)
 - [Bedford School](#)
 - [Bedford Modern School](#)
- a State School (via LA link above)
- another independent school

12. Complaints Procedure

While we endeavour for a seamless admissions process, we acknowledge the importance of addressing any concerns promptly and transparently. Details of our complaints' procedure are available upon request.

Appendix A

Pilgrims Readiness Observation Checklist: Pre School to Reception

Personal, Social and Emotional Development	
1	I can dress and undress with minimal help Child can take off socks, shoes, coat, shorts/joggers. Child can put on socks and shoes with a little support for buckles etc, can put on own coat with support for zip/buttons.
2	I can use the toilet independently Child wears pants, can use the toilet independently but may need help with wiping.
3	I can share resources Child allows others to join in, sharing resources or toys.
4	I can take turns In a game or activity, the child understands turn-taking and waiting, sometimes in a line.
5	I can transition from one activity or location to another without support Child responds to name when called to an activity. Child stops one activity and moves to another when requested and with minimal intervention.
6	I can follow directions/requests from an adult Child will follow directions when asked without resistance e.g. come and line up, come in from the garden etc.
7	I can regulate my emotions Child does not get angry or upset in any situations to the extent where behaviour affects others (hitting, biting, lashing out etc)
8	I can follow some rules and routines without reminders from an adult Child knows some rules and why they are important e.g. walking inside, being kind with our hands.
9	I can separate from my carer, with minimal support Child mostly enters the setting happily or with a little reassurance.

Communication and Language	
1	I can speak in sentences of 4-6 words Child can construct sentences e.g. The cow lives in a field on a farm. EAL children may do this in English or home language
2	I can answer simple 'why?' questions Child can answer a simple question such as 'Why do we need to put our coats on today?'
3	I can listen when an adult is speaking to the group I am in At group/carpet time, the child does not routinely interrupt or talk to others when the adult or another child is speaking.
4	I can follow 2 and 3-part instructions Child can follow an instruction such as, 'Put your coat on and line up at the door.' or 'Scrape your plate, put your beaker in the bucket and come and sit at the table.'

Physical Development	
1	I can move in a variety of ways and show some spatial awareness* Child can walk and run, including at speed and usually avoid collisions with other children or obstacles
2	I can feed myself using a knife, fork and spoon Child can eat independently at mealtimes.
3	I can competently drink from an open topped cup Child can drink independently at mealtimes
4	I can put on and take off my own shoes Child can undo Velcro and remove shoes. Child can put feet in shoes and fasten with Velcro. Child may need help with buckles/laces.
5	I can put on and take off my own coat Child can take off own coat. Child can put on own coat but may need help with zip/buttons.

*This will not apply if the child has a physical disability and is reliant upon a wheelchair or walking aid.