



# ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023-24

## **Introduction**

Pioneer Secondary Academy School is vested in the trusteeship of the Sikh Academies Trust. The school is conducted, by its Governing Body (Local Advisory Board, LAB), in accordance with its funding agreement and articles of association. Up to 50% of the places will be allocated on the basis of Sikh faith and all remaining places will be allocated to children of other or no faith. In the event that fewer Sikh children apply for places allocated on the basis of faith by the end of the academic year or LA deadlines for statutory schooling applications, the remaining places will be allocated to children of other or not faith. Conversely in the event that fewer children of other or no faith apply for available places, then the remaining places will be allocated to children of Sikh faith.

The Governing Body (LAB) is the 'Admissions Authority' for the school. The Admissions Panel (on behalf of the Governing Body) makes all the decisions about admissions, the Headteacher is not involved.

The Governing Body applies the regulations on admissions fairly and equally to all those who wish to attend this school. All applications will be treated on merit and in a sensitive manner. The background or level of ability of a child plays no part in the admissions policy of this school, which applies to our sixth form also.

## **Admissions Information**

Pioneer Secondary Academy is a Sikh faith free school which provides for a total of 840 places for girls and boys in the age range of 11 to 18 years old.

## **Definition of a Sikh**

The Definition of a Sikh as stipulated in the Sikh Rehat Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions as defined by Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar) is:

*"Any human being who faithfully believes in i. One Immortal Being, ii. Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, iii. The Guru Granth Sahib, iv. The utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and v. the baptism bequeathed by the tenth Guru, and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh."*

## **Definition of an Amritdhari (Baptised Sikh)**

An Amritdhari is someone who has been initiated into the Sikh faith through the Sikh baptism ceremony of "Amrit Sanchaar" and keeps all of the discipline and Rehats as stipulated to them at the time of Amrit.

Applicants will demonstrate the above by completing a Religious Questionnaire (RQ) which is signed by the Gurdwara Granthi (Priest).

## **Admissions Number**

The school's pupil admissions number (PAN) is 120 per year.

If you wish to apply to any other year group, please contact the school directly to see if there are any places.

## Admissions Procedures

To apply for a place at our school, parents/legal guardians/carers must complete the CAF (Common Admissions Form) from your local authority within the required deadlines as set out by the local authority.

- You will need to state Pioneer Secondary Academy as your first choice preference on your application form.
- If you live in Buckinghamshire you will need to apply either using a paper copy of the CAF or directly on line at the following address:  
<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/schools/admissions-andmovingschool/admission-to-secondary-school/online-application/Form>
- If you live outside Buckinghamshire then your home Local Authority will provide you with information about where to find the application form on their website.
- If you have difficulties locating PSA on the on-line application, please contact your Local Authority and speak to the Council that you are applying through and they will help you.

We are not able to accept direct applications but please contact PSA direct if you wish to seek immediate admission to one of the other year groups currently in the Academy.

All Sikh Parents and guardians applying in this category **must fill in a Religious Questionnaire (RQ) as well as a CAF**, with the exception of looked after children and/or previously looked after children.

The Religious Questionnaire (RQ) is obtainable from the school office or website and is on the LA website. It needs to be returned by post to: **Admissions, Sikh Academies Trust, Hollybush Hill, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4QB, by the closing date of the CAF application.** All Religious Questionnaires must be received by this date.

All applications should be sent by a recorded delivery method that records the name and address of the sender and the address that it is posted to, which will act as your receipt and proof of the date of postage.

## Admissions Criteria

Pioneer Secondary Academy welcomes applications from all children in the local community but the school will give priority to Sikh children who worship regularly at Gurdwara for 50% of its places. If you apply under the faith criteria, you should fill in the Religious Questionnaire (RQ) to show your commitment to your faith and links to your local Gurdwara.

If undersubscribed, the school will admit all applicants. If oversubscribed, the school will admit children under two categories below. The school will admit all SEN pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) where the school is named in the plan before applying the oversubscription criteria.

**Priority Group A** – 50% of places allocated on the basis of faith and be admitted in the following order:

- Sikh Children and Young People in Care\* and previous Children and Young People in Care
- Sikh Children and young people in care are children who are (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of the social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time the application is made to school.
- 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) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- Sikh children who have one or more siblings at the school (within Years 7 to 10) on the date they apply. (Sibling means a full brother or sister, a half-brother or half-sister, a stepbrother or stepsister, or an adopted or long-term fostered brother or sister living from cohabiting parents who live at the same address and are going to the same school).
- Sikh children whose parents demonstrate their commitment to the Sikh faith; this commitment will be assessed and places will be allocated based on the score achieved in the RQ. Priority will be given to the highest scores over those with lower scores. See below (under 'Religious Questionnaire') for how points are allocated.

#### **Tie break within Group A**

- If two or more children have an equal number of points, the place will be allocated to the Sikh children who live nearest to the school measured in accordance with the definition of 'proximity' below.
- When children live exactly the same distance from the school an independently supervised random allocation will be used to determine who is admitted.

**Priority Group B** – 50% of allocation of places will be allocated to children without reference to faith and will be admitted in the following order:

- Children and Young People in Care\* and previous Children and Young People in Care
- Sikh Children and young people in care are children who are (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of the social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time the application is made to school.
- 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 immediately following having been looked after and 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.

- Children who have a sibling attending the school at the time the child is due to start the school. Priority will be given to children from multiple births when applying at the same time. (Siblings mean a full brother or sister, a half-brother or half-sister, a stepbrother or stepsister, or an adopted or long-term fostered brother or sister living from cohabiting parents who live at the same address and are going to the same school).
- Proximity: children who live nearest to the school as measured by the definition below.

### **Tie break within Group B**

When children live exactly the same distance from the school an independently supervised random allocation will be used to determine who is admitted.

### **\* Supporting Evidence**

If the child is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority this must be indicated on the common application form and evidence (e.g. evidence of child in care from the placement authority) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. If the child has previously been in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them and has subsequently been adopted, or is subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order this must be indicated on the common application form and evidence (e.g. adoption certificate/copy of court order) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. For children in state care outside of England who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted the relevant legal document(s) must be supplied.

### **Proximity**

Distance from home to the school will be measured by the Local Authority using the Geographical Information System produced by Tribal Technology Limited.

The distance from home to school is measured by the shortest walking route. The distance is measured from the central point in the property to the centre of the road, along the centre of the road, to the midpoint of the school. The route is measured using public highways and lit footpaths, but excludes common land and public open spaces. It does not take into account access by public transport or any private vehicle.

In the case of multi-occupancy buildings, for example flats, priority will be given to the applicants whose door number is the lowest numerically and/or alphabetically e.g. 11B takes priority over 12A.

## **Random Allocation**

Random allocation will decide who is admitted if two applicants are tied for the final place within either group A or B and live exactly the same distance away from the school.

We will use the 'random number' facility in a spreadsheet to produce ranking. Each child involved will have an equal chance of being selected. The process will be independently observed by a representative from the local authority.

## **Children of Multiple Birth**

In both Group A and Group B in the normal admission round, if the last child to be offered a place is a twin or other multiple birth, and their sibling cannot be offered a place, we will ensure that all the children are offered a place together, even if this means exceeding our PAN.

## **Proof of Address**

For any parent who, for whatever reason, has more than one property, they should only refer to the property in which the child actually resides. In cases where parents are separated and the child lives for periods with both, then the child's address will be that property at which, during the school year, the child for the most part resides, this will normally be determined by the address which is registered by the GP. Evidence will have to be provided. The proof of address documentation includes e.g. Council Tax, utilities bill, Child Benefit, house purchase contract, Electoral Roll etc. or as published annually by the Admissions Panel. If the address is a rented property, the original properly witnessed lease, signed by a solicitor, must be provided. We will not accept photocopies or downloaded agreements.

Documentation will be required to confirm the arrangement. If this is not available, then the use of the address of the parent who receives the child benefit will be used when prioritising the application.

All offers of a place made by the school, or on behalf of the school, will be conditional upon the receipt of proof of residence. The provision of false or misleading information may lead to the withdrawal of an offer.

## **Religious Questionnaire (RQ)**

All Sikh applicants, with the exception of looked after children and/or previously looked after children need to demonstrate a commitment to the Sikh faith by filling in the RQ.

The table below shows the number of points awarded for meeting the criteria for Group A. The SIF is marked in accordance with the criteria below. The total number of points will be used to put the applications in rank order; those with higher scores will have priority over those with lower scores.

*Number of points awards to children on the frequency they attend the Gurdwara*

	Children who go to Gurdwara daily Children who regularly go to Gurdwara two times a week
	Children who regularly go to Gurdwara monthly

Children who go to Gurdwara occasionally

*Number of points awarded to children based on the length of time they have attended the Gurdwara*

	Children who have been going to the Gurdwara for 2 years or more
	Children who have been going to Gurdwara for at least 1 year but less than 2 years

	Children who have been going to Gurdwara for at least 6 months but less than 1 year
	Children who have been going to the Gurdwara for under 6 months

*Number of points awarded to children based on Baptised Sikh Children*

	Amritdhari (Baptised Sikh) children
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Additional points to note:

- Sikh Parents are also strongly advised to keep a photocopy of their completed RQ, should any query arise or in any case of appeal.
- For Sikh parents/legal guardians/carers who do not submit a completed Religious Questionnaire, with the exception of looked after children and/or previously looked after children in respect of their child's place, the application will not be considered.
- Any Religious Questionnaires (RQs) received after the closing date will be deemed late and be given lower priority than those received on time, regardless of their RQ score and will be placed on the waiting list as detailed below in the Waiting List section.
- The Religious Questionnaire (RQ) is marked objectively by The Slough Sikh Education Trust (SSET) according to our marking scheme.
- RQ answers in English or Punjabi are acceptable. Support will be given to parents who require translation or a scribe and request this in writing.

## **Waiting List**

A waiting list will be maintained by the Governing Body in the order of the oversubscription criteria and not in the order in which applications are received. The waiting list is held and re-ranked when every new application is received. Consequently, a waiting list position can go up or down depending upon the number of vacancies that may arise as well as the number of applications received and the criterion that is met in each case.

When a vacancy occurs at the school, the Governors will offer the place to the child in accordance with the admissions criteria. The awarding of the place will depend on whether the vacant place is Sikh or Non-Sikh. Parents/carers will be required to confirm in writing by the end of the autumn term to the school that they wish to remain on this list. The list will be retained for the remainder of the school year. If a place cannot be offered within the academic year parents will need to apply again for the next academic year.

## **Late Request**

If we receive your application late, we will deal with it after we have dealt with the applications that we received on time.

## **Withdrawal**

The DfE School Admissions Code states 'an offer of a school place may be withdrawn if a fraudulent or an intentionally misleading application from a parent/carer is made (e.g. a false claim of residency in a catchment area)'. The burden of proof lies with you and your application.

## **In-Year Application**

This is when an application is made to move between schools outside of the usual transfer time, due to relocation or a change in circumstances. The application should be made directly to the school and will be considered under the school's admissions policy.

## **Fair Access Protocol**

Pioneer Secondary Academy is committed to taking its reasonable share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in the Buckinghamshire County Council Fair Access Protocol. Such pupils take precedence over those on the waiting list.

## **Admission Appeals**

Parents who are dissatisfied with the decision of the Governing Body not to admit a child may appeal. Appeals should be made within 20 days of receiving the decision and should be made in writing to: Admissions Appeals Officer, Pioneer Secondary Academy, Hollybush Hill, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4QP.



An independent appeals panel's decision is binding for all parties concerned. Details of appeal arrangements are set out in the School Admissions Appeals Code, February 2012.

For further information about the code, please visit:

[https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1 /DFE00014 2012](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE00014%202012)

### **Review**

The Governing Body of Pioneer Secondary Academy, as a Faith Academy, determines its own admissions criteria.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body in line with the Department for Education School Admissions Code.