



PSA ADMISSIONS POLICY

Date reviewed: Autumn 2024
Date of next review: Autumn 2026

ADMISSIONS

Introduction

Pioneer Secondary Academy School is a part of the Sikh Academies Trust.

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 your respective LA deadline 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.

SAT is the 'Admissions Authority' for the school. The Admissions Panel (on behalf of SAT) makes all the decisions about admissions.

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

Admissions Information

Pioneer Secondary Academy is a Sikh faith free school which provides for a total of 600 places for girls and boys in the age range of 11 to 16 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 apply to the school directly. Your application will be placed on a waiting list in order of the admission criteria.

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 let us know and contact your Local Authority that you are applying through and they will help you.

We are not able to accept direct applications for primary (year 6) to secondary (year 7). However, if your admission relates to in-year or year 8 onwards please contact PSA directly.

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, Pioneer Secondary Academy (Sikh Academies Trust), Hollybush Hill, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4QB, by the closing date of the CAF application.

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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Sikh children who have one or more siblings at the school (within Years 7 to 13) 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).
4. 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 ('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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. 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.

Children of staff at the school

SAT gives priority in the oversubscription criteria to children of staff in either or both of the following circumstances:

- a. where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made; and/or
- b. the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

SAT specify in the admission arrangements how this priority will be applied: it will be applied to all staff or support staff employed at the Trust. In case of oversubscription this criterion applies after Priority Group A.

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 consider 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.

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

10	Children who go to Gurdwara daily
8	Children who regularly go to Gurdwara two times a week
6	Children who regularly go to Gurdwara monthly
4	Children who go to Gurdwara occasionally

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

5	Children who have been going to the Gurdwara for 2 years or more
4	Children who have been going to Gurdwara for at least 1 year but less than 2 years
3	Children who have been going to Gurdwara for at least 6 months but less than 1 year
2	Children who have been going to the Gurdwara for under 6 months

3. Number of points awarded to children based on Baptised Sikh Children

3	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 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 SAT 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, we 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. 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, Sikh Academies Trust, 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

Sixth Form Admissions

Places in Year 12 will be awarded in the following order of priority:

1. Children currently in public care (Looked After Children) / children previously in public care who meet the entry requirements and subject specific criteria.
2. Students who are on roll at Pioneer Secondary Academy at the end of Year 11 and who meet the entry requirements and subject specific criteria. Students must apply by Monday, 16th December 2024.

3. External applicants who are on track to meet entry requirements and subject specific criteria must apply by Monday, 16th December 2024. Any applications received after this date will be added to the waiting list.

Provisional offers will be made after formal interview and will be dependant on results in August 2025.

Additional notes:

- All applicants must be aged 16 on the 31st August in the year of application to start Year 12.
- Students must meet the entry requirements for their chosen programme of study.
- Students must meet the individual subject criteria.
- Places will be offered in accordance with points 1-3 above and are subject to availability of places on courses and availability of combinations of subjects.
- Late applicants may be invited for discussion if places are available on their chosen courses or for a place on the waiting list.

Review

Trustees of Pioneer Secondary Academy, as a Faith Academy, determine their own admissions criteria. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees in line with the School Admissions Code 2021.