

Scholars' Education Trust Harpenden Academy

POLICY TITLE:	ADMISSIONS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022
STATUS:	STATUTORY
ISSUED BY:	Admissions Committee
DATE DUE:	January 2020
NEXT REVIEW:	Autumn 2020

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Harpenden Academy Admissions process.

Harpenden Academy is a co-educational, all ability school for children aged 4-11. The published admissions number for Reception is 60.

Harpenden Academy complies with the legal requirements of the DfE published Admissions Code.

Harpenden Academy operates an unbiased admissions process.

Harpenden Academy will form part of Hertfordshire County Council's Co-ordinated Admissions process for Reception places until further notice. We will co-ordinate and share data with Hertfordshire County Council. All applicants must complete the Common Application Form of their home Local Authority. Hertfordshire residents should apply online to Hertfordshire County. Families resident in other authorities must complete the form provided by the authority in which they live. Applicants for Harpenden Academy do not need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

If the School receives more applications than it has places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order they are printed below.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with a statement of special educational needs that names their school. Schools must also admit children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school.

Rule 1

Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order). Please see notes below for full definition.

Rule 2

Medical or social: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the Academy. Please see notes below for full definition. A panel of governors will determine whether the evidence is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the Academy applied for under Rule 2 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.

Applications for children adopted but previously looked after abroad will be considered under this rule and accepted if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed. Hertfordshire's "Virtual School" will be asked to verify all such applications.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- a. Evidence that the child was previously cared for by the state abroad because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and has been subsequently adopted; OR***
- b. Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs; and/or
- c. Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- d. If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- e. For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Rule 3

Sibling: Children who have a sibling on roll of the Academy at the time of application. Please see notes below for full definition.

Rule 4

Children of Staff

Rule 5

Nearest School: Children for whom it is their nearest school or academy. All schools, except those schools that admit pupils on the basis of faith, are included.

Rule 6

Distance: Children who live nearest the Academy. (Straight line system of measurement from a child's home address point to the address point of the school will be used for all admission distances - see below). If your child does not qualify under rule 5, they will be considered under rule 6.

Tie-Break

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tiebreak will be used by applying the next rule to those children. Where there is a need for a tie-breaker where two different addresses measure the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random allocation. Random allocation will be undertaken independently of the school by Hertfordshire County Council. Every child entered onto the county council's admissions database has an individual random number

assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break this random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

NOTES ON THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangement order (see footnote 1) or a special guardianship order (footnote 2)).

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. These children will be prioritised under rule 1.

Highest priority will also be given to children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

A “child looked after” 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 (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1 (footnote 3).

Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Rule 1.

Children who were not “looked after” **immediately** before being adopted, or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, **will not** be prioritised under rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

Rule 2: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the Academy.

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However in a few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under **Rule 2** are agreed. All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- a) Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child’s individual needs; and/or
- b) Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child’s needs;

- c) If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate;
- d) For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate.

Applications under Rule 2 can only be considered when supported by a recent letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example a doctor, psychologist or police officer. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child.

Applications for children previously "looked after" but not meeting the specific criteria outlined Rule 1, may be made under this rule.

Sibling

A sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after (see footnote 1) and in every case living permanently (see footnote 2) in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts or have been offered and accepted a place.

If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

Children of Staff

The school will admit a child of a member of staff provided that 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 or where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

For the purposes of satisfying these criteria, a member of staff is defined as a permanent member of the teaching staff, or a permanent member of the non-teaching staff. This definition does not include contract staff. This definition does not include peripatetic staff employed by HCC.

The child must be living permanently with the member of staff.

Footnotes:

1. Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.

2. A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

Twins and Multiple Births

The school will admit over the published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at a school.

Home Addresses

The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application. 'At the time of application' means the closing date for applications. "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year and/or the family own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one that the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the child's main residence.

If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit/Tax Credit alternative documentation will be requested.

If a child's residence is in dispute, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g. containing separate preferences, the application from the parent in receipt of child benefit will be processed if the applications cannot be reconciled.

Home to School Distance Measurement for Purposes of Admissions

Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements for admission allocation purposes. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

Where Harpenden Academy has offered a child a place at the school, we provide for the full-time admission of that child in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September, then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. Summer born children are only able to "defer" entry to Reception class until the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Where parents wish, children can attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents wishing to take up a part-time place or deferred entry should contact Harpenden Academy to discuss their child's requirements.

Summer born children (1st April – 31st August) – Entry to Reception

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. If you do not believe your child will be ready to start Reception in the 2021/22 academic year, you may instead make an application for your child to start Reception in September 2022.

Summer born applications that are delayed for a year (for entry in September 2022) will be processed in exactly the same way as all other reception applications received at that time; there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at a child's preferred school.

If parents wish to delay their application for a Reception place they are advised to discuss their child's needs/development with their current early years or nursery provider.

Children Seeking Admission Outside Their Chronological Year Group (except applications for reception from summer born children)

The school's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance, (see footnote 1) which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".

The Scholars Education Trust, as the relevant admission authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The Trust's decision will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly, there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of the school.

Applications from Children¹ from Overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in England have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in England for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

An application for a school place will only be accepted for such children currently overseas if, for In Year applications, proof is provided that the child will be resident in Hertfordshire within two weeks. In Year allocations are made on the assumption that the child will accept the school place and be on roll within that timescale.

Footnotes

1. "Advice on the admission of summer born children" December 2014.

Applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants (and from military families who are residents of countries with a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK). In these cases, Harpenden Academy will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria. Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative "work" address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes.

The school, in liaison with HCC, will also consider accepting applications from children (see footnote 1) whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by a panel of county council officers and communicated with parents within 6 weeks of the closing date for applications.

If an applicant owns a property in Hertfordshire but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, the Hertfordshire address will not be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children, than those mentioned above, from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application, in addition to proof of Hertfordshire address, for example a council tax bill or 12 month rental agreement.

Arrangements for Admitting Pupils to Other Year Groups, including to replace any Pupils who have left Harpenden Academy

Any requests for an In Year transfer should be made to the school and will be passed to Scholars' Education Trust for consideration.

Harpenden Academy will operate a continuous waiting list.

Allocations to year groups 1-6 will only be made where such allocation does not take the year group above the published admissions number (or alternatively agreed for a specific year group by the Governing Body). Applications will be considered using the same criteria as used of Reception applicants where there are more applicants than spaces available.

Footnotes

1. Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports), or have a UK passport describing them as a British citizen or British subject with the right of abode or are European Economic Area nationals normally have unrestricted entry to the UK.

Harpenden Academy will hold, if required, a waiting list – throughout the year. For each added child, Harpenden Academy will re-rank the list again in line with the Over-subscriptions Policy in this document and award a space as soon as one becomes available. In the event that multiple applicants wish to start in future terms (e.g. applications made in September for a January start), offers will be made 2 weeks before the end of each preceding term (e.g. December).

Priority will not be based on the date the application was received or the name was added to the list.

Repeat Applications

Unless there are significant and material changes in the circumstances of the parent’s application for their child or the academy, the Scholars Education Trust will not consider a repeat application in the same academic year.

Appeals

All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal, who applied on line, should log on to their online application and click on the link “register an appeal”. Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link “log into the appeals system”.

If your In Year application is unsuccessful, the county council will write to you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals.

Late Applications

Any online or paper application received after the statutory deadline, 15th January 2021, will be treated as a late application. Late applications are not dealt with until all on-time applications have been considered. You are much less likely to be offered a place at one of your preferred schools if you apply late. If there are exceptional circumstances why you were unable to make your application by the closing date, you should contact your Local Authority giving your reasons and supplying support evidence where appropriate.

Fair Access

The school participates in the County Council’s Fair Access Protocol and will admit children under this protocol before children on continuing interest and above the Published Admissions Number.

Timescales

Closing date for online applications to be submitted to Herts CC	[] January 2021
Statutory deadline for receipt of paper applications	[] January 2021
National Allocation Day	[] April 2021
Date by which parents/carers may accept or reject place offered	[] April 2021
Date by which parents/carers return appeal forms	[] May 2021

Equalities impact assessment considered.