



NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY

Jesus said, 'I am the Good Shepherd... I know my sheep and my sheep know me.' John 10.14

Our school vision

We are inspired to be a vibrant, joyful community in which we know and love one another, leading together and growing together by:

- Appreciating everyone and everything around us
- Making one another feel safe
- Sharing, so no one feels left out
- Living well together in love
- Moving forward together in hope

Our vision for admissions to our nursery

We know what kind of community we strive to be, and we know that our vision for the school has to be put into practice from the very first moment that we receive an enquiry about admissions. This policy is intended to comply with statutory requirements and to make sure we handle admissions to nursery transparently and in line with all our values.

When can children start in our nursery?

Children normally start nursery in the September following their third birthday, unless it is agreed with the Headteacher that they may start the following January. In addition, at the discretion of the Headteacher, a child may start nursery at the beginning of the term following their third birthday.

How do you apply for a place in our nursery?

Since September 2018 the Local Authority no longer coordinates the admissions for nursery in Hertfordshire schools. All applications must be made online using the link from the school website's nursery admissions page, or on the school's own application form which is available to download on the school's website and, when completed, can be emailed to the school. If you prefer to use a paper form, but cannot print one from the website, you can ask for a printed copy from the school office. Paper forms should, when completed, be returned to the school. If you need any help with completing the form, please contact us and we will do our best to advise you.

When should applications for nursery places be made?

The official opening date for nursery admission application forms for entry in September 2023 is 1st January 2023 (although you can apply prior to this date) and applications will close on Friday 24th February 2023.

How many places are available?

We can admit a maximum of 15 children in each academic year. Children are normally expected to attend nursery for each morning session, Monday to Friday. They may also attend one or more of our nursery's afternoon sessions. We will not discriminate against children who will only be attending the morning sessions.

Does a place in nursery guarantee a place in reception?

Attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee subsequent admission into the main school for primary education. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the admission authority for our reception class and for vacancies in the main school. A separate application for admission will need to be made to HCC and places will be allocated on the basis of HCC's published criteria (see our admissions page for the main school on our website).

When are nursery places allocated?

Allocations will be made at the beginning of March and parents will subsequently be informed. Following the initial allocation, parents will be expected to accept or reject the offer within two weeks in order that remaining places can be allocated. Any remaining places will be allocated as they are required in accordance with the criteria followed by the school which is the Hertfordshire County Council's policy and criteria on looked-after children and children with a statement of Special Educational Needs or with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school.

What criteria are used to allocate places?

If there are fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be offered a place.

If there are more applications than places available, the criteria set out below will be used to allocate nursery places:

- 1) **Children in care and children who were looked after** but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order).
- 2) Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular **medical or social need** to go to the school.
- 3) Children who will have a **sibling** on the roll of the school at the time of admission.
- 4) Children for whom it is their **nearest** community or voluntary controlled school.
- 5) Any other children.

Continuing Interest (Nursery places)

After places have been offered, governors will create and maintain a Continuing Interest (CI) List, often known informally as a 'waiting list'. A child's position on the CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. The school will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. A continuing interest list will be maintained until the end of the summer term of 2023 for September 2023 admissions.

Definitions and Explanatory notes

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions criteria:

Children in public care (children looked after)

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 criterion 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.

Child Arrangements Order - under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been

replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

Special guardianship order – under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

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 criterion 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 criterion 1.

Medical or Social need

A panel of officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the school applied for under Rule 2 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.

Definition of '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 and, in every case, living permanently 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. If a place is obtained for a child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

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 address

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 which 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.

Fraudulent applications

The school will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses. Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked, and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided.

Action will be taken in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
 - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful
 - The family has returned to an existing property
 - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period
 - Council tax information shows a different residence at the time of application
 - When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application

Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used for all home to school distance measurements for admission allocation purposes.

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Review: November 2023