

Statutory School Admissions Consultation & Determination Process

Guidance for foundation, voluntary aided schools
and academies



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Schools Admissions Consultation Guidance

Schools Admissions Code (SAC)

The SAC covers statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, school adjudicators and admission appeals panels and includes but is not limited to guidance on the consultation and determination processes.

It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with this Code. Where a school is the admission authority, this responsibility falls to the governing body or Academy Trust. The latest SAC can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

What is consultation and why do I need to consult?

A school admissions consultation ensures that those who may have an interest in your school admission arrangements are aware of any proposed changes and are given an opportunity to express their views about the changes.

Own admission authority schools and academies **must** consult on their arrangements, in accordance with the SAC:

- when changes are proposed **or**
- at least once every 7 years if there have been no changes during that period.

The public consultation process must be carried out and all views considered before the governing body or academy trust agrees (determines) any decisions about changing the school's admission arrangements. The decision of the governing body and the main points of discussion must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

The only exception is where own admission authority schools propose to **increase** their PAN. This does not require consultation. Schools proposing to **decrease** their PAN **must** always consult.

Who needs to consult?

All admission authorities are responsible for their own consultation process and for ensuring that the requirements of the SAC are met. This includes schools that are, or will be one of the following, at the time consultation starts:

- Voluntary Aided
- Foundation
- Academy
- Free school
- University Technical College/Studio School

The Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools and will undertake any consultation that is required.

When do schools need to consult?

The SAC states that consultation **must** last for a minimum of 6 weeks and **must** take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. For example, when reviewing admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21, consultation must take place between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2019.

Schools that were previously community or voluntary controlled **must** undertake formal consultation if they wish to amend their existing admission arrangements in any way, however they must be their own admitting authority at the time the consultation process starts.

Own Admission Authority Schools that are part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

For academies operating within multi-academy trusts it is ultimately the MAT's decision (as the admission authority) whether to undertake consultation. It is not necessary for consultation to be undertaken for all schools in the MAT at the same time; consultation for individual schools within the MAT can be undertaken.

Who do I need to consult?

In accordance with paragraph 1.44 of the School Admissions Code, all admission authorities (including own admission authority schools and academies) **must** consult:

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority;
- f) in the case of faith schools, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

It is not sufficient to only publish proposals to amend admission arrangements on the school website.

How do schools consult?

EITHER – As part of the county council's consultation process (following the same timeline)

The county council is happy to coordinate the admissions consultation process on behalf of own admission authority schools and academies in Hertfordshire. As part of the consultation process, the county council ensures that information about the consultation process for all schools taking part is sent to the following statutory consultees (as outlined in c) – f) above):

- all schools and academies in Hertfordshire
- neighbouring LAs
- faith representatives **and**
- is published on the Hertfordshire website

If the county council is also consulting on its own arrangements, we will also:

- advertise the process in local newspapers across Hertfordshire
- launch a poster campaign for all schools in Hertfordshire, children's centres, libraries, dental and doctors surgeries
- inform town, parish, district and borough councils
- advertise via social media - Facebook and Twitter

However, in accordance with paragraph 1.44 of the School Admissions Code own admission authority schools and academies **must** ensure they undertake adequate consultation with their own families and local community. Own admission authorities **must** consult with:

- a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen
- b) Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions (for example pre- schools and private nurseries, parish councils, local residents etc).

You must also ensure the proposed arrangements and rationale for the proposed changes are published on the school website on or before the consultation start date and for the duration of the consultation period. Remember to tell people how to respond – giving an email and/or postal address.

OR - Run your own consultation

If you chose not to coordinate your school admissions consultation process with HCC, you **must** consult with all statutory consultees outlined in the SAC:

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;
- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions (for example pre- schools and private nurseries, parish councils, local residents);
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);
- d) the local authority (HCC);
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities; and
- f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.

You must also ensure your proposed arrangements and the rationale for the changes are published on the school website on or before the consultation start date and for the duration of the consultation period. Remember to tell people how to respond – giving an email and/or postal address. If any of the persons or bodies listed above request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements, you are required to send this by email/post.

Oversubscription criteria

The SAC does not give a definitive list of acceptable oversubscription criteria. It is for admission authorities to decide which criteria are most suitable to the school according to the local circumstances. However, paragraph 1.8 states:

“Oversubscription criteria **must** be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. Admission authorities **must** ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs, and that other policies around school uniform or school trips do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.”

Some information is mandatory and **must** be included in the arrangements for every school and academy. Please ensure that when you are formulating your admission arrangements (regardless of whether you are consulting or not), all the mandatory requirements listed below are included.

Mandatory Requirements

The SAC (paragraph 1.9) is clear that admission authorities, when formulating their admission arrangements, **must not**:

- a) place any conditions on the consideration of any application other than those in the oversubscription criteria published in their admission arrangements;
- b) take into account any previous schools attended, unless it is a named feeder school;
- c) give extra priority to children whose parents rank preferred schools in a particular order, including ‘first preference first’ arrangements;
- d) introduce any new selection by ability;
- e) give priority to children on the basis of any practical or financial support parents may give to the school or any associated organisation, including any religious authority. The exception to this is where parents pay optional nursery fees to the school or school-run nursery, for additional hours on top of their 15-hour funded early education, where children from the school nursery class or school-run nursery are given priority for admission to Reception;
- f) give priority to children according to the occupational, marital, financial or educational status of parents applying. The exceptions to this are children of staff at the school and those eligible for the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium and the service premium who may be prioritised in the arrangements in accordance with paragraphs 1.39 – 1.39B;
- g) take account of reports from previous schools about children’s past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other children in the family;
- h) discriminate against or disadvantage disabled children, those with special educational needs, or those applying for admission outside their normal age group where an admission authority has agreed to this under paragraphs 2.17 to 2.17B;
- i) prioritise children on the basis of their own or their parents’ past or current hobbies or activities (schools which have been designated as having a religious character may take account of religious activities, as laid out by the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination);
- j) in designated grammar schools that rank all children according to a pre-determined pass mark and then allocate places to those who score highest, give priority to siblings of current or former pupils;
- k) in the case of schools with boarding places, rank children on the basis of a child’s suitability for boarding – more information on boarding schools is set out at paragraphs 1.40 - 1.41 below;
- l) name fee-paying independent schools as feeder schools;
- m) interview children or parents. In the case of sixth form applications, a meeting may be held to discuss options and academic entry requirements for particular courses, but this meeting cannot form part of the decision making process on whether to offer a place.
- n) Boarding schools may interview children to assess their suitability for boarding;
- o) request financial contributions (either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations or deposits (even if refundable)) as any part of the admissions process – including for tests; or
- p) request photographs of a child for any part of the admissions process, other than as proof of identity when sitting a selection test.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Your arrangements **must** explain how applications for children who wish to be admitted outside their chronological year group will be handled.

In general, children should be educated in their normal age group. However if parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should be given the opportunity, at the time of application, to submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family explaining why the child should be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort.

The decision whether to admit a child outside their normal year group is a matter for individual admission authorities - the school's governing body or academy trust. It is not a decision a Headteacher can make although their opinion must be taken into account. Some schools delegate this decision making to the county council.

Further guidance on deferred and delayed entry to Reception in infant, first and primary schools is available on pages 6-7.

Appeals

Arrangements **must** confirm how parents can appeal if their application is unsuccessful. An explanation of the appeal process must be included for both transfer and In Year admissions.

If your school/academy buys into HCC's appeals administration service (the Appeals Team that organise the dates, venue, panel etc.) you must include the following text in your arrangements:

For the Reception or Secondary transfer intake:

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in 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".

For In Year Admissions if your school IS NOT part of In Year coordination service provided by the Admissions & Transport Team:

We will write to you with the outcome of your application and if you have been 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

OR

For In Year Admissions, if your school IS part of In Year coordination provided by the Admissions & Transport Team:

The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

Children looked after (CLA)/previously looked after (PCLA)

In accordance with paragraph 1.7 of the SAC, children looked after and previously looked after, including those adopted or with a child arrangements order or special guardianship order must be given the highest priority for admission in the arrangements of every school and academy.

Schools with a religious character must give the highest priority to children looked after and children previously looked after of the faith, but are permitted to prioritise other children of their faith before other CLA/CPLA. See page 11 for further detail.

HCC's full definition is included in the explanatory notes and definitions document on page 34.

Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

Arrangements **must** include the following wording above the oversubscription criteria:

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school.

The following explanatory text is also useful:

These children will be admitted within the school's PAN but before any child prioritised under the school's oversubscription criteria.

Continued Interest (waiting) lists

All admission authorities must maintain a clear, fair and objective waiting list, explaining in their arrangements that each child will be added in accordance with the school's published oversubscription criteria.

Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list. HCC's statement regarding continuing interest for all community and voluntary controlled schools is as follows:

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for all community and voluntary controlled schools. A child's position on a 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 county council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be confirmed). To retain a CI application after this time, parents must make an In Year application.

Deferred entry (for Infant, First and Primary schools only)

Reception children who wish to start school later in the year or attend part-time until they reach statutory school age instead of starting at the beginning of the academic year (September). These children are educated in their chronological age group.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

Your arrangements **must** confirm that when a Reception place has been offered; the child's parents/carers can defer entry to the school.

All children offered a place in Reception must be given the opportunity to start full-time from September. However, parents may defer entry until later in the (same) school year but not beyond

- the point at which they reach compulsory school age **or**
- the beginning of the final (summer) term of the school year for which it was made.

Parents may also request that children attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point they reach statutory school age.

Definitions and explanatory notes

In the event that your oversubscription criteria require clarification, full definitions and explanatory notes must be included with your arrangements.

Delayed entry (for Infant, First and Primary schools only):

Children who wish to start school a year later than their chronological year group, i.e. – the September after their 5th birthday instead of the September after their 4th birthday. These children are educated outside of their chronological age group.

Admission of summer born children outside their normal age group (for Reception entry only)

Your arrangements **must** explain how applications for summer born children (born between 1 April and 31 August) who wish to delay their entry to the school will be handled.

If a child is summer born, parents can apply for a place to start as usual in the September after their 4th birthday or they may wish to delay their application and apply the following year, to start in the September after their child's 5th birthday.

Following publication of the open [letter](#) from Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools in September 2015; Hertfordshire County Council agreed to accept all delayed summer born applications for entry to community and voluntary controlled schools. Applications for children that have already accepted a Reception place and/or are in school at the time of the application will (in general) be rejected.

The decision whether to admit a summer born child a year late is a matter for individual admission authorities - the school's governing body or academy trust. It is not a decision a Headteacher can make although their opinion must be taken into account. The county council contact all own admission authority schools every year in the autumn term to clarify whether "late" summer born applications will be automatically accepted.

HCC's arrangements regarding deferred and delayed entry are available on pages 38-39.

Fair Access (In Year Admissions only)

All admission authorities **must** participate in the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol (FAP) in order to ensure that unplaced children are allocated a school place quickly. Hertfordshire's Fair Access Protocol (FAP) is available on the website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear

Your In Year admission arrangements should contain a statement explaining this, for example:

The Governors/school/academy (delete as appropriate) will admit children under the Fair Access Protocol before those on continuing interest, and over the Published Admission Number (PAN) if required.

Fraudulent applications

All admission authorities **must** clearly set out in their arrangements what they will do to prevent and investigate applications made from a fraudulent address.

The majority of schools in Hertfordshire work in liaison with HCC, using the county council's policy as a basis for checking their own applications. If your school uses HCC's fraudulent application policy, your admission arrangements must include the full explanation which is available on pages 36-37 of the explanatory notes and definitions document.

Home address

All admission authorities **must** clearly set out in their arrangements what is considered to be the child's 'home' address. This should include provision for cases where parents have shared responsibility for a child following the breakdown of their relationship and the child lives for part of the week with each parent. You may ask for *proof of a child's address but must make clear in your arrangements what proof you will require and in what circumstances.

The majority of schools in Hertfordshire use the county council's definition of home address. If your school uses HCC's definition, your admission arrangements must include the full explanation which is available on pages 36 of the explanatory notes and definitions document.

***Please note:** A recent determination by the OSA has made clear that it is not reasonable to simply use the address where child benefit is claimed in cases where children live at more than one address.

In Year Admissions

Your arrangements **must** explain how In Year applications will be handled, including how applications are made, where they should be sent and what oversubscription criteria will be used in the event there are more applications than places available (if different to the criteria used at the usual entry point).

Currently there is no statutory requirement for LAs to co-ordinate in year admissions, however the county council offers an In Year coordination service to all own admission authority schools. If your school/academy has opted in to the county council's In Year coordination service, you must include the following text in your arrangements:

Parents can make an online in year application via the Hertfordshire County Council website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application form. Parents should return the application form direct to the County Council.

If your school/academy does not buy into the In Year service, the county council will signpost parents directly to the school website for information. Please ensure that your website explains how to make an In Year application.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

Arrangements **must** include an admission number for each 'relevant age group'.

For example:

The Governors/Trust/School (delete as appropriate) will admit up to the published admission number (PAN) of XX.

Sixth form arrangements (for Secondary, Upper & Studio Schools and UTCs only):

If your school has a sixth form, your sixth form arrangements **must** include:

- A published admission number (PAN) – this must relate to external students only
- Minimum academic entry requirements which apply to all students (internal or external)
- Oversubscription criteria that give the highest priority to Children Looked After and Previously Looked After
- A tie break in the event that there is only 1 place available and more than 1 student who would equally qualify for the place
- An application form

Sixth form arrangements **must not** include:

- An average/highest GCSE point score as part of sixth form oversubscription criteria. This qualifies as a form of academic selection, and is therefore prohibited by paragraph 1.22 of the School Admissions Code.
- Application forms that request any information that is not relevant to the application of the oversubscription criteria, for example,
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Why the pupil wishes to join the 6th form
 - A reference
 - Agreement to standards/behaviour or ethos
 - Career /university aspirationsRequesting any of this information is a breach of the SAC.
- Interviews. Schools may meet prospective pupils to discuss options and courses but this meeting cannot be taken into account in the decision whether to offer a place.

Tie Break

Admission arrangements **must** include an effective, clear and fair tie breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated. A tie break is used to decide which child has the highest priority for admission if there is only one place available and two children who meet the criteria equally.

Many schools use distance as a tie break. Random allocation is also an appropriate tie break but your arrangements must explain how the process works and that it is independently verified. Alternatively your arrangements may state that, in these circumstances, both children will be admitted.

Twins/Multiple births

Your arrangements must explain the school's policy if only one twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place, for example if one twin is allocated the last place available at the school or if one twin is allocated an academic place but the other does not qualify. Most schools and academies ensure the additional child(ren) are admitted over PAN.

The county council's policy is:

"Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the admission authority will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at a school."

If you decide to incorporate the additional child(ren) within the school/academy PAN and classify them as a sibling allocation, your arrangements should also clarify this.

Primary/Infant/First Schools: Twins and other multiple birth children have been an exception to infant class size prejudice since the 2012 SAC was introduced, and can therefore be admitted to the school over PAN if one twin/multiple birth is allocated the last place.

Popular Oversubscription Criteria

Many schools include some of the following oversubscription criteria in their arrangements. You **must** ensure that these criteria also meet the SAC requirements.

Boarding schools

Boarding schools can set separate published admission numbers (PANs) for day places and boarding places. Applicants may be interviewed to assess suitability for boarding, but the interview must only consider whether the child presents a serious health and safety hazard to other boarders or whether they would be able to cope with and benefit from a boarding environment.

To help with this assessment, you may use a supplementary information form (SIF) and information provided by the previous school and by the child's home local authority (on safeguarding issues). These processes, and the timeline for them, must be clearly set out in the school's admission arrangements.

Boarding schools must give priority in their oversubscription criteria in the following order:

- a) looked after children and previously looked after children;
- b) children of members of the UK Armed Forces who qualify for Ministry of Defence financial assistance with the cost of boarding school fees;
- c) children with a 'boarding need', making it clear what they mean by this.

Boarding places can only be allocated to children who stay overnight at the school. "Day borders" must be assessed using the school's oversubscription for day pupils.

Children eligible for pupil premium or service premium

You may give priority in your oversubscription criteria to children eligible for:

- Early years pupil premium
- Pupil premium
- Service premium

If you do give priority, you should clearly define in your admissions arrangements the categories of eligible premium that will be prioritised. Your arrangements should clearly outline how membership of these groups will be verified and what evidence parents/carers must include with their application.

Infant, first and primary schools may also give priority to children who are in receipt of one of these premiums and:

- are in a nursery class which is part of the school; or
- attend a nursery that is established and run by the school.
The nursery must be named in the admission arrangements and its selection must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

Children looked after from abroad

Advice issued by the DfE on 6 August 2018 strongly advised all local authorities and schools to consult to amend their arrangements to give second highest priority to "children previously looked after by the state abroad". The DfE guidance also emphasised the importance of consistent decision making when considering these applications and the county council (using the Virtual School) agreed to make decisions on the validity of applications for all schools that agree to give priority to children previously looked after by the state abroad in their admission arrangements.

HCC amended its admission arrangements for 2020/21 to include children previously looked after by the state abroad under Rule 2 - Medical or Social. If your school consulted to use HCC's amended Rule 2, your admission arrangements must include the full definition which is available on page 34-35.

If your school consulted to give priority to children looked after by the state abroad but you do not use HCC's rule 2, you must ensure the following statement is included in your arrangements:

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

Please note: children looked after by the state abroad must not be considered under Rule 1.

Children of Staff

If your arrangements prioritise children of staff, you **must** outline that these children can only be admitted in the following circumstances:

- if 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
- if the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Staff must be employed **at** the individual school. Children of staff employed by the MAT or at a "linked" or federated school cannot be prioritised under this rule unless they are employed at the individual school within the given definition.

You should consider whether the children of all your staff members will be prioritised under this rule – both teaching and non-teaching staff and whether staff should work a minimum number of hours/days to be included. You should also consider the definition of "children", e.g. whether you will include children of unmarried partners and if children have to live at the same permanent address as the staff member. You are advised to be mindful of Equalities legislation when making your decision.

Distance

Many schools use distance as part of their oversubscription criterion and as a tie break. Your arrangements **must** clearly set out how distance from home to the school is measured; making clear which point at both the home address and the school will be measured to.

The majority of schools in Hertfordshire use the county council's GIS measurement system and the distances are automatically available with application information in SEAM. If your school uses HCC's distance measurement system, your admission arrangements must include the full explanation which is available on page 37.

Faith based oversubscription criteria in schools designated with a religious character

Schools with a religious character (commonly known as faith schools) are required to offer a place to every child who applies, whether of the faith, another faith or no faith; if there are places available. However, as a school designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character, faith-based criteria may be used to prioritise applications and allocate places by reference to faith where the school is oversubscribed.

Faith schools:

- must ensure that parents can easily understand how any faith-based criteria can be met.
- must have regard to any guidance from the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination when constructing faith-based admission arrangements, to the extent that the guidance complies with the mandatory provisions and guidelines of the SAC.
- must consult with the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination when deciding how membership or practice of the faith is to be demonstrated.
- with a Church of England designation must, as required by the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991, consult with their diocese about proposed admission arrangements before any public consultation.
- may give priority to all looked after children and previously looked after children whether they are or are not of the faith
- must give priority to looked after children and previously looked after children of the faith before other (non CLA status) children of the faith.
- must give priority to looked after children and previously looked after children not of the faith above other (non CLA status) children not of the faith.

Feeder Schools

Schools may include feeder (or linked) schools in their admission arrangements. The inclusion of a feeder/linked school or schools as an oversubscription criterion must be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.

Schools in Multi Academy Trusts may not name other schools in the same MAT as feeder schools (for example secondary schools naming feeder primary schools) purely on the basis that the schools operate within the same trust. When considering the inclusion of named feeder schools, admission authorities must ensure that this will not unduly disadvantage children who may otherwise have been allocated a place at the school. Recent determinations made by the OSA have made this point clear.

Random allocation

If you include random allocation in your admission arrangements, you must set out clearly how this will operate, ensuring that arrangements are transparent. The random allocation process must be supervised by someone independent of the school, and a fresh round of random allocation must be used each time a child is to be offered a place from a waiting list.

Selection by ability

Only schools and academies that have had partially selective arrangements since the school year 1997/98 and every subsequent year are permitted to continue to use selection by ability. If your arrangements select a proportion of pupils by ability, you must ensure that the number of pupils selected is not “rounded up” above the maximum permitted proportion.

As a partially selective school, your arrangements must:

- include the entry requirements for a selective place, and the process for such selection
- explain that places will be offered to other children if there are insufficient applicants who satisfy the requirements for a selective place, and how these places will be offered
- not exceed the lowest proportion of selection that has been used since the 1997/98 school year.

Selection by aptitude

A maximum of 10% of a school’s PAN can be allocated on the basis of **aptitude** (even if the school has more than one specialism). The only specialisms that may be selected by aptitude are:

- Physical education or sport, or one or more sports;
- The performing arts, or any one or more of those arts;
- The visual arts, or any one or more of those arts;
- Modern foreign languages, or any such language; and
- Design and technology and information technology (only schools that have selected by aptitude for one or more of these specialisms since 2007/08 and in every subsequent year, may continue to select on this basis).

If your school selects a percentage of pupils by aptitude, the total number of pupils admitted under the aptitude criteria must not **be** “rounded up” above the maximum permitted percentage (10% of PAN).

If your school decides to admit above PAN at any stage of the process (as long as the LA agrees such an increase can be incorporated successfully into the coordinated process), the maximum number of pupils selected by aptitude (and/or academic ability) will remain the same. The maximum number is directly related to the school’s PAN and not a higher “intake” number.

Selection by banding

Banding is a form of selection that aims to ensure a school's intake includes an equitable proportion of children of all ability levels. Banding can be used to produce an intake that is representative of:

- a) The full range of ability of applicants for the school(s);
- b) The range of ability of children in the local area; or
- c) The national ability range.

Currently very few schools in Hertfordshire use banding.

If your arrangements include the use of banding, you must ensure that:

- Entry requirements are fair, clear and objective.
- Your arrangements include the requirements and the process for banding and decision making, including details of any tests* that will be used to band children according to ability.
- Children with an Education, Health and Care Plans may be included in banding tests and allocated places in the appropriate bands but, regardless of any banding arrangements, they must be allocated a place if their EHCP names the school.
- Looked after children and previously looked after children are given top priority in each band, and in any oversubscription criteria applied within each band.
- Priority is not given within bands according to the applicant's performance in the test.

If you use both banding **and** aptitude selection, your arrangements must clearly explain how those two methods of selection will be applied.

Siblings

Most schools give priority to siblings and if you do, your arrangements must include the definition of a 'sibling'. Most schools will prioritise children with a sibling "at the time of application" but you may also prioritise former siblings. If you include former siblings, you should include a date range of the former siblings you will consider (e.g. - those who have left school within the last 3 years). Your sibling definition must clarify whether children of partners, step children, adopted or fostered children are included and should explain whether children must live at the same permanent address.

If your school has adopted HCC's sibling rule, your admission arrangements should include the full HCC definition which is available on page 35 of this guidance.

Social and medical need

If your arrangements include prioritisation for 'social and medical needs', you **must** set out how you will handle the applications, what supporting evidence will be required (e.g. a letter from a doctor or social worker) and who makes the decision (governing body/academy trust). Some schools delegate this decision making to the county council and if this is the case; you must clarify this in your arrangements.

If the county council decides the outcome of your social/medical applications, you must include the full explanation of the process in your arrangements. HCC's social/medical process is outlined in the 'explanatory notes and definitions' on pages 34-35.

If your governing body makes these decisions on behalf of the school, suitable explanatory text could be:

A panel of Governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

It is also advisable that you have a documented process for considering social and/or medical applications which can be referred to and provided to a parent/carer if requested.

Tests for selection

Tests for all forms of selection must be clear, objective, and give an accurate reflection of the child's ability or aptitude, irrespective of sex, race, or disability. It is for the admission authority to decide the content of the test, providing that the test is a true test of aptitude or ability. You must:

- a) ensure that tests for aptitude in a particular subject are designed to test only for aptitude (talent) in the subject concerned, and not for ability (skill);
- b) ensure that tests are accessible to children with special educational needs and disabilities, having regard to the reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils required under equalities legislation;
- c) take all reasonable steps to inform parents of the outcome of selection tests before the closing date for secondary applications on 31 October so as to allow parents time to make an informed choice of school while making clear that this does not equate to a guarantee of a selective place;
- d) not adjust the score achieved by any child in a test to take account of oversubscription criteria, such as having a sibling at the school.

Supplementary Information Forms (SIF)

In some cases, you may need to ask for additional information not requested on HCC's common application form (CAF) in order to process applications in accordance with your oversubscription criteria. This can be done using a Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

You **must** only use a SIF to request additional information that is not requested via the CAF that has a direct bearing on allocation decisions. You **must** not ask, or use supplementary forms that ask for any of the information prohibited by paragraph 1.9 of the SAC (see page 4) or:

- a) any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates);
- b) the first language of parents or the child;
- c) details about parents' or a child's disabilities, special educational needs or medical conditions;
- d) parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way;
- e) both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.

You must not ask for photographs as part of the application process nor proof of identity, e.g. birth certificates or passports. If you are concerned about the validity of an application (for example the age of a child) you may request a birth certificate after a place has been allocated.

General Oversubscription Criteria Advice

All schools are also advised to take into account the following points when considering their admission arrangements:

- If your school has adopted all/part of HCC's oversubscription criteria you should ensure the relevant notes and definitions are also included in your arrangements. It is not sufficient to quote HCC's arrangements or refer to the HCC website or admissions literature. The admission arrangements for every individual school must "stand alone" and parents should not need to refer to other documents to gain a full understanding of your arrangements. HCC's explanatory notes and definitions are available on pages 34-39.
- If your arrangements refer to HCC or the Admissions team, please refer to the service being part of Children's Services. We are no longer referred to as CSF.
- Ensure that your arrangements do not refer to parents receiving an allocation letter by post; 95% of families now receive their allocation by email.
- Confirm where possible that only Hertfordshire residents can complete the Hertfordshire CAF, either online or on paper. The following text is suggested

Parents/carers of children living in Hertfordshire can make an online application via the Hertfordshire County Council website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application form. Parents should return the application form direct to the County Council. Parents/carers of children not living in Hertfordshire must make an application to their local authority.

High Court ruling for Catholic schools only

In July 2017, in a High Court ruling, specific definitions were outlined which must be used by all catholic schools for the consideration of faith applications for entry in September 2018 and beyond. The full definitions, as outlined below, **must** be included in the admission arrangements of all catholic schools.

Further details are available at <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/governors/admissions/>

Certificate of Catholic Practice' (CCP)

Certificate of Catholic Practice' means a certificate issued by the family's parish priest (or the priest in charge of the church where the family attends Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is over seven years old) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least five years (or, in the case of the child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will also be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstances which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions.

Definition of children of other faiths

"Children of other faiths" means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

- A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and
- A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a Supreme Being and an expression of belief in that Supreme Being through worship.

Definition of children of other Christian denominations.

"Children of other Christian denominations" means: children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and of CYTÛN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

Timeline - Schools that are consulting to HCC's timeline

If you are consulting because you are proposing changes to your admission arrangements or because it has been 7 years since you last consulted on your arrangements, officers in the Central Admissions Team will guide you through the process and coordinate the admissions consultation process on your behalf; a service provided free of charge.

The Central Admissions Team will contact you throughout to remind you of key dates and requirements but the following is a guide to help you prepare for the process:

Date	Event	School Action Required?
June	You will receive an email with information about the consultation process from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager. This email will include a timeline and advance notification of HCC's potential consultation proposals.	Yes – Governors need to convene to discuss whether changes to the school's admission arrangements are required (late summer or early autumn).
September	You will receive an email from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager asking whether your school will be consulting on its admission arrangements.	Yes – you need to respond to our online survey, letting us know that your school is consulting and that you would like to be part of HCC's consultation process.
October	HCC Cabinet considers proposals to consult on any changes to Hertfordshire's admission arrangements, including PANS of community and voluntary controlled schools.	Maybe – if the proposed changes to HCC's admission arrangements directly affect your admission arrangements, you will need to consider whether you are also going to amend your arrangements.
Early November	HCC prepare the annual school admissions consultation documents for publication.	<p>Yes – you must provide us with a copy of your proposed arrangements by the given deadline. The deadline will be provided in the emails sent to you in June and September.</p> <p>Arrangements must include all associated documentation, e.g. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and maps of priority/parish areas.</p> <p>Please ensure your arrangements include all changes you are proposing, correct oversubscription criteria (see pages 4-15 for guidance) and are updated with the relevant dates for the admission year.</p>

Date	Event	School Action Required?
Mid November	<p>HCC's annual school admissions consultation process begins. The admissions consultation will be publicised via/to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCC website • Update Me, HCC's email alerts service • Neighbouring local authorities • District Councils • Borough Councils • Diocesan representatives • All maintained schools in Hertfordshire • Social media (Facebook/Twitter) <p>Where HCC is also consulting on the admission arrangements, the admissions consultation will also be publicised via/to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster campaign to GP and dental surgeries, Children's Centres and Private, Voluntary and Independent provision • Several local newspapers across the county • Town and parish councils 	<p>Yes – you must publish your proposed arrangements on your website and clearly outline how to respond to the consultation.</p> <p>In accordance with paragraph 1.44 of the School Admissions Code, you must ensure you also undertake adequate consultation with your own families and local community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen b) Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions. <p>It is not sufficient to send a copy of proposed arrangements to HCC and post a copy on the school website.</p> <p>We suggest the following consultees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school newsletter • school social media/blogs • local residents • parish councils (<i>if HCC is not consulting on its arrangements</i>) • pre- schools and private nurseries (<i>for primary, infant and first schools</i>)
By early January	HCC will scrutinise your proposed arrangements and provide advice on Code compliance as necessary before the end of the consultation period.	Yes – the Governors must convene and are strongly advised to follow any advice provided when determining the arrangements.
Early January	HCC's annual school admissions consultation process ends.	Yes – the Full Governing Body must convene soon to consider all feedback received from the consultation.
Mid - late February	HCC Cabinet considers consultation responses and determines admission arrangements	Maybe – if you proposed to introduce the same changes that were proposed in HCC's admission arrangements, you will need to consider whether you are going to determine your arrangements to fall in line with HCC.

Date	Event	School Action Required?
By 28 th February	Admission arrangements must be determined. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	<p>Yes – the Full Governing Body must have met prior to this date to agree the determined arrangements for your school and record the decision in the minutes.</p> <p>If the school is part of an Academy Trust/Multi Academy Trust, the trust may determine the arrangements on behalf of all the schools within that AT/MAT.</p>
Early March	HCC prepare determined admissions arrangements for publication.	<p>Yes – you must provide HCC with a copy of your determined arrangements including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and maps of priority/parish areas. The deadline for providing your arrangements will be sent to you after the consultation closes in January.</p> <p>Please ensure your arrangements include any agreed changes that were consulted on, include correct oversubscription criteria (see pages 4-15 for guidance) and are updated with the relevant dates for the admission year.</p>
By 15 th March	Determined admission arrangements must be published. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	Yes – ensure you have published your determined arrangements on your website including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and priority area/parish maps.
By 15 th May	Objections to admission arrangements must be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by this date.	<p>Maybe – your school is free to object to the determined admission arrangements of any school or authority.</p> <p>If an objection is made and upheld against your school’s arrangements; you will be required to amend your arrangements (usually within 2 months of the determination), provide an updated copy to HCC and re-publish on your own school website. See page 25 for more information.</p>

Timeline - Schools that are running their own consultation

If you are proposing changes to your admission arrangements or consulting because it has been 7 years since you last consulted on your arrangements and have decided to run your own school consultation; you should follow this timeline.

The Central Admissions Team will contact you throughout to remind you of key dates and requirements but the following is a guide to help you prepare for the process:

Date	Event	School Action Required?
June	You will receive an email with information about the consultation process from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager. This email will include a timeline and advance notification of HCC's potential consultation proposals.	Yes – Governors need to convene to discuss whether changes to the school's admission arrangements are required (late summer or early autumn).
September	You will receive an email from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager asking whether your school will be consulting on its admission arrangements.	Yes – you need to respond to our online survey, letting us know that your school is consulting and that you will be running your own consultation. If possible, you should also provide the dates for your consultation.
1 October	Consultation can be undertaken from 1 October. Schools prepare their admission arrangements for consultation (as necessary)	Yes – you must ensure that your proposed arrangements are published and circulated on or before the start of your consultation period. Arrangements must include all associated documentation, e.g. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and maps of priority/parish areas. See page 2 for information on who you must consult with. All consultees must be given a minimum of 6 weeks to respond.
October	HCC Cabinet considers proposals to consult on any changes to Hertfordshire's admission arrangements, including PANS at community and voluntary controlled schools.	Maybe – if the proposed changes to HCC's admission arrangements directly affect your admission arrangements, you will need to consider whether you are also going to amend your arrangements.

Date	Event	School Action Required?
Before the end of your consultation period	HCC will scrutinise your proposed arrangements and provide advice on Code compliance as necessary.	Yes – the Governors must convene and are strongly advised to follow any advice provided when determining the arrangements.
31 January	Consultation must end by 31 January.	<p>Yes – the 6 week consultation for all proposed changes to your admission arrangements must have been undertaken by 31 January.</p> <p>The Full Governing Body must convene soon after the close of your consultation to consider all feedback received.</p>
Mid - late February	HCC Cabinet considers consultation responses and determines admission arrangements	Maybe – if you proposed to introduce the same changes that were proposed in HCC’s admission arrangements, you will need to consider whether you are going to determine your arrangements to fall in line with HCC.
By 28 th February	Admission arrangements must be determined. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	<p>Yes – the Full Governing Body must have met prior to this date to agree the determined arrangements for your school and record the decision in the minutes.</p> <p>If the school is part of an Academy Trust/Multi Academy Trust, the trust may determine the arrangements on behalf of all the schools within that AT/MAT.</p>
Early March	HCC prepare determined admissions arrangements for publication.	<p>Yes – you must provide HCC with a copy of your determined arrangements including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and maps of priority/parish areas. The deadline for providing your arrangements will be sent to you after the consultation closes in January.</p> <p>Please ensure your arrangements include any agreed changes that were consulted on, correct oversubscription criteria (see pages 4-15 for guidance) and are updated with the relevant dates for the admission year.</p>

Date	Event	School Action Required?
By 15 th March	Determined admission arrangements must be published. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	Yes – ensure you have published your determined arrangements on your website including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and priority area/parish maps.
By 15 th May	Objections to admission arrangements must be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by this date.	<p>Maybe – your school is free to object to the determined admission arrangements of any school or authority.</p> <p>If an objection is made and upheld against your school’s arrangements; you will be required to amend your arrangements (usually within 2 months of the determination), provide an updated copy to HCC and re-publish on your own school website. See page 25 for more information.</p>

Timeline - Schools that are not consulting

If you are not consulting on your arrangements, your governing body (or academy trust) is still required to determine (agree) your admission arrangements every year. This is a requirement of the SAC. Officers in the Central Admissions Team are available to help guide you through the process and will contact you throughout to remind you of key dates and requirements. The following is a guide to help you prepare for the determination process:

Date	Event	School Action Required?
June	You will receive an email with information about the forthcoming consultation process from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager. This email will include a timeline and advance notification of HCC's potential consultation proposals.	Yes – Governors need to convene soon to discuss whether school consultation is required.
September	You will receive an email from Jayne Abery, Strategy & Policy Manager asking whether your school will be consulting on the admission arrangements.	Yes – you need to respond to our online survey to let us know that your school is not consulting.
By 28 th February	Admission arrangements must be determined. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	<p>Yes – the Full Governing Body must have met prior to this date to agree the determined arrangements for your school and record the decision in the minutes.</p> <p>If the school is part of an Academy Trust/Multi Academy Trust, the trust may determine the arrangements on behalf of all the schools within that AT/MAT.</p>
Early March	HCC prepare the determined admissions arrangements for publication.	<p>You must provide HCC with a copy of your determined arrangements including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and priority area/parish maps.</p> <p>You must not make any changes to your admission arrangements or definitions unless consulted upon, with the exception of an increase in PAN. If you did not consult but are increasing your PAN, you must notify HCC and reference the change to PAN on the school website.</p> <p>The date for providing the arrangements will be sent to you after the HCC annual admissions consultation closes in January.</p>
By 15 th March	Determined admission arrangements must be published. This is a requirement of the School Admissions Code.	Yes – ensure you have published your determined arrangements on your website including any associated documents, i.e. SIF, In Year application form, sixth form arrangements and application form, full definitions and maps of priority/parish areas.

Date	Event	School Action Required?
By 15 th May	Objections to admission arrangements must be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by this date.	<p>Maybe – your school is free to object to any school’s admission arrangements.</p> <p>If an objection is made and upheld against your school’s arrangements; you will be required to amend your arrangements (usually within 2 months of the determination), provide an updated copy to HCC and re-publish on your own school website. See page 25 for more information.</p>

Office of the Schools Adjudicator

Any person or body who considers that the determined admission arrangements of any maintained school or academy are unlawful, or not compliant with the Code or relevant law relating to admissions, can make an objection to the Schools Adjudicator.

Objections to admission arrangements for entry in September must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15th May in the determination year. For example, for arrangements starting from September 2020, objections must be submitted by 15th May 2019.

The Schools Adjudicator

The Adjudicator will consider whether admission arrangements referred comply with the SAC and the law relating to admissions. The admission authority must, where necessary, revise their admission arrangements to give effect to the Adjudicator's decision within two months of the decision (or by 28 February following the decision, whichever is sooner); unless an alternative timescale is specified by the Adjudicator. An Adjudicator's determination is binding and enforceable.

Local authorities must refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements that have been determined by other admission authorities are unlawful. If requested by the Schools Adjudicator, admission authorities must provide the information set out in Schedule 1 to the School Admissions Regulations.

The following types of objections cannot be brought:

- a) objections that seek to remove selective arrangements at a maintained school (which are permitted under Section 105 to 109 of the SSFA 1988) or a selective academy;
- b) objections about own authority admission's decision to increase or keep the same PAN;
- c) objections about a decision by the admission authority of a voluntary controlled or community school to increase or keep the same PAN, unless the objection is brought by the governing body of the school;
- d) objections in respect of an agreed variation from the Code in relation to admission arrangements for an Academy;
- e) objections to arrangements which raise the same or substantially the same matters as the adjudicator has decided on for that school in the last 2 years; and
- f) anonymous objections.

The Adjudicator may also consider arrangements which may not comply with mandatory requirements that come to the Adjudicator's attention by other means.

Further information on how to make an objection can be obtained from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator>

FAQ's

- 1. When will we receive information regarding the statutory admissions consultation process?**

An initial information letter is sent to schools in June every year. This will include a timetable, information and some guidance. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.
- 2. Why do we need to consult?**

Consultation is a requirement of the School Admissions Code. A school admissions consultation involves making those who have an interest in your school admission arrangements aware of any proposed changes as well as giving them an opportunity to express their views about the changes. Please read the ['why do we need to consult?'](#) section on page 1 for further information.
- 3. Who needs to consult?**

All admission authorities are required to consult if they are making changes to their admission arrangements, or if they have not consulted for 7 years. Please read the ['who needs to consult?'](#) section on page 1 for further information.
- 4. When do schools need to consult?**

Consultation must take place for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January. Please read the ['when do schools need to consult?'](#) section on page 1-2 for further information.
- 5. How do we let HCC know we would like to consult?**

All admission authorities are asked if they are consulting in September every year. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.
- 6. How do we consult and who with?**

Please read the ['How do schools consult'](#) section for information about HCC's consultation process and how schools can run their own consultation.
- 7. Do we have to consult to the same timeline as HCC?**

No. You can consult to your own timeline as long as you consult for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January. Please read the ['How do schools consult'](#) section for information about how to run your own consultation.
- 8. We want to increase our PAN, do we need to consult?**

No. You do not need to consult to increase your PAN. However you must ensure you let HCC know and publish the rationale for increasing the PAN on your school website.
- 9. We want to decrease our PAN, do we need to consult?**

Yes. You must consult to decrease your PAN. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.
- 10. What must we include in our arrangements?**

Information about what to include in your admission arrangements is detailed in the ['oversubscription criteria'](#) section on pages 4-15.
- 11. When do we need to send our proposed arrangements to HCC (if the school is consulting)?**

The deadline will be confirmed in the information sent in September. We will also write to remind you nearer the time. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.
- 12. How do we know if our proposed arrangements comply with the SAC?**

When formulating your proposed arrangements, you should pay particular attention to the ['oversubscription criteria'](#) section on pages 4-15 which explains what information must/must not be included in your arrangements. HCC also carry out 'scrutiny' on all proposed arrangements during the consultation period and provide feedback where arrangements do not comply with the Code.

13. When do we need to determine our admission arrangements by?

Arrangements must be agreed by your full governing body and determined by 28th February every year (whether the school consulted or not). This is a statutory requirement of the Code.

14. What do we need to do once we have determined our admission arrangements?

You must send a copy of your determined admission arrangements to HCC for publication on the website in early March (date to be confirmed) and also publish a copy on your own school website by 15th March every year. This is a statutory requirement of the Code.

15. We have recently converted from a community/voluntary controlled school. Are we now responsible for our own arrangements?

Yes, the governing body or academy trust is now responsible for the admission arrangements. However at the time of conversion, you must continue using HCC's admission arrangements and can only amend the arrangements once you have the opportunity to consult. When you convert will determine the next steps available to you:

- If after conversion you are happy to continue using HCC's admission arrangements, you do not need to consult but will need to determine your arrangements by 28th February each year. Please see the [timeline for determination](#) on page 23-24.
- If you become a foundation, voluntary aided school or academy prior to the start of November; you can consult to amend your arrangements as part of HCC's consultation process or run your own consultation. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.
- If you become a foundation, voluntary aided school or academy after the start of November but prior to 13th December; you are too late to be part of HCC's consultation but still have time to carry out your own consultation if you want to amend your arrangements for the following entry year. Read the [How do schools consult?](#) section on page 3 and also the [timeline for school running their own consultation](#) on page 20-22.
- If you become a foundation, voluntary aided school or academy after 13th December; you are too late to consult and must continue using HCC's admission arrangements until you can consult for the following entry year. Please see [HCC's timeline for consultation](#) on page 17-19.

HCC's Admission Rules for Under 11's (to Primary, Junior and Middle Schools)

HCC's proposed (during consultation) and determined admission arrangements can be found on our website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions The determined arrangements for 2020/21 are as follows:

Hertfordshire County Council's oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled, first, infant, primary, junior and middle schools for the school year 2020/21

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school.

If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined below will be used to prioritise applications.

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 arrangements order or a special guardianship order)*.

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 school, which includes children previously from abroad who were cared for by the state because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and subsequently adopted.

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.

Rule 3: Linked School (*This rule only applies to pupils who are currently attending an infant school which has a linked junior school¹.*)

In the case of junior schools, children who attend the linked infant school at the time of their application.

Rule 4: Sibling

Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school or linked school at the time of application*. *This applies to reception through to Year 5 in infant, junior and primary schools; and from reception through to Year 3 in first schools; and from Year 5 to Year 7 in middle schools.*

Rule 5: Nearest School

Children for whom it is their nearest school or academy.

This includes all schools except those which allocate places on the basis of faith.

Rule 6: Distance

Children who live nearest to the school.

Children not considered under rule 5 will be considered under rule 6.

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, for rules 2-5 the next rule will be applied to further prioritise children.

Tie Break

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are 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. Every child entered onto the HCC 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 the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

Please see the 'Explanatory notes and definitions 2020/21 document for a full explanation/definition.

Continuing Interest

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for all community and voluntary controlled schools. A child's position on a 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 county council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be confirmed). To retain a CI application after this time, parents must make an In Year application.

In Year Admissions

Hertfordshire County Council co-ordinate In Year Admissions for all community and voluntary controlled schools. Information about how to apply and the online application form can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear The oversubscription criteria outlined above is used to prioritise all In Year applications to community and voluntary controlled schools.

Fair Access

Community and voluntary controlled schools will admit children under the Fair Access Protocol before those on continuing interest, and over the Published Admission Number (PAN) if required.

Linked infant and junior schools

The table below shows the community and voluntary controlled infant schools and academies which are “linked” for allocations to junior schools under Rule 3.

Infant school	School type	Town	Linked Junior school	School type
St Mary’s Church of England (VC) Infant School	VC	Baldock	St Mary’s C of E (VC) Junior School	VC
Bushey and Oxhey Infant School	C	Bushey	Bushey Manor Junior School	C
Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery	C	Bushey	Ashfield Junior School	VC
Brookland Infant and Nursery School	C	Cheshunt	Brookland Junior School	C
Malvern Way Infant and Nursery School	C	Croxley	Little Green Junior School	C
Kingsway Infant School	C	Garston	Kingsway Junior School	C
Crabtree Infants’ School	A	Harpenden	Crabtree Junior School	A
The Grove Infant and Nursery School	C	Harpenden	The Grove Junior School	C
Chaulden Infants’ and Nursery School	C	Hemel Hempstead	Chaulden Junior School	A
Hobletts Manor Infants’ and Nursery School	C	Hemel Hempstead	Hobletts Manor Junior School	C
Holtmere End Infant and Nursery School	C	Hemel Hempstead	Holtmere End Junior School	C
Highbury Infant School and Nursery	C	Hitchin	Whitehill Junior School	C
Strathmore Infant and Nursery School	C	Hitchin	Wilshere-Dacre Junior Academy	A
Hillshott Infant School and Nursery	C	Letchworth	Pixmore Junior School	C
Icknield Infant and Nursery School	C	Letchworth	Wilbury Junior School	A
Northfields Infant and Nursery School	C	Letchworth	The Grange Academy	A
St John’s C of E Infant and Nursery School	VC	Radlett	Fair Field Junior School	A
Fawbert and Barnard Infants’ School	C	Sawbridgeworth	Reedings Junior School	C
Bernards Heath Infant School	C	St Albans	Bernards Heath Junior School	C
Cunningham Hill Infant School	C	St Albans	Cunningham Hill Junior School	C
Fleetville Infant and Nursery School	A	St Albans	Fleetville Junior School	A
Wheatfields Infants’ and Nursery School	C	St Albans	Wheatfields Junior School	C
Giles Nursery and Infant’s School	C	Stevenage	Giles Junior School	C
Letchmore Infants’ and Nursery School	C	Stevenage	Almond Hill Junior School	C
Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School	C	Stevenage	Woolenwick Junior School	C
Goldfield Infants’ and Nursery School	C	Tring	Bishop Wood C of E Junior School	VA
Kingshill Infant School	C	Ware	St Mary’s (VC) C of E Junior School	VC
Cassiobury Infant and Nursery School	C	Watford	Cassiobury Junior School	C
Chater Infant School	C	Watford	Chater Junior School	C
Nascot Wood Infant and Nursery School	C	Watford	Nascot Wood Junior School	C
Parkgate Infants and Nursery School	C	Watford	Parkgate Junior School	C
Watford Field School Infant & Nursery	C	Watford	Field Junior School	C

- C = Community
- VC = Voluntary Controlled
- A = Academy
- F = Foundation
- VA = Voluntary Aided

HCC's Admission Rules – Secondary

HCC's proposed (during consultation) and determined admission arrangements can be found on our website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions The determined arrangements for 2020/21 are as follows:

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school.

If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined below will be used to prioritise applications.

Oversubscription criteria

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 arrangements order or a special guardianship order)*.

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 school, which includes children previously from abroad who were cared for by the state because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and subsequently adopted.

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.

Rule 3: Sibling

Children who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, unless the sibling is in the last year of the normal age-range of the school*.

Note: the 'normal age range' is the designated range for which the school provides, for example Years 7 to 11 in an 11-16 secondary school, Years 7 to 13 in an 11-18 school.

Rule 4: Children who live in the priority area for whom it is their nearest* Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, co-educational and non-partially selective.

Note: Non-partially selective means that the school does not offer any places based on academic ability

Rule 5: Children who live in the priority area who live nearest to the school.

Rule 6: Children living outside the priority area on the basis of distance, with those living nearest to the school given priority.

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, for rules 2-5 the next rule will be applied to further prioritise children.

Tie break

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are 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. Every child entered onto the HCC 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 the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority. For further details please see the '*HCC definitions*' section of this document for a full explanation/definition.

Continuing Interest

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for all community and voluntary controlled schools. A child's position on a 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 county council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To retain a CI application after this time, parents must make an In Year application.

In Year Admissions

Hertfordshire County Council co-ordinate In Year Admissions for all community and voluntary controlled schools. Information about how to apply and the online application form can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear The oversubscription criteria outlined above is used to prioritise all In Year applications to community and voluntary controlled schools.

Fair Access

Community and voluntary controlled schools will admit children under the Fair Access Protocol before those on continuing interest, and over the Published Admission Number (PAN) if required.

Priority Areas

The coeducational priority areas in the admission rules are based on the following towns, parishes/unparished areas. These apply to Rules 4 and 5. Academies and foundation schools (agreed or proposed) that will be retaining the county's priority areas as part of their admission arrangements for 2020/21 have been included for information but are marked with an asterisk*

	Priority Area	Towns/Parishes/Unparished areas	Schools
1	Hitchin	Hexton, Hitchin, Holwell, Ickleford, Langley, Lilley, Offley, Pirton, Preston, St. Ippolyts, Wymondley.	The Priory *
2	Letchworth Garden City	Letchworth.	Fearnhill*, The Highfield*
3	Baldock and surrounding villages	Ashwell, Baldock, Bygrave, Caldecote, Clothall, Edworth, Hinxworth, Newnham, Radwell, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington, Weston.	The Knights Templar*
4	Buntingford, Puckeridge and Royston	Anstey, Ardeley, Aspenden, Barkway, Barley, Braughing, Brent Pelham, Buckland, Buntingford, Cottered, Great Munden, Hormead, Kelshall, Meesden, Nuthampstead, Reed, Royston, Standon, Therfield, Westmill, Wyddial.	The Meridian*
5	Stevenage	Aston, Benington, Datchworth, Graveley, Great Ashby, Knebworth, Stevenage, Walkern.	The Barclay, Barnwell*, Marriotts, The Nobel*, Thomas Alleyne*
6	Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley, Berkhamsted, Tring, Garston, Watford, Chorleywood and Rickmansworth	Abbots Langley, Aldbury, Berkhamsted, Bovingdon, Chipperfield, Chorleywood, Croxley Green, Flaunden, Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley, Little Gaddesden, Maple Cross, Nash Mills, Nettleden with Potten End, Northchurch, Rickmansworth, Sarratt, Tring, Tring Rural, Watford, Wigginton.	Adeyfield*, Ashlyn's*, The Astley Cooper*, Laureate Academy, The Hemel Hempstead, Longdean*, Kings Langley*, Westfield*

	Priority Area	Towns/Parishes/Unparished areas	Schools
7	Harpenden and St. Albans	Ayot St. Lawrence, Colney Heath, Flamstead, Harpenden, Harpenden Rural, Kimpton, King's Walden, London Colney, Markyate, Redbourn, Ridge, Sandridge, St. Michael, St. Pauls Walden, St. Stephens, St. Albans, Shenley, Wheathampstead.	Beaumont*, Roundwood Park*, Samuel Ryder*, Sir John Lawes*, Katherine Warington
8	Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Potters Bar and Brookmans Park	Ayot St. Peter, Codicote, Essendon, Hatfield, North Mymms, Potters Bar, South Mymms, Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn, Woolmer Green.	Monks Walk*, Onslow St. Audreys*, Sir Frederic Osborn*, Stanborough*
9	Ware and Hertford	Bayford, Bengoe Rural, Bramfield, Brickendon Liberty, Great Amwell, Hertford, Hertford Heath, Hertingfordbury, Hunsdon, Little Berkhamsted, Little Munden, Sacombe, Stanstead St. Margarets, Stapleford, Tewin, Thundridge, Ware, Wareside, Watton-at-Stone, Widford.	Chauncy*, Simon Balle*
10	Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth	Albury, Birchanger, Bishop's Stortford, Eastwick, Elsenham, Furneux Pelham, Gilston, Great Hallingbury, High Wych, Little Hadham, Little Hallingbury, Much Hadham, Sawbridgeworth, Sheering, Stocking Pelham, Thorley.	
11	Borehamwood, Bushey and Watford Rural	Aldenham, Bushey, Elstree, Borehamwood, Watford Rural.	
12	Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Turnford and Cheshunt	Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Hoddesdon, Nazeing, Northaw & Cuffley, Stanstead Abbots, Waltham Cross.	Robert Barclay*, Haileybury Turnford*, Goffs-Churchgate*

HCC's explanatory notes and definitions

HCC's proposed (during consultation) and determined admission arrangements can be found on our website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. The determined definitions for 2020/21 are as follows:

The HCC definitions are set out below and may be used for support when schools are creating their own definitions to their oversubscription criteria.

Explanatory notes and definitions for the admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled schools in Hertfordshire for 2020/21

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

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 arrangements order¹ or a special guardianship order²)

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 1.³

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.

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.

² 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.

³ This definition has been amended in accordance with paragraph 1.7 (footnote 17) of the School Admissions Code that came into force on 19 December 2014.

Rule 2: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school, *this includes children previously from abroad who were cared for by the state because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and subsequently adopted.*

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.

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.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. A Rule 2 application will generally not be upheld in cases where more than one school could meet the child's need.

In exceptional cases relating to a disability, where more than one school in the county can meet the child's specific needs, a clear and compelling case can be made for the "nearest" school with the relevant facilities, environment or location. You must clearly explain why attendance at the "nearest" school with these facilities is essential.

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. A panel of officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

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

Further details on the Rule 2 process can be found in the [Rule 2 protocol](#).

Definition of sibling

For applications to schools using Hertfordshire County Council's admission criteria, 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 after¹ and in every case living permanently² 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.

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.

Multiple births

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the admission authority will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated the last place at a school. Where we are not the admitting authority we would request the school take in the subsequent child(ren) in line with the school's own admission arrangements.

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.

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

Fraudulent applications

Hertfordshire County Council will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referring cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Hertfordshire County Council will take action 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;
 - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements for community and VC schools in Hertfordshire. 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. Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

Definition of "nearest school" for secondary/upper admissions

For coeducational community schools, the "nearest school" definition for rule 4 is "the nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, co-educational, and non-partially selective.

Note – non-partially selective means that the school does not offer any places based on academic ability.

Coeducational schools/academies which select partially on ability are:

- Dame Alice Owen's School
- Parmiter's School
- Queens' School
- Rickmansworth School
- St Clement Danes School

For all coeducational community schools this definition applies to rule 4.

Definition of "nearest school" for primary/junior/middle admissions

The definition of "nearest school" includes all schools and academies (regardless of status) unless that school or academy prioritises applications and allocates places on the basis of faith.

Applications from children* 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.

For the Primary and Secondary transfer processes, applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this (for both In Year and transfer processes) 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 HCC 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 HCC 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.

HCC will also consider accepting applications from children* 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 (4 December 2019 for secondary transfer and 3 February 2020 for the Under 11s process) cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by a panel of senior 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.

**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.*

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016* would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2020. All Hertfordshire infant, first and primary schools provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place 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 (at the school at which a place has been offered) 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 the individual school(s) 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. Children born between 1 April 2016 and 31 August 2016 are categorised as "summer born" and if parents/carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in 2020 they should contact the home LA, and any own admission authority schools, for guidance before making an application. Summer born applications that are delayed for a year (for entry in September 2021) 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. If parents wish their child to remain in their existing nursery school or class for a further year (rather than moving into the Reception year group) they must let their current school know before the end of the Spring term in 2020 (before the Easter break).

Children Out of Year Group (except applications for reception from summer born)

Hertfordshire County Council'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 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”.

For community and voluntary controlled schools, the county council as the relevant admission authority, through a panel process, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The panel make decisions based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the relevant headteacher(s), 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 individual schools.

The governing body of schools responsible for their own admissions (academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools) is ultimately responsible for making this decision for applications made to their school.

Nursery Provision

Some schools have a nursery unit or deliver pre-school nursery education. The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into any nursery or pre-school provision. The responsibility for admission into nursery provision lies with the governing body of the school which offers such provision.

Parents of children who are admitted to a nursery provision at a school **must** apply in the normal way for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the reception class. Attendance at the nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school.

Glossary of terms

Terms	Meaning
Admission arrangements	The overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
Appeal	A hearing for parents/carers to contest an admission authority decision to refuse admission.
Child Arrangements Order	Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.
Child Looked After (CLA)	<p>A ' Child Looked After ' (CLA) 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 at the time of making an application to a school.</p> <p>This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.</p>
Common Application Form (CAF)	The form parents complete, listing their preferred choices of schools, and then submit to local authorities when applying for a school place for their child as part of the local co-ordination scheme, during the normal admissions round.
Determined admissions arrangements	Admission arrangements that have been formally agreed by the admission authority, for example, agreed at a meeting of the admission authority and the decision recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
Early Years Pupil Premium	The early years pupil premium is additional funding paid to support disadvantaged children receiving government-funded early education, per section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006. It was introduced in April 2015.
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	An Education, Health and Care plan is a plan made by the local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special education provision required for that child.
HCC's schemes of coordination	The process by which HCC co-ordinate the distribution of offers of places for schools in their area. All local authorities are required to co-ordinate the normal admissions round for primary and secondary schools in their area.
In Year Admissions	In Year Admissions are applications for a school place submitted outside of the usual points of transfer/admission, i.e. for admission during the school year.
Multi Academy Trust (MAT)	A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is the admissions authority responsible for setting and applying the admission arrangements for multiple academies.

Oversubscription Criteria	This refers to the published criteria that an admission authority applies when a school has more applications than places available in order to decide which children will be allocated a place.
Own Admitting Authority (OAA)	The body responsible for setting and applying a school's admission arrangements. For foundation or voluntary aided schools, this body is the governing body of the school. For Academies, this body is the Academy Trust.
Previously Looked After (CLA)	Previously Looked after Children (CLA) 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).
Office of The Schools Adjudicator (OSA)	The Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) is the body that receive all objections to the determined admission arrangements in order to clarify the legal position on admissions policies in schools.
Proposed admission arrangements (for schools that are consulting)	Arrangements that contain changes to the overall procedure, practices and oversubscription criteria used in deciding the allocation of school places including any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.
Published Admissions Number (PAN)	The number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group of a school for which it is the admission authority. Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements.
Pupil premium	The pupil premium is additional funding paid annually to schools under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the attainment of disadvantaged children.
Schools admissions code (SAC)	The Schools Admissions Code (SAC) is statutory guidance that schools must follow when carrying out duties relating to schools admissions.
Schools Adjudicator	A statutory office-holder who is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education, but is independent. The Adjudicator decides on objections to published admission arrangements of all state-funded schools and variations of determined admission arrangements for maintained schools.
Service Premium	The Service Premium is additional funding paid annually to schools under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 for the purposes of supporting the pastoral needs of the children of Armed Services personnel.
Special Guardianship Order	Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a Special Guardianship Order as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).
Summer born	The term 'summer born' children relates to all children born between 1 April and 31 August.
Supplementary Information form (SIF)	A form used to request additional information that is not already available on the Common Application Form (CAF) and has a direct bearing on decisions relating to the school's oversubscription criteria.

Useful Links

Hertfordshire's determined admission arrangements and coordinated schemes of admission:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

HCC's Rule 2 protocol

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/admissions/rule-2-protocol.pdf>

HCC's admissions guidance for schools

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml>

Office of the Schools Adjudicator

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator>

School Admissions Code

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

Useful Contacts

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