



Admissions policy year of entry 2019

Reception Year

Introduction

Victoria Infant School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School within the Diocese of St Albans. The Governing Body of the school is the admissions authority. The Governors will admit up to the planned admission number of 60 children into the reception year. The Governing Body is required to abide by the maximum limits for 5, 6 and 7 year olds, i.e., 30 pupils per class.

The Local Authority or LA (Hertfordshire) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. The LA will co-ordinate the process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published in each year. The Governing Body, as the admissions authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy.

The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home local authority is as advertised by that authority. Information on completing 'on-line' applications and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the LA admissions literature and is also available on their website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

All applications must be made on the home LA common application form. Parents/guardians are also requested to complete our supplementary information form [SIF] and return it to the school office by the date shown on the form. If a SIF is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the LA form only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

All applications under criteria 6, 7 and 9 are also requested to complete a clergy form and return it to the school office with the SIF. If the form is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the LA form only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

The school provides for the admission of all successful applicants who have reached their 4th birthday by the beginning of September 2019. However, please note the following;

- a) these arrangements do not apply to our nursery intake,
- b) parents of children currently in our nursery must submit a new application if they wish to apply for a place in Reception,
- c) parents offered a place in Reception may defer the date of their child's admission until later in the year or until the child reaches compulsory school age. Deferred entry only applies to Reception year (see below Age of Admission and Deferral of places),
- d) parents can request part-time attendance until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Please note that the information in this document is correct for the year shown. Policies for future years may well be different.

How Places are Offered

Children who have a statement of educational special needs which names Victoria School will be given a place. Children with an Education, Health and Care plan that names the school will also be admitted.

In the event of there being more applications than available spaces the following over subscription criteria will be applied, in order;

- 1) children looked after and previously looked after. (see definitions below);
- 2) children who have social or medical needs;
- 3) children who have a sibling already attending the school at the proposed time of admission, (see definitions below);
- 4) children who are attending nursery at Victoria School and are eligible for the early years pupil premium, pupil premium or service premium (see definitions below);
- 5) children who are already eligible for the early years pupil premium or service premium and live within 1 mile of the school (see definitions below);
- 6) children, one of whose parents/guardians has a regular worshipping commitment at Saint Peter's Church, (see definitions below);
- 7) children, one of whose parents/guardians has a regular worshipping commitment at All Saints' Church (see definitions below);
- 8) children who have a sibling who is a past pupil of Victoria School and will be attending Thomas Coram Church of England School at the proposed time of admission (see definitions below);
- 9) children living with their parents/guardians at a permanent address in Berkhamsted or Northchurch [HP4 postal address] where one of the parents/guardians has a regular worshipping commitment at another Anglican church or church of another Christian denomination affiliated to Churches Together in England & Ireland or the Evangelical Alliance (see definitions below);
- 10) any other children

Where the application of the above criteria results in a situation where there are more children with an equal right of admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie-break will be the distance from the school. Distances are measured in a 'straight line' using a computerized mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of the child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognized method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences. Where this distance measurement results in more than one child having an identical claim to the last available place, (e.g. as a result of residing in flats) priority will be given to the lowest door number. Should there be two applications having the identical distance from the school claiming the last available space the tie break will be random allocation.

Random allocation will be undertaken independently of the school by Hertfordshire County Council. Every child entered onto the county council's admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break this random number is used to allocate the place, with the lower number given priority.

Where the 60th place is offered to a twin or child from multiple birth, the governing body will admit the other twins or siblings as an exception to the infant class size rule.

The Governors co-operate with the fair access policies of the LA. Children offered places under the HCC Fair Access Protocol will be prioritized before children on continuing interest, and if necessary, allocated over PAN.

Definitions

Criterion 1. The Governors use the same definition as the LA – **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)*. Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. These children will be prioritized 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 11(1) of The Children Act 1989).

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

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 arrangement to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

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

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

Please refer to Herts admissions website for further details:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/research-a-school/hertfordshire-county-council-school-admission-arrangements.aspx

Criterion 2. The Governors use the same definition as the LA – Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school.

Rule 2 application 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 few very exceptional cases, there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

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

- a. Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
- b. Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs
- c. If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate
- d. For medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only a specific school essential.

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

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

Please refer to Herts admissions website for further details:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/research-a-school/hertfordshire-county-council-school-admission-arrangements.aspx

Criterion 3. The Governors use the same definition as the LA – a sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent / carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after* and in every case living permanently** in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts. If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

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

** A sibling link will not be recognized 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.

Please refer to Herts admissions website for further details:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/research-a-school/hertfordshire-county-council-school-admission-arrangements.aspx

Criteria 4 & 5. Children may be eligible for early years pupil premium, pupil premium or service premium if the parent / carer is in receipt of benefits such as Income support, Job seeker' allowance (income based), Child tax credits and Working tax credits.

Please refer to Herts website for further details of how to check for eligibility and contact the school office if you believe you qualify.

Criteria 6, 7 and 9. The word 'regular' is defined as meaning at least twice each calendar month for a period of at least twelve months prior to the closing date for applications. For families new to the area they should have attended at least twice each calendar month since their arrival in the area and they should also submit a letter from the minister of their previous church or place of worship indicating their pattern of worship there.

Please note that attendance of a child at Sunday School/Club or a church toddler group does not meet the regular attendance requirement.

Please note that applications under criteria 6, 7 and 9 should also submit a clergy form.

Home address

The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of the 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 required. If a child's residence is in dispute, parents / carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

Fraudulent applications

The school, in liaison with Hertfordshire County Council, will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses. Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored, checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Action will be taken in the following circumstances:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school
- When a child lives at a different address to the application
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility

When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:

- The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful
- The family has returned to an existing property
- The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period
- Council tax information shows a difference residence at the time of application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application

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.

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.

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 application process 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. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes. The school, in liaison with HCC, will also consider accepting applications from children* (as defined above) whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by a panel of 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.

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

Children born on and between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2019.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which it was made.

Where parents wish, children may attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age.

Any parents interested in taking up a part-time place or deferring entry should contact the school to discuss further. When considering requests the school will take into account the individual circumstances of the child.

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Where a parent of a 'summer-born' child (1 April – 31 August) wishes their child to start school in the autumn term following their fifth birthday, they may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group to Reception rather than Year 1. See 'Summer Born Children and Children Out of Year Group'.

Summer Born Children and Children Out of Year Group

Victoria School follows Hertfordshire County Council's policy 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."

The governing body, through a panel process, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the evidence submitted. The governing body will make its decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned and will take into account the views of the parents, head teacher and 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 will inform parents of the decision on which year group to which the child should be admitted setting out clearly the reasons for the decision. Where the governing body agrees to a parent's request for the child to be admitted out of their normal age group and, as a consequence of that decision, the child will be admitted to Reception, the admissions authority will process the application as part of the main admissions round, following the subscription criteria above (see 'How places are offered'). This means a new application will need to be made the following year. Places cannot be held and the new application will be considered with other applications at the appropriate time, therefore a place is not guaranteed.

In anticipation of this change to School Admissions Code, which will require public consultation, the school has amended its policy regarding summer born children. If your child was born between 1

April and 31 August 2015, and you do not believe they will be ready to start Reception in the 2018/19 academic year, you may instead make an application for your child to start Reception in September 2020.

Unsuccessful applications

Appeals

Parents/guardians who have not been allocated a place for their child at Victoria CE Infant and Nursery School have the right of appeal to an independent panel. At transfer time parents wishing to appeal who applied on line should log into their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. For those who did not apply on line, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack. For in-year applications, parents wishing to appeal should contact the school directly in the first instance.

Continuing Interest [waiting] List and 'In Year' Applications

In the event of more applications than available places the Governors will maintain a continuing interest list [waiting list]. These applications and late applications will be put on this list in a position determined by the criteria. If a place becomes available in the school it will be offered to the child that best meets the published admission rules.

All 'in year' applications will be co-ordinated by the LA on behalf of the school. 'In year' applications must be made to the LA. Please note that a SIF and clergy form (if applicable) is still requested for 'in year' applications.

Parents/guardians are requested to inform the Governors should they wish to have their child's name removed from the continuing interest list. The list will be maintained for the current academic year.

Late Applications

Any online or paper application received after the statutory deadline, as advertised by HCC, will be treated as a late application. Late applications are not dealt with until all on time applications have been considered. If there are exceptional reasons why parents/carers are unable to make an application by the closing date, they will need to contact the HCC Admissions and Transport team, as in certain exceptional cases, late applications can be considered as "on time". Please see the HCC website for details. Any child for whom an application is made after the deadline will be placed on the 'continuing interest list' in the position determined by the oversubscription criteria.

Nursery Provision

Nursery education is non-statutory and therefore is not covered by the School Admissions Code.

The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into any nursery or pre-school provision. The school's nursery arrangements are outlined in the Nursery Admissions Policy.

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.