



**Educating Students for Success in Life**

# **SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY**

## **September 2024**

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**Responsibility**

**Respect**

**Resilience**

## Admissions arrangements 2024 to 2025

The published admissions number (PAN) for September 2024 is 210

The school participates in the Hertfordshire Local Authority co-ordinated scheme for Admissions and all deadlines within that should be adhered to by applicants. All applicants must complete the Common Application Form of their home Local Authority. Hertfordshire residents should apply online to Hertfordshire County Council or complete the Secondary Transfer Form. Families resident in other authorities must complete the form provided by the Authority in which they live. Applicants to The Priory School do not need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF).

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Governing Bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an EHCP (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, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order<sup>1</sup> or a special guardianship order<sup>2</sup>.**

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 previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangement 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.

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.

### <sup>1</sup> 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.***

## **<sup>2</sup> 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 previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".**

**The child's previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:**

- i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and**
- ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.**

**A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –**

- a public authority,**
- a religious organisation, or**
- any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.**

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

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change of circumstances within the family since the initial application was submitted. All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse social and medical needs. However, in a few very exceptional cases there are reasons why a child has to go to one specific school.

Few applications under Rule 2 are agreed.

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

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

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate. 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.

Applications for children who were not “looked after” immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this rule.

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

A panel of Hertfordshire County Council officers, on behalf of the Governing Board of The Priory School 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**

#### **Definition of sibling**

A sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after<sup>1</sup> and in every case living permanently<sup>2</sup> 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 Priory 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.

***<sup>1</sup> 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.***

***<sup>2</sup> 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.***

### **Rule 4: Children of staff**

Children of permanent (full time or part time) members of staff (teaching or support), are directly employed by The Priory School and have been employed at the school for a minimum of two years who live in the same house as the member of staff including children of partners

OR

Have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage, such shortage to be determined by the Governing Board Admissions Committee.

### **Rule 5: Children who live in the priority area**

The Governing Board recognises that in 2013, the three unparished areas of Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth were amalgamated into one single unparished area (North Hertfordshire, unparished area). To ensure our admission arrangements can be implemented accurately and as intended, the three unparished areas of Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth will be considered separately to determine the parish and priority area for each applicant.

If the school is oversubscribed under this rule places will be offered as follows:

- To children living in the parishes of Hexton, Hitchin, Holwell, Ickleford, Langley, Lilley, Offley, Pirton, Preston, St. Ippolyts, Wymondley.
- On the basis of distance, with those living nearest the school prioritised.

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

### **Multiple births**

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

### **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.

### **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

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12\* months and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

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 where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and /or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

It is for a child's home LA to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same LA, it will be for that LA to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different LAs, the above process will be used

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g., containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled neither application will be processed.

For the transfer application rounds, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before the "late deadline". If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as "late". The late deadlines for the 2023/24 transfer application process is 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. If this date changes, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2023/24 application process in September 2022.

**\*If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12-month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be required and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service**

### **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 the purpose of admissions**

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

### **Continuing Interest List**

Hertfordshire County Council administers the CI list on behalf of the school. All unsuccessful applicants will automatically be placed on the school's CI list. 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 remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form.

## **Appeals**

All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. 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](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals) and click on the link 'log into the appeals system'.

## **In-Year Admissions**

The school is part of Hertfordshire County Council's co-ordinated In-Year admissions scheme. Parents should make an In-Year Application online via the Hertfordshire County Council website at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) or by contacting the customer service centre on 0300 123 4043 for a paper application form. Parents should return the form direct to Hertfordshire County Council.

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](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals).

## **Children Seeking Admission outside their Chronological Year Group**

Students will be admitted to the school in Year 7 at the age of 11 irrespective of physical or academic ability or age 12 if they are summer born children where a family chose to delay their entry to Reception by an academic year. It is the school's policy for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group as far as possible, 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".

For children other than summer born delay entry, if parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they must, 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". Such evidence must be submitted to the Headteacher no later than 31st October 2022.

The Governor Board Admissions Committee will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the evidence submitted. If such an application is accepted it does not constitute an offer of a place, the application will then be processed by HCC in accordance with the admissions criteria. The Committee will make decisions based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents/carers, the Headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group.

There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. The internal management and organisation of the school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Governors, Headteacher and senior leadership.

## **Fair Access**

The school participates in the County Council's Fair Access protocol and will admit children under this protocol before those on the continuing interest list and above PAN if necessary.

## **Sixth Form admission arrangements**

The school will admit up to 80 external students to its Sixth Form. Minimum entry requirements are five GCSE passes at Grade 9-4, including English and Maths at Grade 4 or above. Some subjects will require grade 5 at GCSE. Full details

can be found in the Consortium prospectus. The oversubscription criteria and tie break will be the same, unless identified otherwise, as that for KS3 and KS4 admissions.

### **Oversubscription criteria**

**Rule 1:** Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order

**Rule 2:** Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school (The Governing Board Admissions Committee would be the body responsible for making this decision)

**Rule 3:** Sibling

**Rule 4:** Children of staff

**Rule 5:** Children who live in the priority area

The Governing Board recognises that in 2013, the three unparished areas of Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth were amalgamated into one single unparished area (North Hertfordshire, unparished area). To ensure our admission arrangements can be implemented accurately and as intended, the three unparished areas of Baldock, Hitchin and Letchworth will be considered separately to determine the parish and priority area for each applicant.

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**Rule 6:** Distance (if two applicants have the same home-school distance both shall be admitted)

### **Sixth Form admissions appeals**

Appeals will be heard by the Governing Board Admission Committee. Submissions to the Chair of the Committee can be made by emailing Emma Sangster ([Emma.sangster@priory.herts.sch.uk](mailto:Emma.sangster@priory.herts.sch.uk))