

Hitchin Girls' School Admission Arrangements 2021/2022

The admission number for September 2021 is 210. Girls will be admitted at the age of 11 or after having completed National Curriculum Year 6.

The school participates in the Hertfordshire Local Authority co-ordinated scheme for Admissions and all deadlines within that should be adhered to by applicants.

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.

If there are fewer applications than places available, all applicants will be offered a place. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined below will be used to allocate places.

Rule 1 Children looked after (in public care) 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 they would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and subsequently adopted. *A panel of Hertfordshire County Council 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 Siblings living in the priority area: Children who live in the priority area, (including for this purpose the parish of Baldock), and who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, excluding sisters who a) first entered the school in the Sixth Form (Year 12) or b) are in Year 13 which is the last year of the normal age range of the school.*

* However places allocated to siblings from the parish of Letchworth are subject to the limit mentioned below - see rule 6.

Rule 4 Children of Staff: Children of permanent members of staff who are a) directly employed by Hitchin Girls' School and b) will have been employed at the school for a minimum of two years at the time the application is made for admission to the school or have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

Children who live in the priority area¹

Rule 5 - Children who live in the parish of Hitchin.

The school will allocate 120 places to children whose permanent home address is in the parish of Hitchin.

In the event of more than 120 applications for consideration under this rule, places will be allocated as follows:

- a) firstly to girls for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith and non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender;
- b) secondly, if there are places remaining, to girls in the parish of Hitchin for whom it is **not** their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith and non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender.

The tiebreak for rule 5a and 5b is distance², with those that live closest to the school having the highest priority.

A maximum of 120 places will be allocated under this rule. If fewer than 120 places are allocated, the balance will be added to the places available to applicants from the rest of the priority area and distributed under rule 6.

Rule 6 - Children who live in the rest of the priority area by parish, on a proportional basis.

Any remaining places will be allocated to each parish/unparished area or town in the rest of the priority area in proportion to the number of applications made, with the exception of the Parish of Letchworth where the total number of places allocated under rules 1 to 6 will not exceed 20. In the event of there being more applications than places available to a particular parish/unparished area or town, places will be allocated as follows:

- a) to girls for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender;
- b) to girls for whom it is **not** their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith and non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender.

The tiebreak for rule 6a is distance², with those that live closest to the school having the highest priority. The tiebreak for rule 6b differs, with all places being allocated on a random³ basis.

Any unused places are reallocated to parishes to remain as near to the originally established proportions as possible. This is achieved by considering each place to be redistributed in turn and assigning it to the most under allocated/least over allocated parish.

If, following the distribution of places through parish proportionality, all applications in the rest of the priority area have been satisfied and places remain available, they will be allocated firstly to any outstanding applicants from Hitchin prioritised as outlined in Rule 5 and then to any outstanding applicants from the parish of Letchworth, prioritised as outlined above.

Children who live outside the priority area

Rule 7 Siblings living outside the priority area: Children who live outside the priority area and who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, excluding sisters who a) first entered the school in the Sixth Form (Year 12) or b) are in Year 13 which is the last year of the normal age range of the school.

Rule 8 Random

Any remaining places will be offered to children living outside of the priority area, on a random³ basis.

Notes

1 The priority area for Hitchin Girls' School is based on the following towns / parishes / unparished areas:

Codicote, Graveley, Hexton, Hitchin, Holwell, Ickleford, King's Walden, Knebworth, Langley, Letchworth Garden City, Lilley, Offley, Pirton, Preston, St. Ippolyts, St. Pauls Walden, Weston, Wymondley

² A 'straight line' distance measurement; from the address point of the child's home, supplied by Address Base Premium, to the address point of the school is used in all home to school distance measurements for community and VC schools in Hertfordshire and will also be used by Hitchin Girls' School. The measurement is undertaken by a computerised mapping system to two decimal places.

³ 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.

Tiebreak

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under Rules 1, 2, 3, and 4 than there are places available, a tie-break will be used by applying the next rule to those children.

Where there is a need for a tie-breaker where two different addresses measure the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random

Continuing Interest Lists (Waiting Lists)

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain the school's continuing interest (waiting) list. A child's position on the CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. The 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 end of the summer term. To retain a continuing interest application after this time, parents must make an In Year application.

In Year Admissions

The school is part of the Hertfordshire County Council's coordinated In Year admissions scheme. In year applications should be made online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions A paper application form can be requested from the Customer Service Centre, 0300 123 4043.

Places will first be allocated in accordance with rules 1-4 above and then as follows:

Rule 5: Children who live in the priority area (including for this purpose the parish of Hitchin) for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender.

If more children qualify under rule 5 than places are available, the tiebreak would be those that live closest to the school.

Rule 6: Children in the priority area on a random basis

Rule 7 Siblings living outside the priority area: Children who live outside the priority area and who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, excluding sisters who a) first entered the school in the Sixth Form (Year 12) or b) are in Year 13 which is the last year of the normal age range of the school.

Rule 8: Children outside the priority area on a random basis.

Parish proportionality will not be taken into account for In Year allocations.

Fair Access

The school participates in the Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access protocol and will admit children under this protocol before children on continuing interest lists, and over the Published Admission Number (PAN) if required.

Sixth Form admission arrangements

The School will admit to its Sixth Form any student of the appropriate age with an EHCP that names the school. The school will admit up to 50 external students to its Sixth Form.

Minimum academic entry requirements are 5 Grade 9-4 GCSE passes including English and Maths at Grade 4 or above. Some subjects will have additional entry requirements as set out in the Sixth Form Prospectus and all have a recommended GCSE Average Points Score (APS).

If the school is oversubscribed, priority will first be given to:

- i) Children looked after or previously looked after.
- ii) Children for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith and non-partially selective and makes provision for children of the relevant gender
- iii) Distance (if two applicants have the same home-school distance both shall be admitted)

Transfer Appeals

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, log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

In Year Appeals

For in-year admissions, 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

Explanatory notes and definitions for the admission arrangements for Hitchin Girls' School for 2021/22

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 1³.

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 arrangements order or special guardianship order, **will not** be prioritised under rule 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

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

The school governing body has delegated rule 2 decision making to Hertfordshire County Council. Decisions will be made by a panel of 3 HCC officers and parents/carers will be notified of the outcome of their rule 2 applications within 40 working days of the secondary transfer closing date.

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.

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 she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately and has subsequently been 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 Hertfordshire County Council 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" available at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/admissions/rule-2-protocol-2018.pdf>

Definition of sibling:

A sibling is defined as: the sister, half sister, adopted sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after⁴, and in every case living permanently⁵ in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of the 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

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

Children of Staff:

The staff member must be:

- the child's parent by blood or adoption, or have legal parental responsibility for the child, OR
- cohabiting with one of the child's parents,
AND

have been living with the child in the same house Monday- Friday for a minimum of two years.

Multiple births:

If you have more than one child applying for the school at the same time, make a separate application for each of them.

If one of your children is offered the last place available at the school and we've received an application for the other child or children, a place will be offered to the other child or children unless the place allocated to the first child was offered under the random allocation procedure.

In this case, places will not be offered to other children in the family initially as this would compromise the random element of the allocation process. However, the school will admit over the published admission number and offer an additional place after the allocation process has been completed.

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 Tax 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.

If your child is allocated a place under Rule 5, Children who live in the Hitchin Parish, the school will ask for evidence that the address provided is the child's permanent address at the time of application. This evidence must be received and verified when you accept the place and before the child can take up her place. Failure to provide this evidence may lead to the offer of a school place being withdrawn.

Fraudulent applications:

Hitchin Girls' School, in liaison with 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. Action will be taken in the following circumstances:

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

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:

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

Definition of "nearest school"

For allocations under rules 5 & 6 the "nearest school" is defined as the nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, non-partially selective and caters for children of the appropriate gender.

Priority Areas

Priority areas are determined by administrative parishes/towns/unparished areas. Your home parish/town or unparished area is clearly identified on your Council Tax statement/bill. If you are unsure which area you live in you can use the "Find Your Nearest School" facility available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

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 Secondary 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.

Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative “work” address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes.

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

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

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

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

*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.

Children Out of Year Group

The school’s policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance* 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 school’s governing body, as the relevant admission authority, has delegated Out of Year Group decision making to Hertfordshire County Council. A panel of HCC officers will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. Their decision will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the headteacher, the child’s social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of the school.

*Advice on the admission of summer born children” December 2014