

# Admissions Arrangements Policy

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## Year 7 September admission

Applications for places in the normal admissions round for Year 7 at Westfield Academy will be made in accordance with the Hertfordshire County Council co-ordinated admission arrangements. The application has to be on the Common Application Form (CAF) provided and administered by Hertfordshire County Council.

Applicants should apply online regarding secondary school transfer. Please visit the Hertfordshire County Council website: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/admissions>.

### Admission criteria

The published admission number for Year 7 in 2024 / 2025 is 240.

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. If there are fewer applications than places available all applicants will be admitted. After the admission of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs/children with Education, Health and Care Plans where Westfield Academy is named on the statement/plan, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

- **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>.
- **Rule 2:** Medical or Social: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a specific medical or social need to go to the Westfield Academy. A panel of HCC officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the Westfield Academy and must clearly demonstrate why Westfield Academy is the only school that can meet the child's needs.
- **Rule 3:** Sibling: Children who have a brother or sister still in attendance at Westfield Academy at the time of application, unless the sibling is in the last year of the normal age range of the school.<sup>3</sup> This includes siblings living in the same household, step-siblings and adopted siblings but does not apply to cousins. The Academy reserves the right to ask for proof of relationship once offers have been made.
- **Rule 4:** Children who live in the priority area for whom Westfield Academy is their nearest Hertfordshire 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, on the basis of distance, with those living nearest the school given priority. If a fraudulent application is made, any offered place may be withdrawn.
- **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, a tie break will be used by applying the next rule to those children. 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

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<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) a public authority, (b) a religious organisation, or (c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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 GIS measurement system and the distances are automatically available with application information in SEAM. The HCC's admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each 2nd 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.

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements. The measurement is taken from the Address Base 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.

## Priority areas

The co-educational 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 that will be retaining the county county's priority areas as part of their admission arrangements for 2024 / 25 may be found at: [School Admissions Secondary and Upper Schools Priority Areas](#).

## Home address

The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application. 'At the time of application' means the closing date for applications. "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year and / or the family own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months. The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one which the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the child's main residence. If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit / Tax Credit alternative documentation will be requested. If a child's residence is in dispute, parents / carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

## Fraudulent applications

Westfield Academy will work in close liaison with the Hertfordshire County Council to do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. 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;
  - 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.

## Fair access (in-year admissions only)

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

## Continuing interest (waiting) lists

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (CI) (waiting) 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 confirmed). To retain a CI application after this time, parents must make an In Year application.

## In-year admissions

The Academy will remain part of the county council's coordinated In Year admissions scheme. You can make an In Year application online via [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear) or request a paper copy from the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043. Parents/carers should return the application form directly to the County Council (address on the form).

## Appeals

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).

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](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals) and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

If the application was not made using Hertfordshire County Council's online application system parents should contact the Customer Service Centre (0300 123 4043) to request an appeal pack.

## Multiple birth

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

## Post 16 admission criteria

- Westfield Academy operates a Sixth Form for a total of 300 students. The capacity for Year 12 is 150. Our existing Year 11 students who wish to continue their education in Westfield Academy's Sixth Form will be given priority providing they meet the entry requirements.
- Where fewer than 150 places are taken up by existing Year 11 students, these will be available to external candidates. In this circumstance, the admission criteria above will apply. Places will be dependent on achieving the required grades and on receiving a satisfactory reference from the previous school.
- Applicants must submit their application form (found in the Sixth Form section on the Academy's website). Applicants who do not meet the criteria will not be offered a place.
- Appeals are to be in writing addressed to the Headteacher.

## Explanatory notes and definitions

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions 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>4</sup> or a special guardianship order<sup>5</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:

- in the care of a local authority, or
- 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.

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:

- 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
- 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.

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<sup>4</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>5</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.

## Rule 2

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:

- Specific recent professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs; and / or
- Professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs.
- If the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address, clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.
- 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.

## 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>6</sup> and in every case living permanently<sup>7</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 named school at the time the younger child starts or has 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.

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<sup>6</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>7</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.

## Applications from children<sup>8</sup> 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.

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 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 out of year group

The Academy'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.

Supporting evidence should be submitted to HCC's Admissions Team, 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".

Through a panel process, HCC will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. On behalf of the governors of the Academy, the panel makes 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 the 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.

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<sup>8</sup> 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



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.