



Hartlepool Borough Council
School Admissions Arrangements
2025-26

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
DETERMINED ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR 2025-26

The admissions policy for entry to community and voluntary controlled primary schools, effective from 2025/26 admissions round, is as follows:

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the Plan, will be admitted to the school. The remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:

Oversubscription Criteria:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, child arrangements order, or special guardianship order¹ 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. A looked after child 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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Those children who have brothers or sisters who will be attending the school at the time of admission;
3. Those children who live in the school's admission zone;
4. Those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school;
5. Those children who live closest to the school as determined by a straight line distance measurement; from the address point for the child's home to the address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

¹ A 'looked after child' 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 (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders). A 'child arrangements order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Tie-breaker:

If more children qualify under a particular criterion than there are places available, priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school (as described under criteria 5). Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications, for example two applicants who live at an equal distance from the school, the Local Authority's computerised system will use random selection.

Definitions:

Sibling: Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/guardian's partner and, in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address. In all cases the responsible parent will hold the child benefit for those children permanently living at that address. A brother or sister living at the same address must be attending the preferred school at the same time as the child who is applying. *Please note, this criteria only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school*

Twins or multiple birth children: If you have more than one child who are twins or part of a multiple birth going through the application process this year, you must make a separate application for each child and indicate on each online or paper form that your child has a sibling also going through the process. For community and voluntary controlled schools, we will offer a place to the other child(ren) if one of your twins/multiple birth children is offered the last place available and you have applied to the same school for the other child(ren).

Distance: Distance will be measured by a straight line measurement from the address point of the child's home address to the address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Admission Zone: All Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hartlepool have a defined geographic area called an Admission Zone. Do not assume that you live within a particular school's admission zone as some streets are split. To find out which admission zone you live in contact the School Admissions Team on telephone number 01429 523765 or 01429 523768. Please note, a child is not guaranteed a place at an admission zone school.

Medical Grounds/Exceptional Circumstances: A panel of specialist officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this criterion. If you think your child has a particular medical or social need to go to a certain school, you must provide supporting evidence from a doctor, psychologist or other professional involved with your child. The supporting evidence must relate specifically to the school you are claiming medical grounds/exceptional circumstances for, and clearly demonstrate why it is only that school that can meet your child's needs in a way that no other school can. If you are applying on-line for a place under this criterion, please send your supporting evidence to the Admissions Team by the National closing date, which should include your child's name and date of birth.

NB: Exceptional social reasons do not, in the view of the Authority, include domestic inconvenience arising from parents' work patterns, child-minding problems, separation from particular nursery/primary school friends. Problems of this kind are widespread and cannot be classed as exceptional. Medical reasons do not include temporary conditions. They are permanent medical conditions which require special treatment available at the preferred school only. Medical evidence must be provided and the Authority's officers must be satisfied that the child would suffer to a significant degree if he/she went to any other school.

NOTES:

Criteria 1 Applications

- Applications from children who are looked after must be accompanied by a letter from the Social Worker confirming the legal status of the child and the reasons for the school preferences. Any change of legal status and/or placement arrangements must be notified to the Admissions Team.
- Applications for previously looked after children must be accompanied by a copy of any Special Guardianship Order, Adoption Order or Child Arrangements Order.
- Applications for children previously in state care outside of England must provide evidence of their child's previously looked after status with accompanying paperwork to evidence this eg a UK adoption order or a copy of the adoption order from the child's country of origin.

Criteria 2 Applications

To obtain a school place under the sibling criteria the sibling must still attend the school at the time when the child for whom the place is sought joins the school. This criterion only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school.

Criteria 4 Applications

A panel of officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the school applied for under Criteria 4 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs. Criteria 4 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 Hartlepool 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 Criteria 4 are agreed. All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- specific 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
- medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only one specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate.

Examples of cases which have been accepted under Criteria 4

- A child with limited mobility who is only able to walk to their nearest school, as their admission zone school is further away.
- A child for whom only one school is suitable due to child protection issues.

Examples of cases which have not been accepted under Criteria 4

- Case made for continuity of child minding arrangements, such as using a childminder that children are already familiar with who caters for children attending certain schools, or childminding by family members living close to a specific school. These cases were not upheld because they are not exceptional. Many families rely on complex childminding arrangements.
- Cases made for children with specific learning and/or behavioural needs where the professional evidence submitted is not school specific. All schools are able to support

children with a wide variety of individual needs. If a child's individual needs warrant an Education, Health and Care Plan, this will name the appropriate school.

- Medical cases where even though there is a severe illness, more than one school could deal with the child's needs.

How to apply under Criteria 4

- Parents/guardians should submit all relevant information including professional evidence, with their application. If applying online, written information should be received before the closing date for applications and include the child's name and date of birth. Information provided after the closing date will only be considered when there are significant changes of circumstances.
- Applications under Criteria 4 will only be considered when supported by a letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example, a doctor, psychologist or police officer. Supporting evidence should demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child or family.

Criteria 5 Applications

Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications the Local Authority's computerised system will randomly select.

Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday. A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which an offer was made. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school in writing, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The Local Governing Committee will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Local Governing Committee will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Summer Born Children

The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August, may request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.

Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request and in addition it should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The local authority will liaise with the Local Governing Committee that will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher, who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the Local Governing Committee will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.

If the request is agreed by the Local Governing Committee, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, applicants will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out below and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for

admission will operate throughout the school year. The waiting list will be held open until the last day of the summer term. Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

Infant Class Size Regulations

Infant classes may not, by law, contain more than 30 pupils with a single qualified teacher (subject to the provisions in the School Admissions Code for 'excepted children'). Parents do have a right of appeal in accordance with the infant class size regulations if the school is oversubscribed and their child is refused a place.

The Local Governing Committee will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Applications should be made by contacting the local authority admission team at School Admissions, Hartlepool Borough Council, Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, Brierton Lane, Hartlepool, TS25 4BY, on 01429 284368 or by email at admissionsteam@hartlepool.gov.uk

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria will be applied.

If there are no places available, a request can be made that the child is added to the waiting list.

Right of Appeal

Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a child, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the chair of governors at the school address or in the local authority schools admissions team, details above

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the Local Governing Committee is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the school and the Local Governing Committee for the current school year. The Local Governing Committee has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number (subject to the infant class size exceptions).

Nursery

For children attending the school's nursery, application to the reception class of the school must be made in the normal way, to the home local authority. Attendance at the school's nursery does not automatically guarantee that a place will be offered at the school.

False evidence

The Local Governing Committee reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school, the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Local Authority's admission guidance for parents.