



St Nicholas Primary School Harpenden

DETERMINED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2026-2027

St Nicholas School is here to serve the local community and is open to children of any faith or no faith. The school has a Christian character and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. Each child is a member of a caring school community, with an emphasis on enabling each child to achieve their full personal and academic potential.

If there are fewer applications than places available at the school, all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places, the criteria 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 Governors) to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order).

Rule 2: Siblings

Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school at the proposed time of entry.

Rule 3: All other children

Children wherever they live, with priority given to those who live the shortest distance from the school.

General

The school is a voluntary aided primary school within the Diocese of St. Albans. The Governing Body of the school is the admission authority. The school provides places for approximately 154 pupils divided into 7 year groups currently organised into 5 classes. The Governors will admit 22 pupils (the 'Published Admission Number') into the Reception Class in each academic year. The Governors are required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds) of 30 pupils per class.

Hertfordshire County Council ('HCC') operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme in line with government legislation. HCC will co-ordinate the normal admissions round (ie for applications in January 2026) on behalf of the school according to the scheme published by HCC each year. Please refer to the HCC primary school admissions website.

The school will admit any child with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school. The school will also admit children under HCC's Fair Access protocol before those on the school's continuing interest list and, if necessary, above the Published Admission Number.

Tie Break

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 the school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto HCC's admissions database has an individual random number assigned, which will be used to allocate the place with the lowest number given priority.

Explanatory Notes

The school applies the explanatory notes and definitions for the admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled schools in Hertfordshire for the relevant academic year as published by HCC from time to time, amended as necessary to reflect the nature of St Nicholas School and its admissions policy.

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions policy:

Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the Governors) to have been in state care outside England, 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, including those who appear (to the Governors) to have been in state care outside England, 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 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.

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 section 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 HCC'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: (i) a public authority (ii) a religious organisation or (iii) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

Rule 2: 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 after¹ and in every case living permanently² 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 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.

¹ 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.

² 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.

Multiple births

The school will admit over its Published Admission Number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place at the school and the other twin/multiple birth child has applied but not been allocated.

Home address

The address provided on the application form 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 at the time of application, 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. 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 requested.

It is for the Governing Body (as the admission authority) to determine the address to be used for admission purposes.

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

school week. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address.

Addresses will be verified as necessary with HCC's Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

Applications made as part of the main reception admissions round are processed by HCC on behalf of the Governing Body, in accordance with HCC's published coordinated admission scheme.

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, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

If HCC receives two different main reception admission round applications 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 main reception admission round, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received by HCC "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before 2nd February 2026 (the late deadline). If the amended joint application is received after 3rd February, it will be treated as "late".

Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used in 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 the 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.

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

The school's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022* would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2026. All Hertfordshire infant, first and primary schools provide for the full-time admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September (at the school at which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age. Summer born children are only able to "defer" entry to Reception class until the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Where parents wish, children can attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents wishing to take up a part-time place or deferred entry should contact the school to discuss their child's requirements.

***Summer born children (1st April – 31st August) – Entry to Reception**

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Children born between 1 April 2022 and 31 August 2022 are categorised as "summer born" and if parents/carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in 2026 they should contact the home LA and the school for guidance before making an application.

Summer born applications that are delayed for a year (for entry in September 2027) will be processed in exactly the same way as all other reception applications received at that time; there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at a child's preferred school.

If parents wish to delay their application for a Reception place they are advised to discuss their child's needs/development with their current early years or nursery provider. If parents wish their child to remain in their existing nursery school or class for a further year (rather than moving into the Reception year group) they must let their current school know before the end of the Spring term in 2026 (before the Easter break).

Children Out of Year Group (except applications for reception from summer born)

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 will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The school make decisions 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.

In Year Admissions

You can apply to change school during the school year. This is called an "in year admission". To apply for an in-year admission to St Nicholas School please obtain a copy of the In Year Application Form from the school website or from the school office.

Where possible applications will be processed, and offers made, within 10 school days of receipt of the In Year form. If the year group applied for has a place available, the school will offer a place to the child. If the year group applied for does not have a place available, your child's name can be added to the waiting list at your request. You will also have a right to appeal the decision.

Transfer Appeals

Parents wishing to appeal who applied through HCC'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

We will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, HCC will write to you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals.