OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR ALL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Reviewed and consulted on December 2020
Reviewed in line with updated School Admissions code August 2021 for use from September 2021 onwards

Reviewed November 2025

For Admission in academic year 2027 - 2028

The oversubscription criteria list (A) below applies to all schools where Herefordshire Council is the admissions authority except for Aylestone and Weobley Secondary Schools for whom list (B) below applies. This policy should be read in conjunction with the information for parent's booklet.

Places will be allocated as follows:

(A)

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Educational, Health & Care Plan which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

Priority 1: Looked after children[1] and previously looked after children[2] who have since been adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order[3] or special guardianship order,[4] including those children 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.

Priority 2 - Children living within the **defined catchment area*** of the school;

Priority 3 - Sibling connection - Children who have a **sibling**** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the child is due to start

Priority 4 - Exceptional circumstances - Children with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school only is necessary for the wellbeing of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source.

Priority 5 - Distance*** - Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route.

General Notes

No priority is given to pupils living outside but attending a primary school within the catchment area of the relevant high school, i.e. the determining factor is the child's home address.

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after children who either currently are or were in the 'looked

[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.

[2] 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 Childrens Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

[3] 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.

[3a] Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

[4] See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

after' system it will be catchment area children second, siblings third, ****exceptional circumstances fourth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top three categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out of area siblings, priorities will be decided first by reference to exceptional circumstances, then according to distance, with those living nearest to the school using the distance calculations outlined below *** taking priority

Following the allocation of the top two categories there may be an occasion when it is not possible to offer places for all children living in the catchment area. In this situation the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with siblings who would still be at the school in September 2026, next to pupils with exceptional circumstances, and finally according to distance from the school.

In case where distance is not the final deciding factor i.e. two applications are at exactly the same distance then the final tie breaker will be a lottery undertaken by an individual independent of the Children and Families directorate.

* In order to determine the relevant catchment area, the home address of a child is defined as the only or main permanent residential address, at the closing date for applications, where the child usually resides and which is the usual address of the parent/carer with main responsibility for the child. If arrangements are such that a child resides at two addresses for equal amounts of time, then parents must decide which address to use for admissions purposes.
Where more than one parent submits an application for a child, or where there is a parent not in agreement with the preferences, the Local Authority may not be able to process any application until agreement over the preferences is reached. Failure to ensure agreement prior to submission, may result in a delay in any application being processed and in some instances, where agreement cannot be reached we may not be able to proceed until a legal resolution has been sought and the courts determine which parent can make the final decision on schooling

Copies of catchment area maps, if required are available from the LA, or can be viewed in schools. To find the catchment school for a postcode please visit
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/find-school

** A sibling connection refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or a child of the parents/carer's partner, and in every case the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address.

***Distance is measured by the shortest available walking route (using road and/or made up footpath) using the nearest network node from the property address point to the nearest network node at the main school entrance gate.

Please see Information for parents' booklet for the relevant age group for details of requesting admission out of the normal age group and for information on waiting lists

(B) Applies to Aylestone and Weobley Secondary Schools only

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Educational, Health & Care Plan which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

Priority 1: Looked after children[5] and previously looked after children[6] who have since been adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order[7] or special guardianship order,[8] including those children 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.

Priority 2 – Children who are on roll at a primary school that is **hard federated** (has a single governing body) **with the preferred secondary school**.

Priority 3 - Children living within the **defined catchment area*** of the school;

Priority 4 - Sibling connection - Children who have a **sibling**** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the child is due to start;

Priority 5 - Exceptional circumstances - Children with exceptional **medical, social or compassionate** grounds for admission and whose parents can show that entry to a particular school only is necessary for the wellbeing of their child. Parents are required to produce a medical certificate or other appropriate information preferably from an independent source.

Priority 6 - Distance*** - Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route.

General Notes for Aylestone and Weobley Secondary Schools Only

Where, at any school, applications exceed the number of places, the priorities will be applied in the sequence indicated above, i.e. after children who either currently are or were in the 'looked after' system it will be children attending a hard federated primary school, then catchment area children, siblings, exceptional circumstances, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

If the admission of the top three categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all catchment area children, priorities will be decided first by reference to exceptional circumstances, then according to distance, with those living nearest to the school using the distance calculations outlined below *** taking priority

If the admission of the top four categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out of area siblings, priorities will be decided first by reference to exceptional circumstances, then according to distance, with those living nearest to the school using the distance calculations outlined below *** taking priority

In case where distance is not the final deciding factor i.e. two applications are at exactly the same distance then the final tie breaker will be a lottery undertaken by an individual independent of the Children and Families directorate.

* In order to determine the relevant catchment area, the home address of a child is defined as the only or main permanent residential address, at the closing date for applications, where the child usually resides and which is the usual address of the parent/carer with main responsibility for the child. If arrangements are such that a child resides at two addresses for equal amounts of time, then parents must decide which address to use for admissions purposes.

---

[5] 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.

[6] 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 Childrens Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

[7a] 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.

[7] Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

[8] See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

Where more than one parent submits an application for a child, or where there is a parent not in agreement with the preferences, the Local Authority may not be able to process any application until agreement over the preferences is reached. Failure to ensure agreement prior to submission, may result in a delay in any application being processed and in some instances, where agreement cannot be reached we may not be able to proceed until a legal resolution has been sought and the courts determine which parent can make the final decision on schooling

Copies of catchment area maps, if required are available from the LA, or can be viewed in schools. To find the catchment school for a postcode please visit https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/find-school

** A sibling connection refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or a child of the parents/carer's partner, and in every case the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address.

******Distance is measured by the shortest available walking route (using road and/or made up footpath) using the nearest network node from the property address point to the nearest network node at the main school entrance gate.

Please see Information for parents' booklet for the relevant age group for details of requesting admission out of the normal age group and for information on waiting lists

Local authority Nursery Class Admissions

The council maintains nursery classes for pupils aged 3 or 4 years in the following primary schools-
Schools with nursery classes:

Hereford, Broadlands Primary School	01432 266772
Hereford, Riverside Primary School	01432 274653
Kington Primary School	01544 230363
Ledbury Primary School	01531 632940
Leominster Primary School,	01568 616919
Ross-on-Wye, Ashfield Park Primary School	01989 562738
Weobley Primary School	01544 318273
Withington Primary School	01432 850289

All schools can administer their own nursery admissions, all provisions should make it clear to parents that a place in their nursery does not guarantee a place in the main school. Schools can have their own delivery model of early education, for both twos and three-four year olds, including universal and extended entitlements. The following applies:

- No session to be longer than 10 hours
- No minimum session length
- Not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- A maximum of two sites in a single day
- Meet the quality requirements as set out in regulations and in the statutory guidance
- No artificial breaks

You can apply for a place in a nursery class by contacting the headteacher of the school in which it is based. It is advisable to apply as soon as possible **after** your child's 2nd birthday. Some priority is given to children with special needs or according to family circumstances.

It should be noted that admission to a nursery class is quite separate from admission to the main school. Consequently:

i) there is no guarantee that a child in a nursery class will have a place in the reception class of the same school, especially since nursery classes serve an area that extends beyond the catchment area of the school. This applies even if the school purports to give such a guarantee.

ii) the school cannot insist that nursery children remain at the school beyond the age of five.

iii) parents must make a separate application to transfer from nursery to primary school.

Multiple Birth policy

If when places are offered under the Co-ordinated Schemes only one child from a multiple birth family can be admitted (one of a twin or triplet for instance) then subject to clause 2.15 of the School Admission Appeals Code places will be offered at the same school to the other children from the same multiple birth.

Implementation of Scheme

This scheme will apply to all parents/guardians wishing for their children to be admitted to any maintained primary school within Herefordshire during the academic year 2027/2028

Number of Preferences and Closing Date

All parents will be invited to state three first preferences, in ranked order, on an online application, which will also apply to all voluntary aided and foundation schools and Academies. The National Closing date for primary school applications will be the 15 January 2027

Voluntary Aided Schools – Additional Information

To enable individual admission authorities to determine their allocation of places supplementary information may be required. Details of the information that is required is stated in the school prospectus of the school concerned.

However, all parents **must** complete the on line common application by 15 January 2027

Date of Admission

Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term **following their 5th birthday.** In Herefordshire, however, most children start school at least a term earlier than the law requires. The council's **standard admissions policy** entitles parents to places for their children, in one of the council's maintained schools, according to the date of their child's 5th birthday, as follows:

In the Autumn term if 5 between 1 September and 31 December inclusive
In the Spring term if 5 between 1 January and 30 April inclusive
In the Summer term if 5 between 1 May and 31 August inclusive

The autumn term begins after the summer holidays, the spring term after the Christmas and New Year holidays, and the summer term after the Easter holidays.

Option for Delayed Entry

Parents/carers may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented, the parents/carers may seek early entry.

Children born in the summer term (i.e. 1 April – 31 August) are not required to start school until a full year after the point at which they could first have been admitted into a reception class (the point at which other children in their age range are beginning year 1). Parents/carers have the option of requesting delayed entry where they hold back their child from joining the correct year group for their age so that they start school a year later than they are due to.

Paragraph 2.17A of the Admissions Code requires that, in any circumstance where a parents/carers requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority must decide based on the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

In the case of a Community or Voluntary Controlled School, a Local Authority panel will make the final decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. In the case of a Community or Voluntary Controlled School the Local Authority will request the head teacher of the school to take account of the parents/carers views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical

history and the views of a medical professional; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely, all of this information will be used by the panel in order to reach a decision as to whether or not it is appropriate for the individual child to delay or accelerate their entry into school and be taught permanently behind or ahead of their chronological age group. The reasons for the decision must be clearly set out. This process must be completed in advance of the closing date. In the event that the delayed entry is not approved, parents will need to make an application in time for the 2027 intake (by the 15 January 2027). If delayed entry is approved you will receive details of how to proceed with an application.

Please be aware that even if delayed or early entry is agreed, the normal admission arrangements apply and there is no guarantee of a place. You should therefore give careful consideration to requesting delayed or early entry.

To request to delay entry to any school please see the guidance and delayed entry form on the Herefordshire council website Apply to delay or defer

Deferred Entry – for Summer Born Children

A child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age which is the term following their 5th birthday. Parents/carers are not obliged to take up places for their children any earlier than the law requires. Schools cannot require children to start sooner than parents/carers wish.

Parents/carers therefore have the option of deferring their child's entry until later in the same academic school year.

Deferred entry to a school is where a parent decides to request that their child starts school later in the school year that follows their 4th birthday or when the child reaches compulsory school age (the term after the child's 5th birthday).

The effect is that the place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child.

Parents/carers would not however be able to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday.

If you wish to defer taking up a place for your child, you are strongly advised to discuss the matter first with the school or with the Pupil Admissions Office, and you must apply by the closing date for applications (15 January 2027).

Allocation of Places

Places in reception classes for all maintained schools are allocated on the basis of applications received on or before 15 January 2027. Applications should be submitted to the Pupil Admissions Office. The date of 15 January 2027 applies for all admissions during the school year, including children who might be entitled to start school in January 2028 or April 2028

The Primary National Offer Day for the admission year will be: **Thursday 16 April 2027**

Late Applications

Applications received after 15 January 2027 will be allocated to the preferred school on the understanding that admissions do not exceed the published admission number or conflict with the requirement not to exceed 30 pupils in a key stage one class. When considering the late application the council or the relevant Voluntary Aided, Foundation School or Academy will have regard to the reason for the delay in applying together with the distance to the nearest alternative school.

Secondary Transfer – September 2027

Co-ordinated admission arrangements for Herefordshire

Introduction

Herefordshire will operate an inter-Local authority scheme for September 2027 with Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. However, in respect of Monmouthshire and Powys the council will continue to exchange preference information with the allocation being determined by the school's home authority.

The following sections describe the proposed co-ordinated scheme for Herefordshire.

Application Form and Closing Date

Parents are invited to indicate 3 preferences on a common application form, which will also enable parents to give reasons for their preference. All preferences are treated as equal initially, and sent out as equal to other admission authorities. However, if more than one school place can potentially be offered to an individual applicant, the single offer is for the school the parent ranked highest.

The Herefordshire application form invites all parents resident in the County to name 3 preferred schools, in order of preference, by 31 October 2026 the National Closing date for secondary school applications. It is made clear that parents should name all schools for which they wish their child to be considered for a place, including any voluntary aided and foundation schools and Academies and/or any maintained schools outside the County. There is agreement with Powys and Monmouthshire that the closing date of 31 October 2026 will be respected even if this date is different to their closing date. This will be important if a parent expresses a preference for a school outside Herefordshire.

Initial Allocation Process

By w/c 17 November 2026 the Admission Office sends other admission authorities/Local Authorities details of applicants for their schools.

Admission authorities then apply their admission criteria, including any selection tests, and will send the Herefordshire Admission Office by 6 January 2027 a list indicating the order in which all children for whom applications to the school have been made have priority by reference to the over-subscription criteria.

Although all applications need to be assessed and grouped against the criteria, admission authorities of significantly oversubscribed schools need not give individual rankings to applicants in the lowest priority groups for admission, if there is no likelihood of being able to offer them a place after elimination of multiple offers. The Herefordshire Admission Office will draw up a similar list for any school for which it is the admission authority. After other admission authorities have sent their ranked lists to the Local authority in whose area they are located, each local authority should have a list for each of its maintained schools.

Finalising the Allocation Arrangements

Herefordshire will then compare the lists for all schools in its area. When a child qualifies for one of the available number of places at more than one school, the Herefordshire Admission Office provisionally allocates a place at the school indicated by the terms of its co-ordinated scheme. It also adjusts the list for any other school for which a preference was expressed by that parent, moving another child who was previously not allocated a potential place up the list to the provisional place, which has been vacated.

By 13 January 2027, the Herefordshire Admission Office (whose own decisions on which school to offer, in the event of multiple potential offers, will have been made in accordance with its model scheme, i.e. the school ranked highest by the parent) will also have received similar notifications from other local authorities of any places which those local authorities or schools in their areas can offer in response to any preference expressed by one of their residents. Monmouthshire and Powys will not have a co-ordinated scheme in place by September 2027. But they will supply information to Herefordshire on applicants applying for schools in the county.

Herefordshire has agreed that **the appropriate authority will make** where the highest ranked school is situated in Monmouthshire or Powys the offer of the place, which is likely to be before the official date of **Monday 1 March 2027**. When this situation arises the Herefordshire Admission Office will only confirm that an offer has been made by another local authority. That confirmation will be sent on **1 March 2027.**

Clearly, if no preferred school in the home local authority can be offered, the Herefordshire Admission Office need not look for an alternative place if it knows that another Local authority will be making an offer.

Late Applications

Between 1 November 2026 and 13 January 2027 (final allocation list) it is likely that the Herefordshire Admission Office will receive late applications. The council has agreed within its co-ordinated scheme to accept these applications, on the understanding that the delay was reasonable, for example service family moving to the Credenhill Garrison or a family moving into the area. Because the individual circumstances will vary from application to application the determination of the Director of Children and Families or her nominee will decide what is reasonable. In the case of another admission authority the determination will be made by the Governing Body.

Applications received after 13 January 2027 will be placed on a waiting list based on the oversubscription policy. Allocations will be made against the preference order as vacancies occur although the Herefordshire Admission Office will endeavour to offer a suitable school at a reasonable distance to the child's home where vacancies exist. However, parents will be able to appeal against the decision that an offer to their preferred school has not been made.

Offer of a Place

If any child looks like remaining unplaced, the Herefordshire Admission Office will consider how to place them in schools within its area, having regard to any reasons expressed by the parent for their (unsuccessful) preferences.

Each local authority then sends the schools, which it maintains, the final lists of pupils to be allocated places.

On **Monday 1 March 2027 – the 'National Offer day'** for secondary schools – it writes to every resident parent who filled in its secondary application form, to tell them of their allocated school place. Where the school in question is its own admission authority, the local authority must state that the offer is being communicated on behalf of that school govern