

Fair Field Junior School Consultation of Admissions Arrangements 2023/4

Fair Field Junior School has a published admission number of 60 pupils. Fair Field Junior School is part of The Poppy Academy Trust.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school.

If there are fewer applications than places available at a school, all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined 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 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 order¹ or a special guardianship order².

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. Fair Field governors 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: Children on roll at St John's Nursery and Infant School, the linked feeder school.

Rule 4: Sibling Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school or St John's Infant and Nursery School at the time of application in years Reception through to Year 5.

Rule 5: Children of Staff who has been employed at Fair Field Junior School or St John's Infant and Nursery School for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made.

Rule 6: Children for who it is the nearest school or academy. This includes all schools except those which allocate places on the basis of faith (membership or practice) before allocating on the basis of distance.

Rule 7: Distance Children who live nearest to the school. Children not considered under rule 5 will be considered under rule 6. These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, for rules 2-5 the next rule will be applied to further prioritise children.

Tie Break

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 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 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.

Continuing Interest

After places have been offered, the school will maintain a continuing interest (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 end of the summer term. To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form.

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".

Fair Access

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

In Year Admissions

Hertfordshire County Council co-ordinate In Year Admissions for on behalf of the Poppy Academy Trust. 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 log in and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals. Information about how to apply and the online application form can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear. The oversubscription criteria outlined above is used to prioritise all In Year applications. If your In Year application is unsuccessful, the County Council will write to you with the outcome and include details of how to log on and register an appeal.

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 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 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:

- 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. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 2.

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.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Rule 1 if the child's previously looked status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".

The child's previously looked 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.

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.

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:

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

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 named school at the time the 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 See Rule 1 definition regarding looked after and previously looked after children. 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.

¹Children 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.

Multiple births

The Poppy Academy Trust, as the admission authority will admit over the school’s published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place at a school.

Definition of Children of Staff

A member of Staff is defined by:

- if the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and
- the member of staff is employed to work at Fair Field and has done for 2 years, and
- Any person employed by Fair Field on a permanent contract (including teaching and non-teaching staff, full and part time staff), and
- Children is defined as daughter, son, step daughter or son, adopted daughter or son, 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.

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

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, 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.

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

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 and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

It is for a child's home Local Authority to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same Local Authority, it will be for that Local Authority to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different Local Authorities, the above process will be used

If two different applications are received 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 transfer application rounds, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before the "late deadline". If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as "late". The late deadlines for the 2023/24 transfer application process are 2nd December 2022 for secondary and upper applications and 1st February for reception, junior and middle applications. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the admissions web pages at the start of the 2023/24 application process in September 2022.

* 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 and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

Fraudulent applications

Hertfordshire County Council on behalf of the school 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. 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;
 - Official/public records show an alternative address at the time of the 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.

Address Visits

Where suspicions lie as to the validity of an address, the Admissions & Transport Team may make unannounced visits to the applicant's claimed address or any other address suspected to be the normal permanent residence of the child's primary carer or the address where the child resides for the majority of the week. The aim of these visits is to verify that the address information provided on the application form is accurate. All visits will be made by two members of the Admissions & Transport Team.

If an address appears to be unoccupied at the time of a visit, a letter will be left confirming that an attempted visit took place. This letter will ask the occupant to contact the Admissions & Transport Team within 24 hours to confirm receipt of the letter and details of the occupant. It is reasonable to expect that an applicant living at the address stated on the application form can respond within 24 hours. If contact takes longer than 24 hours, the applicant will be asked to explain why and provide evidence why they did not respond within the specified time.

If, following the initial investigation or any further investigation, the Admissions & Transport Team concludes that, on the balance of probability, a fraudulent address has been used on an application, correspondence will be sent to the applicant confirming this decision. This will outline the factors taken into account in making the decision as well as the action which will be taken with the application. It will also set out which address will be considered to be the child's permanent home address for the purpose of their application for admission to school.

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 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 primary admissions

The definition of "nearest school" includes all schools and academies (regardless of status) unless that school or academy prioritises applications and allocates places on the basis of faith.

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.

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, The Poppy Academy Trust 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 Hertfordshire County Council 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 Poppy Academy Trust 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 (1 February 2023) for the Under 11s process) 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 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 and normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. Freedom of movement into the UK for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens ended at the end of 2020. EEA (Irish citizens aside) and Swiss national children entering the UK after the end of 2020 are now treated the same as other foreign nationals. This means they will no longer have the right to enter the country to access a state-funded school unless they fall within certain immigration categories. Find out more about visas and immigration and the EU Settlement Scheme for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens*

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

The school’s policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2020 would normally commence Year 3 in the academic year beginning in September 2023.

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”. However, children who were admitted a year late in Reception will be admitted in the year group they are currently being educated in.

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 The Poppy Academy Trust'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".

The Poppy Academy Trust will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The panel make 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 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 Executive Headteacher and senior leadership of individual schools.