



Stapleford Primary School

Determined Admissions Policy for Year of Entry 2026-27

INTRODUCTION

Stapleford School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School within the Diocese of St Albans. The Governing Body of the school is the admission authority. The Governors will admit up to the published admission number of 12 children into the nursery (N2) and reception years. The Governing Body is required to abide by the maximum limits for infant classes (5, 6 and 7 year olds), i.e. 30 pupils per class.

The Local Authority no longer coordinates the admissions for nursery in Hertfordshire schools. All applications must be made on the school's own application form. Applications may be made by downloading the form from the school website and emailing it to the school or by completing a paper copy available from the school office. The Nursery now offers both 15 and 30-hour provision. The Nursery Admissions Policy is available on the school website.

The Local Authority or LA (Hertfordshire County Council) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme, for those applying for places in the Reception cohort, in line with government legislation. The LA will coordinate the admissions process on behalf of the school according to the scheme published each year. The Governing Body, as the admission authority, will allocate the available places in line with this policy. However, applications must be made to the child's home LA.

Information on completing the 'on-line' application and notification dates of admission decisions are published in the LA admissions literature which is also available from their website. Information for Hertfordshire residents is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

All applications must be made on the child's home LA's common application form. Parents/carers who wish their application to be considered under criterion 3 (church attendance) are requested to complete our Supplementary Information Form (SIF) and return it to the school office. If a SIF is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the LA form only, which may result in your application being given a lower priority.

The closing date for applications is the 15th January 2026 and the allocation day for school places is the 16th April 2026.

This policy provides for the full-time admission of all successful applicants who have reached their 3rd birthday (Nursery - N2) and 4th birthday (Reception) by the beginning of September, 2025. However, please note the following:

- a. Parents of children currently in our nursery (N2) must reapply for a place in reception.
- b. Attendance at our nursery (N2) does not guarantee a place in reception.
- c. Where parents so wish, a child may attend on a part-time basis until the child reaches compulsory school age.

Summer Born Children

Parents offered a place may defer the date of their child's admission until later in the year, or until the child reaches compulsory school age. All children must join the school by the start of the summer term of the Reception year or a new application will need to be made for a Year 1 place. If your child was born between 1st April and 31st August 2022, and you do not believe they will be ready to start Reception in the 2026/27 academic year, you may instead make an application for your child to start reception in September 2027. Please see "**Children out of year group**" below.

Please note that the information in this policy is correct for the year shown. Policies for future years may well be different.

HOW PLACES ARE OFFERED

Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan which names the school will be admitted to the school. In the event of there being more applications than available places, the following oversubscription criteria will then be applied, in order:

1. Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear (to the governing body) to have been in state care outside of England, and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are those who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.
2. Children who have a sibling in the school at the time of entry.
3. Children of families who live in our three ecclesiastical parishes of Stapleford, Bramfield and Waterford and whose family (parents and children) has attended any Christian church at least once a month for the year immediately prior to the closing date for applications.
4. Children of parents living within the ecclesiastical parishes of Stapleford, Bramfield and Waterford.
5. Any other children.

Tie Break

Where the application of the above criteria results in a situation where there are more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, priority will be given to those children whose home address is nearest to the school.

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. 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 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.

The governors cooperate with the fair access policies of the LA. Children admitted under the Fair Access Protocol will be prioritised above those on the CI list and can be admitted over the Published Admissions Number PAN. Parents of children entitled to be considered under the fair access protocol may also make an in year application for a place at the school (see below).

Every effort will be made to accommodate twins and other 'multiple birth' applications in all year groups. Where the last available place has been offered to a twin or multiple birth child the second twin or other sibling(s) will be offered places as exceptions to the Class Size rule.

Children out of year group

Children are normally 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, make a separate application to the Governing Body (by letter addressed to the Governing Body, c/o the school office) for their child to be admitted out of year group. Applications should include any evidence the parents wish the Governing Body to consider in support of their application. 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’s governing body, as the relevant admission authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The governors’ decision will be made in the best interests of the child and will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents; the view of the headteacher; the child’s social, academic and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether the child has been previously educated out of year group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis, although reasons will be given for the Governing Body’s decision. If the request is not accepted but a place is offered in the normal year group, this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal.

DEFINITIONS

Criterion 1 Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 2, Section 7 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

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 criterion 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 criterion 1.

Children who were not “looked after” immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under criterion 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 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 outside England and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under criterion 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 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.

Category 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 after and in every case living permanently¹ 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.

¹A 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.

If an applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must also reside at the same address for the majority of the school week. The sibling’s address will be verified by the school

Categories 3

Home Address, parish and Christian church

The website www.achurchnearyou.com can be used to check parish of residence.

A Christian church is defined as one which is a member of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance.

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. 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 to (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 the Hertfordshire County Council's Shared Anti-Fraud Service. If, following an initial investigation and/or any investigation by with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service, the county council concludes that, a fraudulent address has been used, correspondence confirming this decision will be sent to the applicant. We will explain the decision-making process and the action that will be taken with the application. We will also confirm which address will be used as the child's permanent home address for admission allocation purposes.

Applications made as part of the main Reception admissions round and in-year admission applications are processed by Hertfordshire County Council ("HCC") on behalf of the Governing Body, in accordance with HCC's published coordinated admission schemes.

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 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 main Reception application round, 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 2nd February 2026 (the "late deadline"). If the amended joint application is received after the late deadline, it will be treated as "late". If this date changes, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2026/27 application process in September 2025.

UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Appeals

In Year 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.

Reception Transfer Appeals:

Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log on to their on-line application and click the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 03001234043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system".

Continuing interest (waiting) list

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list for the Governors of the school. 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 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.

In-Year applications

Hertfordshire County Council co-ordinate In Year Admissions on behalf of the Governors of the school. Information about how to apply and the online application form can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/inyear or parents can contact the Customer Service Centre on 03001234043 for a paper application form. The oversubscription criteria outlined above is used to prioritise all In Year applications. Parents who wish their application to be considered under Criterion 3 also need to fill in the SIF and return it directly to the school.

Policy Written: October 2024

Next review: October 2025 (for 2027-28 policy)

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