Victoria
Church of England
Infant & Nursery School

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GOVERNORS' ADMISSIONS POLICY 2025/2026

Victoria is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery school. It is a member of Castle Church of England Federation. The Federation Governing Body is the admissions authority; they will admit up to 60 pupils into the Reception Year in September 2025. This number has been agreed between the Governing Body and the Local Authority and applies to the year 2025/2026. Admission numbers and policies for future years may be different.

"Our vision is to flourish in learning and love within a happy, Christian family." We ask all parents applying for a place to respect this vision and its importance to the school community. This does not affect the right of parents who are not of the faith of this school to apply for and be considered for a place.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school. If a child's EHCP names Victoria Church of England Infant and Nursery School, that child will be admitted to the school.

If there are fewer applications than places available at the school, all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available at the school, the criteria outlined below will be used to prioritise applications.

Oversubscription criteria (refer to the Explanatory notes and definitions beginning on page 3)

Priority 1	Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear to the Governing Body (as 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 order or a special guardianship order.
Priority 2	Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school. *A panel of governors will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to Victoria CE Infant and Nursery School and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.*
Priority 3	Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application.
Priority 4	Children who have a sibling on the roll of The Thomas Coram Church of England School at the time of application.
Priority 5	Children who are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium or Pupil Premium Grant funding and live within the ecclesiastical Parishes of Great Berkhamsted or Sunnyside with Bourne End.
Priority 6	Children whose parent(s)/carer(s) have a regular worship commitment at any of the Anglican churches of Great Berkhamsted or Sunnyside with Bourne End, verified on the attached Form 2 by the parish priest concerned.
Priority 7	Children of parent(s)/carer(s) who have a regular worshipping commitment at other Anglican churches, other Christian denominations or other Faiths,

	verified on the attached Form 2 by the priest, minister or religious leader concerned, and live within the ecclesiastical Parishes of Great Berkhamsted or Sunnyside with Bourne End.
Priority 8	Children who live nearest to the school.

These Priorities are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular Priority than there are places available, a tie break will be used by applying the next rule to those 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 Hertfordshire County Council 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

For admission into Reception (other than In Year admissions), after places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a Continuing Interest list (waiting list). These and late applications will be positioned according to the priority order listed above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join and leave it. Hertfordshire 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 specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the Continuing Interest (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form.

Fair Access

The Governing Body will admit children in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Fair Access Protocol before those on the Continuing Interest list, and over the Published Admission Number (PAN) if required.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. If you name this school as one of your preferences, you should complete the school's Supplementary Information Form in addition to your home Local Authority's application form. For Hertfordshire this can be completed on line at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. Our Supplementary Information Form should be forwarded to Victoria CE Infant and Nursery School to arrive not later than Monday 15 January 2025. Without the Supplementary Information Form some of the admission priorities may be unavailable. This means that your application may be of a lower priority rank than if the school had received your Supplementary Information Form.

2. Should the forms not arrive on time, your application will be considered as late and will be dealt with after the applications of those that were received on time. This means that your application will be of a lower priority rank than if the school had received your application on time.

3. The Governing Body will consider all applications, and a place for the next academic year will be offered to the parents/carers of successful applicants in writing from Hertfordshire County Council on Tuesday 16 April 2025. The date by which parents/carers may confirm whether they have rejected offers (deadline for receipt of acceptances) is Wednesday 1 May 2025.

4. In-Year Admissions
   In-Year applications are considered by the Governing Body for admission into all other age groups and at other times of the school year. Our In-Year Admissions form is available on line from both the school's website www.victoria.herts.sch.uk/our-school/admissions and from www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. Applicants should complete this In Year Admissions Form and return it to the school. Admission will depend on vacancies at the proposed time of entry to the relevant year group and the admission number for that year group. The school will inform you of the outcome of your In Year application. If you have been unsuccessful, Hertfordshire County Council will contact you with registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals. The offer of a place must be accepted in writing within ten school days.

5. Appeals
   Parents who are not offered a place for their child have the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel. 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 and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link "log into the appeals system". A booklet entitled 'Guidance for parents', which explains how the appeals process works, can be found online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/csfcustomerfocus.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

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

Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, including those who appear to the Governing Body (as 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 order[1] or a special guardianship order[2].

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 Priority 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 Priority 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 Priority 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 Priority 1. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under Priority 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 Priority 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed. Where governors are not satisfied with the evidence provided, or are unsure about its validity, they will seek advice from 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.

Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school

Priority 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 Priority 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 Priority 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 Priority 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 Priority.

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[1] and in every case living permanently[2] 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.

[1] See 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.

If an applicant has 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.

Multiple births

The Governing Body, 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 the school.

Parish boundaries
A map of the parish boundaries is available on request from the school. Alternatively the website www.achurchnearyou.com may be helpful.

Early years Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Grant

Children are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium funding if:
- parents receive Universal Credit
- parents receive Income Support
- parents receive Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- parents receive Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- parents receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- parents receive the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- parents receive Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- parents receive Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credits

or if they have:
- been looked after by the local authority for at least one day
- been adopted from care in in England or Wales
- left care under a special guardianship order or residence order in England or Wales

Pupils are eligible to receive Pupil Premium Grant funding if they:
- have been recorded as being eligible for free school meals (FSM) in any of the 6 years prior to the proposed time of entry
- have been a looked-after child (LAC) defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English local authority
- have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order
- have recorded as Service Child in any of the 5 years prior to the proposed time of entry or in receipt of a child pension from the Ministry of Defence

"Regular" worship commitment
A "regular" worship commitment means at least once a month for a period of six months at the time of application. Families new to the area should have attended at least once a month since their arrival in the area and they should also submit a letter from the minister of their previous church or place of worship indicating their pattern of worship there. Attendance of a child at Sunday school/club or a church toddler group does not fulfil the regular worship commitment requirement.

In the event that during the period specified for attendance at worship the church or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship has been closed for public worship and has not provided alternative premises for that worship, the requirements of these [admissions] arrangements in relation to attendance will only apply to the period when the church or, in relation to those of other faiths, relevant place of worship or alternative premises have been available for public worship.

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

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 Hertfordshire County Council's Shared Anti-Fraud Service.

Applications made as part of the main Reception admissions round are processed by Hertfordshire County Council ("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 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 3 February 2025 (the late deadline). If the amended joint application is received after 3 February, it will be treated as "late".

Fraudulent applications

The Governing Body will work with Hertfordshire County Council to 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. Action will be taken 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, Hertfordshire Council Council's 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 Hertfordshire Council Council's 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 Hertfordshire Council Council's 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, Hertfordshire Council Council's 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.

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 Governing Body 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 Governing Body 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 (Friday 1 March 2025) cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by the Governing Body, as the admissions authority, 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

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021* would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2025. 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 individual school(s) to discuss their child's requirements.

*Summer born children (1 April – 31 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 2021 and 31 August 2021 are categorised as "summer born" and if parents/carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in 2025 they should contact the home Local Authority, and any own admission authority schools, for guidance before making an application.

Summer born applications that are delayed for a year (for entry in September 2025) 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 2025 (before the Easter break).

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

The Governing Body'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 Hertfordshire County Council's policy and 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 Governing Body, as the admissions authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The governors' decision will be 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 and senior leadership of the school.

Nursery Provision

Victoria CE School has Nursery provision.

The admission arrangements detailed in this document do not apply for those being admitted into the Nursery. A separate Admissions Policy for the Nursery is available on our website. The Governing Body is the admission authority.

Parents of children who are admitted to Nursery provision at the school must apply in the normal way for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the Reception class. Attendance at the Nursery does not guarantee admission to the school.