

CASSIOBURY INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Admissions Policy

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Introduction

As Cassiobury Infant and Nursery School is a Community School, the local authority, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), is the admission authority and is responsible for setting the admission arrangements and allocating places in accordance with the published admission rules.

Children are currently admitted to the school at the beginning of the September term prior to their fifth birthday. Since 2010/11, our standard admission number is 90 children. HCC allocates infant places using their admissions criteria.

There is a separate Nursery Admissions policy.

The School runs open sessions during the application periods so that prospective parents can look around the school and the Nursery.

Arrangements will be made for new children entering the School or Nursery to visit with their parents/guardians.

Aims

- We seek to be an inclusive school, welcoming children from all backgrounds and abilities.
- The only restriction placed on entry is that of number. If the number of children applying for entry exceeds the places available. It is our wish for parents to find a place for their child at the school of their choice. However, this is not always possible, due to excess demand on the places available.
- A child's level of ability is irrelevant to this school's admissions policy.

How parents can apply for their child to be admitted to our Infant School

Our school is a community school and the Admissions Authority for our school is HCC, which publishes its entry regulations every year. Parents can receive a copy of these regulations directly from the LEA or access them on their website.

For 2021/22 and 2022/23 the criteria are:

- **Rule 1** – 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 order. (see below for further information)
- **Rule 2** - Medical or social needs: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to that specific school. (see below for further information)

- **Rule 3 (does not apply to Infant School applications)** - Linked school: In the case of junior schools, children who attend the linked infant school at the time of their application.
- **Rule 4** - Sibling: Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school or linked school at the time of application. This applies to reception through to year 5 in infant, junior and primary schools.
- **Rule 5** - Children for whom it is their nearest community or voluntary-controlled school. For Infant class entry if more children qualify under Rule 5 than there are places available, priority will be given first to twins/multiple births and then to those who live nearest to the school. For all other years (not subject to KS1 legislation) it will be those nearest to the school.
- **Rule 6** - Children who live nearest to the school. If your child does not qualify under rule 5, they will qualify under rule 6.

Rule 1 Further Information

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 Further Information

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.

For rules 5 and 6 the distance from home to school is measured in a straight line.

If a child does not qualify under rule 5, they will qualify under rule 6.

HCC's annual admissions information states how parents apply for a place at the school of their choice. Parents have a right to express their preference but this does not guarantee a place at that particular school. An application should be made online or by completing a paper form that can be obtained from the local Education Department, and should be returned by the date stated. HCC notifies parents of the decision as soon as all the applications have been considered.

Children enter our school in the September of the academic year in which they become 5. However, for children whose 5th birthday is in the Spring or Summer terms, parents can defer their child's place until the start of the Spring term in consultation with the Headteacher.

Children of UK Service Personnel and Crown Servants

Applications for children for whom this applies must use:

- a) the address at which the child will live when applying their oversubscription criteria, as long as the parent/carer provides some evidence of their intended address
- b) a Unit or quartering address as the child's home address when considering the application where a parent/carer requests this

Continuing Interest (CI) List

Children who are not allocated a place at our school but wish to be considered should a place become available will be placed on a Continuing Interest (CI) list. This is managed by HCC and each application for the CI list is subject to the admissions criteria. HCC will contact parents on the list should a place become available. The school will issue application forms when informed by HCC that a place has been accepted for a child on the CI list.

Parents can also apply for an In-Year transfer to our school. These applications are also managed by the Admissions Team at HCC and parents are advised to contact the team.

Details of those children on the CI list can be viewed via the SEAM database.

Admission appeals

If a child is not offered a place at our school, this will be because to do so would prejudice the education of other children by allowing the number of children in the school to increase too much. If parents wish to appeal against a decision to refuse entry, they can do so by applying to the HCC. An independent panel considers all such appeals, and its decision is binding for all parties concerned. If the appeals panel decides that we should admit a child to whom we had refused a place, then we will accept this decision and continue to do all we can to provide the best education for all the children at our school.

Published Admission Number (PAN)

The 'published admission number is the number of children HCC considers the school can accommodate in Reception. At present, the PAN for our school is 90 and we have 90 in each year Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. For Nursery Admission refer to the Nursery Admissions policy.

Sizes of classes for infants

We teach infant children (aged five to seven) in classes that have a maximum number of 30 children. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. As stated in the School Admissions Code dated 1st Feb 2012 the excepted children are:

- a) Children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school;
- b) Looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- c) Children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process;
- d) Children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal;
- e) Children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance;
- f) Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round;
- g) Children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil;
- h) Children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the governing body and reviewed every two years, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances, either in our school or in the local area. The policy will always take due note of guidance provided by the local Admissions Forum.