



Admission Policy No.1

2026-2027

For pupils applying for places to start in September 2026

Review of the Policy

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

Date reviewed:

March 2025

Next review due:

March 2026

"Inspiring us all to create a better world."
Matthew 5 13-15 "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world."

Introduction:

The purpose of this policy is to set out in clear terms, Holmer C. of E. Academy's procedures regarding admission of pupils, ensuring a smooth and trouble free transition from pre-school to the Academy.

Planned Admission number:

The capacity for the Academy is 420 pupils. Our Planned Admission Number for the Reception Year is 60.

Age of Admission:

Parents are not obliged to take up places for their children any earlier than the law requires (i.e. currently from the term following their fifth birthday.)

However, in Herefordshire most children start school at least a term earlier than the law requires. Children who become five in the Autumn term (between 1st September and 31st December) will attend school full time. Children who become 5 in the spring term (1st January – 30th April) or summer term (1st May – 31st August) will be invited to attend school full time. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school full time, from the beginning of the Autumn term. Once the Academy place has been allocated they have the right to choose the start time they feel appropriate for their child. Schools cannot require children to start sooner than parents wish.

How to Apply:

Parents are encouraged to visit the Academy before making their final decision. All parents of school age children. All applications should be made online by visiting the primary admissions page on the Herefordshire Council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reception-class-admissions. The parents are told by the LA which school their child / children will be admitted to.

Allocation of Places:

Priority 1: Looked after children¹ and previously looked after children² in England who have since been adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order³ or special guardianship order.⁴

Priority 2: Looked after children and previously looked after children who were previously in state care outside of England who have since been adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

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

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

Priority 5 - Pupils whose principal address is outside the catchment area and whose family is **at least monthly (over the last twelve months), involved in** the worship, life and work of a Christian faith church. This application must be supported by a letter of confirmation from the appropriate church minister.(see footnote 5)

Priority 6 – Pupils whose parent/s are employed by the Academy and have been for at least two years. (see Footnote 6)

Priority 7 - Pupils who attend the Holmer Pre-School based at the Academy (see footnote 6)

Priority 8 - 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. Applications on such grounds will not be considered by the Director of Children's Wellbeing's advisory panel unless this supporting information is attached to application forms received by 31st October 2020 (secondary schools) or 15th January 2021 (primary schools); ****

Priority 9 - Distance*** - Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route.

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 Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

³ 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).

Holmer C Of E Academy is its own admission authority. Parents are invited to consult the LA's "Information for Parents" booklet which outlines the legal rights of parents and other general information regarding administration and transfers to school. In its coordinating role the LA will offer places based on the rankings above.

Procedures Regarding Admission:

The process of admission is assisted by Holmer's close relationship with local pre-school settings. Holmer staff endeavour to visit the pre-school settings of children who are due to take up places at Holmer. This allows staff to get to know children before admission. Pre-school records are transferred to Holmer C of E Academy. The children are invited to attend Holmer for a series of induction afternoons, in the summer term, prior to them starting. Additionally parents and children are invited to an early years assembly. A meeting is arranged in the summer term for parents to meet with staff and to discuss the ways the Academy and parents can work together to ensure that children's start at Holmer is happy and trouble free.

Review of Procedures:

All procedures for admission are reviewed annually by the Academy in consultation with staff and the full governing body.

General Notes:

Footnote 1: *This is the 1st priority because the Academy wishes to protect children who were or are in public care from further disadvantage that can arise from possible changes of school when the care placement changes.*

Footnote 2: *This is the 2nd priority because the Academy wishes to protect children who were or are in public care outside of England from further disadvantage that can arise from possible changes of school when the care placement changes.*

Footnote 2: *This is the 3rd priority because the Academy gives high importance to try to ensure that children are able to attend the school within their local community.*

Footnote 3: *This is the 4th priority to recognise the importance to daily family life, including travel arrangements, of having brothers/sisters at the same school where possible. The rule is **not** intended to favour parents with a previous but no longer current family connection with the school.*

Footnote 5: *'Church' is taken as meaning an organised body subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity, which is either a member of the local Christian Council / Council of Churches or affiliated to 'Christians Together in England'.*

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 alternative premises have been available for public worship".

Footnote 6: *This is the 6th priority to recognise the importance of daily family life for*

employees of the Academy, including travel arrangements.

Footnote 7: *This is the 7th priority to recognise the close links between the pre school and the Academy, and the high importance the Academy places on children being able to attend the school on the same premises as the pre school.*

Footnote 8: *This is the 8th priority to be sensitive to exceptional needs that individual children and families may have.*

Footnote 9: *The 9th priority is a measurable, objective way of allocating the remaining places.*

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 catchment area children second, siblings third, church places fourth, academy employees fifth, pre school sixth ****exceptional circumstances seventh, 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 2022, next to siblings seeking a church place, next to siblings with parents working at the Academy, next to siblings with siblings at the pre school, 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's Wellbeing 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 a road and/or made up footpath using the nearest node on the transport network to the property point. The effect of this is to take you to the front door and not take into consideration other entrances (such as rear garden gates/ short cuts). This is particularly pertinent in a rural area like Herefordshire where rural properties can have multiple access points.

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

[Primary school admissions – Herefordshire Council](#)