

# Admissions Policy

## Heathcote School and Science College



<b>Approved by the Governing Board:</b>	<b>Autumn 2025</b>
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<b>To be reviewed:</b>	<b>Annually</b>
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<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>Autumn 2026</b>
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## Aims

This policy aims to:

- Explain how to apply for a place at the school
- Set out the school's arrangements for allocating places to the pupils who apply
- Explain how to appeal against a decision not to offer your child a place

This policy is based on the following advice from the Department for Education (DfE):

- [School Admissions Code 2021](#)
- [School Admission Appeals Code](#)
- London Borough of Waltham Forest 2025-26 Determined Admission Arrangements and oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled Infant, Primary and Secondary Schools

## Induction Procedure

Admissions to Heathcote School are managed by the local authority. Year 6 pupils wishing to join Heathcote School should follow the transition guidance from the London Borough of Waltham Forest on selection of their school placements and return the necessary forms to the admissions authority by the published date.

If a child wishes to transfer to Heathcote School mid-term, Waltham Forest Admissions Service are to be contacted using the appropriate information here.

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/apply-school-place>

Heathcote School is unable to accept any applications for a school place directly.

If our school is oversubscribed the following criteria is used by the admissions authority to decide upon the intake for the school:

If our school is oversubscribed, after the admission of any pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named in the Statement or Plan, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in the following order:

- Priority 1 – Looked-After or previously Looked-After Children
- Priority 2 – Medical or social reasons or Children 'at risk'
- Priority 3 – Siblings
- Priority 4 – School staff children
- Priority 5 - Distance

Our current PAN for Year 7 2025/2026 is 180.

## **Waltham Forest Definitions**

### **Looked after children and previously looked after children**

For admission purposes, a 'looked after' child is a child currently in care. In order to be given highest priority for admission, a child has to fall within the definition of 'looked after' in section 22 of the Children Act 1989. For looked after children, the application must be completed by their social worker with the name of the local authority, together with a covering letter.

Previously looked after children are children who were in the care of a local authority in England or appear to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in care as a result of being adopted or made subject to a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order immediately after being looked-after by a local authority in England or elsewhere. For previously looked after children, a copy of the order under which they left care must be provided. If the child you are applying for is adopted from care, you must provide a copy of the Adoption Order.

### **Definitions**

A looked-after or previously looked after child is a child who is or was in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989:

- a) in the care of a Local Authority; or
- b) being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority

Special Guardianship Order – is an order under the terms of the Section 14A Children Act 1989 which is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian(s)'

Child Arrangement Order – is an order under the terms of the Section 8 Children Act 1989 (as amended by Section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014) setting out the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live

Adoption Order – is an order 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), as well as children who were in state care outside of England immediately prior to being adopted.”

### **Medical or social reasons**

Medical or social reasons can only be taken into account where information is provided by the closing date (31 October 2025 for secondary applications and 15 January 2026 for reception/primary applications). Failure to provide such information at that stage may affect whether the child is allocated a place at the preferred school under this criterion.

Applications will only be considered under this category if they are supported by a written statement from a doctor, social worker, psychologist, or other relevant independent professional.

The information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need and demonstrate how the specified school is the only school that can meet the defined needs of the child. In all cases the medical or social need must be permanent or long term. For medical conditions affecting mobility, consideration will only be given for the school nearest to the child's home.

Examples of possible exceptional medical or social reasons:

- Any acute or chronic condition that would make it difficult for a child to attend any school other than the closest school to the child's address
- Any acute or chronic medical condition that requires regular, long-term attendance at a particular medical establishment which is closest to the school named

The decision for community and voluntary controlled schools will be made by a panel of officers based upon the evidence produced. The Panel reserves the right to seek additional professional advice where necessary.

### **Children 'at risk'**

A child is 'at risk' if they are currently on or subject to a Child Protection Plan.

- A child and their family who are considered 'at risk' due to circumstances beyond the family's control such as fleeing domestic violence (housed in a refuge in Waltham Forest) consideration may then be given for the named child to be given a school away from the area of their previous home address for safeguarding purposes.
- An existing restraining order that may put a family 'at risk' if the school were to be outside the remit of distance agreed by the courts.

### **Siblings**

Sibling means:

- A full brother or sister
- A half brother or sister
- An adopted brother or sister
- A step brother or sister
- A foster brother or sister
- The child of a parent or carer's partner living at the same address

In all cases the sibling must be living at the same address and must still attend the school at the time of admission of the child for whom the application is being made. This means that where siblings are living at separate addresses, they will not be considered as siblings when processing the application. If you do not provide the name and date of birth of your child's sibling, we will not be able to take it into account and it will affect your child's chances of being offered a place at that school.'

### **School staff children**

All children of school staff, irrespective of the role that the staff member is performing and whether working part-time or full-time will be given priority:

- a) where 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/or;
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

## **Distance**

Distance is measured using a straight line from the centre of the child's permanent address (as defined by the Local Land and Property Gazetteer) to the designated main gate of the school.

We have to make a decision of where the child's home address is because the allocation of school places under the Admissions Policy, where the criterion of distance is used, is determined by reference to the child's 'home address'. Where a child lives with each of their separated parents for different parts of the week, we will consider the child's home address on any application to be where the child sleeps for most of the school week. Where this is an equal time, this will be determined by reference to the parents' address who receives the Child Benefit. In cases where the recipient of child benefit is clearly not a main carer of the child, or no one receives Child Benefit, we will consider all of the circumstances and make a determination as to the 'home' address which will be used and provide our reasons for doing so.

- All distances will be measured in miles using a computerised mapping system called Routefinder GIS.
- All distances will be measured using this system, which is the only one that that will be used in the allocation of school places by Waltham Forest School Admissions Service.
- If more than one applicant lives in a multi-occupancy building (for example, flats) priority will be given to the applicant whose door number is the lowest numerically and/or alphabetically.

## **How applications for multiple birth children are dealt with**

If the last child to be offered a place is one of multiple births, all multiple birth siblings will be admitted to the school as 'permitted exceptions' to the infant class size legislation which limits infant classes to no more than 30 children.

## **Tie-breaker**

The tie-breaker is to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated. The tie-break for two or more applications will be a lottery tie-break draw (where names are drawn at random out of a blind draw) which will take place with the assistance of an impartial third party (LA officer), who does not work for the school admissions team.

**Parental responsibility** and whose application will be considered where more than one is received

If one parent has parental responsibility (as evidenced by documentation) that parent's application is the one that will be accepted. If parents are separated and both have parental responsibility, then they must determine between them who will make the application and if they cannot agree then either parent may seek to have that determined by a Court. In the event of a dispute between parents who do not have this matter resolved by the Court we will accept the application by the parent with whom the child resides the majority of the school week. Where that is equal, we will determine whose application is progressed with reference to the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit. If no one is in receipt of child

benefit, then we will consider all of the circumstances and decide as to the application which will be accepted and provide our reasons for doing so. This will ensure the child has an active application for a school place.

Where the parent applying does not live in the same address as the child, we will require evidence of child's home address.

Applicants will not be able to change to the other parent's address mid-year unless the current arrangements as set out in any Court Order have changed. Applicants must also provide a copy of any custody or resident order.

### **Waiting lists**

Children are automatically added to the waiting lists for any higher ranked Waltham Forest schools that we are unable to offer. Waiting lists for Waltham Forest schools are ordered in accordance with the admission criteria for each school. Places are allocated to children from the top of the waiting list as vacancies arise. Waiting list positions can change at any time depending on other applicants' circumstances and it is important to note that children's positions may go down as well as up if other applicants join the waiting list. The date of application does not affect the waiting list position once it has been processed. Being on a waiting list is not a guarantee of a place at the school. If we are able to offer a place from the waiting list we will email or write to you. Applicants wishing their child to be placed on the waiting list for any lower preference schools should contact the School Admissions team.

If offered a place from the waiting list, applicants will need to confirm whether they want to accept the place. The place offered from the waiting list will only be held for seven days. After seven days, we will revert back to any previous accepted school offer and withdraw the higher offer. For Waltham Forest schools, waiting lists close on 31 December 2025. If applicants then want their child to rejoin the waiting list for any school, they will need to re-apply by completing an in-year application form and listing the preferred school preferences. These waiting lists will then remain open until the end of June 2026.

### **Appeals**

If a child is not offered a place at one of the schools listed on the application form, there is a right of appeal against this decision to an independent appeal panel. Details of how to make an appeal will be given with the offer of a school place.

The deadline for receipt of appeals for Secondary school for September 2026 entry is 31 March 2026, in order for appeals to be heard in May/June 2026. If the appeal is received after the deadline, it will be heard after the main round of appeals. Appeals will be heard within 40 school days of being submitted. Appeals are heard by panels of people who have not taken part in deciding how places were offered on National Offer Day. The clerk to the independent appeal panel will write to applicants with details of their appeal date. Applicants will be invited to present their case in person and are allowed to bring a friend or representative to help them.

For further guidance regarding appeals please visit:

[https:// https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/appealing-a-schools-decision](https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/appealing-a-schools-decision)

and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appealscode>

If applicants also wish their case to be considered under the Medical/Social 'criteria' and discussed by the relevant medical/social panel they should request this in writing separately from the appeal. Any medical/social cases which are part of the appeal will not automatically go to the medical/social panel unless expressly asked for by the applicant. We can normally only consider one appeal for each school within the same school year. In exceptional circumstances applicants may be able to appeal for the same school more than once, but there would have to be changes to personal circumstances for this to be allowed.

Where possible, appeals for late applications will be included with those being heard for the same admissions round. Applicants who are unhappy with the outcome of their appeal can seek independent legal advice or complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### **Admission of children outside their normal age group**

Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child has experienced problems such as ill health.

In addition, the parents/carers of a summer born child are entitled to choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1.

If parent's wish to apply for a place for their child outside of their normal age group, they should submit their application to the Local Authority together with any supporting evidence they wish to be considered in respect of their application. Applications and any supporting evidence can be emailed to [admissions@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@walthamforest.gov.uk) , stating that you wish the application to be considered outside of normal age group.

A decision will be made on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking account of the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social, and emotional development; where relevant their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The views of the head teacher at the school(s) concerned must also be taken into account.

There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted. If the application for a place outside the normal age group is not accepted there is no right to a statutory appeal. Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of such an application may exercise their rights to make a complaint under the authorities Complaints Procedures.

When informing a parent/carer of their decision on the year group the child should be admitted to, the Local Authority will set out clearly the reasons for their decision.

### **Children of UK service personnel and crown servants**

For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting, or crown servants returning from

overseas, the application should be accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date. This should state the intended address in Waltham Forest. If we are provided with evidence of the intended address, this is the address we will apply the schools' oversubscription criteria to when processing the application.

If there is not a fixed address to return to when making the application, a Unit or quartering address can be stated as the child's home address which will be used when considering the application against the oversubscription criteria of the preferred schools.

### **Making an objection to these Admission Arrangements**

Any objections to these arrangements must be made to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections to admission arrangements for entry in September 2026 must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May 2026. Further information on how to make an objection can be obtained from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-adjudicator-make-an-objection-appeal-orreferral#objections-to-and-referrals-about-determined-school-admission-arrangements>

### **Mid-term admissions**

Mid term admissions (in-year admissions) are allocated by Waltham Forest Admissions. The child's last school is responsible for sending us a Part B (see appendix 1) in which the Head of Year and SLT link for admissions can review before a fact-finding meeting with the family of the child concerned. The SLT link should request further information about a child if there are initial queries or concerns based upon the information in the Part B form.

Post the fact-finding meeting led by the Head of Year, information from the Part B, the pupils' application form and the In-Year Summary document ( see appendix 2) are reviewed by the SLT link for Admissions. In the fact-finding meeting it is important that the GCSE choices of Year 10 or 11 pupil is obtained and parents must be made aware of a child cannot be entered on a GCSE course they have previously studied, due to classes being full, for example. The Head of Year is aiming to ensure a child can study their previous GCSE subject, however, this may not always be the case.

The SLT link post reviewing all the information must decide if further information needs to be obtained, such as safeguarding information. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may be asked to contact the pupils' previous school to obtain information about the child. The data has to be sensitively analysed to understand if a move to our school can be arranged without any detriment to the child concerned, or current pupils in our school. The SLT link for Admissions should discuss any concerns with the Head Teacher. If there are concerns regarding behaviour, then guidance relating to 'challenging behaviour 'outlined in this document should be referred to.

If a pupil is joining Heathcote School then a reasonable start date should be agreed by parents, the Head of Year and the process of induction is initiated by the Admissions & Admin Officer.

Families should be aware of the correct uniform and equipment required.

**Roles:**

Head of Year: Meet with the child and parent/carer to complete the 'In- Year Summary document. Ensure a new pupil is partnered with a buddy and their transition to the year group is successful.

Admissions & Admin Officer: To update Waltham Forest Admissions with the correct number of pupils in each year group. Send a redacted' In Year Summary document' for staff document to teachers of the new pupil so that they are informed of key information pertaining to academic achievement, learning needs and relevant EAL/ SEND information.

SLT Link for Admissions: Evaluate data about an in-year admission and decide if a mid- year admission can be arranged in the best interests of the pupil. Line manage the Admissions & Admin Officer to ensure processes are followed, and specific details regarding a proposed in- year admission are reviewed together.

**Fair Access Protocol**

We participate in Waltham Forest's Fair Access Protocol. This helps ensure that all children, including those who are unplaced and vulnerable, or having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, get access to a school place as quickly as possible and before anyone is considered from the waiting list. Eligibility for the Fair Access Protocol does not limit a parent's right to make an in-year application to the school for their child. Any application will be processed in accordance with the usual in-year admission procedures

**Challenging Behaviour**

We will not refuse to admit a child on behavioural grounds in the normal admissions round or at any point in the normal year of entry. The exception to this is where we may refuse admission in certain cases where the specific criteria listed in the School Admissions Code

We may refuse admission for an in-year applicant for a year group that isn't the normal point of entry, in certain cases.

Para. 3.10 of the Admissions Code 2021 says:

*"Where an admission authority receives an in-year application for a year group that is not the normal point of entry and it does not wish to admit the child because it has good reason to believe that the child may display challenging behaviour<sup>76</sup>, it may refuse admission and refer the child to the Fair Access Protocol"*

We only need to refer to Para. 3.10 when we have first determined that there is a place available in the year group sought. This is because, where this isn't a place available, the application can be refused on that basis anyway.

When there is a place available, we can then consider two possible options for refusing a place, namely the 'twice excluded' rule and the Para. 3.10 'outlined previously in which there is evidence of 'challenging behaviour'.

Challenging behaviour is defined in the Admission Code 2021 as:

*"For the purposes of this Code, behaviour can be described as challenging where it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency, or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil's/other pupils' education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment."*

Crucial to the decision-making process will be whether the child has any form of disability which causes, influences or otherwise impacts on the aspects of their behaviour which are challenging, as refusing under Para. 3.10 in these circumstances is likely to be discriminatory.

The Admission Code 2021 states:

*"A child with challenging behaviour may also be disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010. When considering refusing admission on these grounds, admission authorities must consider their duties under that Act."*

The FAP Guidance expands this, stating:

*"The following reasons on their own should not be grounds for considering that a child may display challenging behaviour:*

*poor attendance elsewhere;  
a defined number of suspensions, without consideration of the grounds on which they were made;  
special educational needs; or  
having a disability".*

and

*"All schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. Schools should be aware that a child who displays challenging behaviour may do so as a result of their disability or any unmet needs. Schools must therefore consider whether any reasonable adjustments can be put in place to support the needs of a particular child when considering whether admission should be refused on these grounds.*

*The impact and effectiveness of these adjustments must also be taken into account in managing presenting behaviours. For example, where a school would have to provide teaching assistant support and put in place an agreed behaviour plan for a pupil with autism, the impact of these arrangements must be factored into a decision over whether the child's behaviour would meet the criteria to be considered challenging".*

The Equality Act 2025 says that schools must not discriminate against a child by refusing to admit them. Schools must therefore take a holistic approach to considering whether the behaviour is sufficiently challenging for the Para. 3.10 ground to be met, having made all adjustments it is reasonable to make to support the pupil's disability and manage their behaviour in school.

## **Managed Moves**

As outlined in the Behaviour in Schools (February 2024) document, a managed move may be initiated for a permanent or temporary move of a pupil to our school. If it is a temporary move to improve behaviour, then we should refer to paragraphs 33 to 42 of the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance. A managed move should only be done in the best interests of the pupil concerned.

## **Transition**

Transition into Year 7 involves:

- Open Morning Tours September - October 2025
- Open Evening October 2025
- Attendance of Senior Leadership Team link for transition to Waltham Forest appeals process
- Transition interviews between Heathcote Staff and families of new pupils
- Open Day for all Year 6 pupils to experience a day in our school
- Induction for SEND pupils
- Visits to primary school to assess data on new pupils
- Transition Evening for all families of new pupils
- Review and update of all documentation concerning admission to school

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

SLT Link for Admissions: overseeing admissions process, including assessment of applications, monitoring of school PAN, update and consult with Head Teacher concerning FAP admissions and admissions of a concerning nature.

Admissions & Admin Officer: weekly communication of current pupil intake per week to Waltham Forest admissions, administration of pupil admissions including timetable and forms, off-rolling pupils,

Each Head of Year: lead fact-finding meeting arrange induction into form class and monitor induction to school, work with family to support induction to school

Each Form Tutor: update Head of Year and pupils' parents/ carer as to how well the pupil is settling into school

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

SLT link for admissions to monitor admissions processes and update Head Teacher.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing body of Heathcote School every year.

Whenever changes to admission arrangements are proposed (except where the change is an increase to the published admission number), the governing board will publicly consult on these changes. If nothing changes, it will publicly consult on the school's admission arrangements at least once every 7 years. Consultation will be for a minimum of 6 weeks and will take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before the arrangement are to apply.

Appendix 1

Pupil's name  Year group

**Current or previous school details**

School name

Date of attendance at this school From  To   
(Leave this date blank if child still attending)

**Attendance**

Attendance  %

If attendance was lower than 90%, please give the reason why and the period(s) covered

Was an attendance and welfare officer involved? Yes  No

**School Support**

SEND Support Yes  No  Statement/EHC Plan Yes  No

SEND category/needs

**Early Help**

Has an early help referral been made? Yes  No

If 'yes', what was the outcome?

**Attainment**

Attainment for current National Curriculum Stage (KS1/KS2/KS3)

	EYFS	KS1	KS2	KS3
Above expected standard				
Expected standard				
Below expected standard				

### Attainment for KS4 applications only

Subject	Examination board	Current Grade	Predicted Grade	Date course began

### Any additional support provided by the school

For example, PSP, Learning Support, Mentor, Counselling

Number of days absent due to fixed term exclusion in the last academic year:

Days  Occasions

Number of days placed in internal exclusion/isolations:

Days  Occasions

Has this child been permanently excluded? If yes, please provide details

### Other agencies involved

Please attach reports or provide details on an extra sheet for every box you tick.

Educational Psychologist Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Early Help	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRU – state referral dates below	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looked After Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMHS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Offending Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education other than provided at school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speech and Language (SALT)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Social worker's name

Phone number of local authority

Please add any other comments or information you think we may find helpful

To help this child move easily into their future school, please give full contact details below so the school or local authority can discuss any of the information provided with you. Thank you for your help in filling in this form.

Your name

Direct line or switchboard plus extension

School name

Local Authority number

Department for Education number

Signature

Date

School stamp

#### Checklist for school

Before returning this section to the parent, please make sure you have done the following:

Met with the family and discussed the reason(s) for transfer.

Filled in all relevant sections of this form.

Added any comments which may be relevant, such as any medical or social issues relating to the child or additional support the child has been receiving in school.

If the information provided is not sufficient, we or the future school will need to contact you to discuss the reasons for transfer.

If you have any questions about filling in this form, please contact Waltham Forest School Admissions Service by telephone on 020 8498 3000  
Or by email to [admissions@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@walthamforest.gov.uk)

Appendix 2

**In-Year Admission – Summary Sheet**

Name and photo	
D.O.B.	
Year Group	
Form Class	
Buddy	
Home Language	
Study Language	
School History	
Reason for leaving previous school	
Attendance	
KS2 SATs Data	
KS3 SATs Data	
Attainment	
FAP?	
Medical	
SEN	
EAL	
LAC / previously LAC	
Safeguarding Concerns	
Behaviour Concerns	
Other issues	
Strategies to be used in class	



Further Information	
Any student views	
Start Date / Time	
Actions needed	