

Townsend Church of England School

ADMISSION POLICY 2024/25

Townsend Church of England School is a Voluntary Aided School and it is the school Governors who decide who will be admitted to the school in accordance with the admissions arrangements outlined below.

The Governors will admit 150 students to Year 7 each September. The school wishes to protect its Christian character and ethos but also **warmly welcomes applications from the wider community**.

Townsend Church of England School endeavours to be a **distinctively Christian** community where the education and the ethos of the school are clearly rooted in, and nourished by, Christian belief and values.

Priority Areas as defined by the County Council for many other schools do not apply to this Voluntary Aided Church School. As Townsend is the only Church of England secondary school in this part of Hertfordshire we welcome applications from a very wide area.

The Local Authority (LA), (Hertfordshire CC) operates an agreed co-ordinated admissions scheme. The LA will coordinate the 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, offers will be made on behalf of Townsend CE School by the home LA.

The closing date for admission application forms to be received by the home Local Authority is 31st October. All applications **must** be made on the **home** LA common application form. For Hertfordshire residents the form is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions
In addition to this parents/carers are also requested to complete the Supplementary Information Form (SIF) and return it to the school office by the closing date for applications. If a SIF is not completed the Governing Body will apply their admission arrangements using the information submitted on the LA form only.

Should there be **over-subscription** within any one priority group within a category, then the deciding factor in that priority group will be the distance from the school to the home. The school uses Hertfordshire County Council's straight line distance measurement system. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of the child's home to the address point of the school. AddressBase premium is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residence. Places will be allocated by the Governing Body in the order indicated in this policy with those living the closest being given priority if the school is over-subscribed.

Tie break

In the event of two children having an equal claim to the last available place then a place will be chosen random tie break. Every applicant is given a unique random number for each of their school preferences. When a random tie break is needed this random number is used to allocate the place. The lowest number is given priority. In the case of two applicants in the same block of flats the applicant with the lower door number is allocated the place.

Appeals

At transfer time, parents/carers wishing to appeal who applied on-line should log into their online application and click on the link 'register an appeal'. For those who did not apply on-line, please contact the HCC Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request an appeal pack.

For in-year applications the county council will contact you with the outcome of your application and, if unsuccessful, will include registration details for you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

Continuing Interest List/Late Applications

In the event of more applications than available places the Governors will maintain a 'continuing interest' list (waiting list). This list will be maintained until 31st December 2024. These and late applications will be positioned according to criteria order. If a place becomes available in the school, it will be offered to the child that best meets the published admission rules at the time. Parents/carers are requested to inform the Governors termly if they wish to remain on the list and to inform Governors if they want to remove their child's name from the list.

In-Year admissions

The school will, if appropriate, admit children who are hard to place in co-operation with the Local Authority Fair Access Protocol. These children will be admitted before any others on the waiting list and may be admitted even if the school is full.

In-Year applications should be made using the Local Authority application form and returned directly to the local authority. The Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, co-ordinates the process on behalf of the governing body. The Local Authority will inform parents of the outcome of the application.

Twins and multiple births

Where the first twin or a multiple birth child has been allocated the last available place then the second twin or other multiple birth siblings will also be admitted.

Education of children outside normal age group

It is the normal practice of the school that children should be educated within their normal age group. However, if a request is made that a child should be educated outside their normal age group the governors will consider the request. They will consider the parents' views, the child's academic and social development and where relevant their medical history and the views of a medical professional. They will also take into account the views of the head teacher. The governors will communicate their decision. If the governors agree an application must be made for admission into the relevant age group. Parents do not have a right of appeal against a decision not to place their child outside the normal age group.

The over-subscription criteria

A Child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the school will be admitted.

In the event of more applications being received than there are places available, places will be allocated by the Governing Body in the order indicated.

- i. 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 order². Please see Appendix One of this Policy for additional guidance and information.*
- ii. Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical or social need to go to the school. In common with most Admission Authorities, the Governors will give prior attention to children whose parent(s)/carer(s) can prove to the satisfaction of Governors, that they have a particular medical or social reason why they must attend Townsend and this request is supported by a Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer, Doctor or similar professional. Admission under this category will be limited to those who provide proof of their claim and provided that the needs identified can be met by the existing provision/resources of the school, or by additional provision/resources provided by the Local Authority. Only a very small number of children usually qualify under these conditions. Please see Appendix Two of this Policy for additional guidance and information.*
- iii. Children who have a sibling in Years 7 to 12 at the school at the time of application. A sibling is defined as the brother or sister, half-brother or half-sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carers or their partner or a child looked after or previously looked after and in every case living permanently in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of admission. 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 or very short term or bridging foster placement*
- iv. The remaining (residual) places will be allocated within two categories: 60% of the places available will be allocated as 'Foundation/Faith Places'; 40% of the places available will be allocated in the 'Community Places' category. In the event of under-subscription in either category, the remaining places will be given to the other category. Should there be over-subscription within any one priority group within a category, those living closest to school – measured by the County Council's computerised mapping system – will be given priority.*

FOUNDATION/FAITH PLACES
(60% of the residual places)

F1. Regular worship in the Church of England

Parents/carers or children who regularly worship at a Church of England Church and whose application is supported by their minister*. Regular worship means attending at least once a month and for at least the past twelve months at the closing date for applications. ** Worship as part of school activities would not be considered sufficient.

F2. Regular worship in another recognised Christian Church

Parents/carers or children who regularly worship at another Christian Church and whose application is supported by their minister*. Regular worship means attending at least once a month and for at least the past twelve months at the closing date for applications. **

A recognised Christian Church will be one that applicants can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Governors' Admission Committee is a member of Churches Together in England, the Evangelical Alliance or Affinity.

F3. Church of England Primary School

Children who attend a Church of England Primary School. The child must be on the roll of the Church of England Primary School at the closing date for receipt of applications.

*If there is a vacancy at the Church and no minister is available to support the application, another authorised Church leader will suffice (eg. in the Church of England, a Church Warden).

**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.

COMMUNITY PLACES (40% of the residual places)

C1. Regular worship in a non-Christian faith community

Children or parents/carers who regularly worship in a non-Christian faith community and whose participation is confirmed by their appropriate faith leader. Regular worship in a non-Christian faith means taking part in faith-sponsored worship at least once a month and for at least the last twelve months at the closing date for applications. ** see above

C2. Any other applicants wanting a place at Townsend Church of England School

Distance from school will be measured using the straight line distance computerised system described earlier in this document.

Home address

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/or the family 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. 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 which the child lives at for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address. 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 and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled. It is for a child's home LA to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same LA, it will be for that LA to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different LAs, the above process will be used. If 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 transfer application rounds, 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 the “late deadline”. If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as “late”. The late deadline for the 2024/25 transfer application process is 1st December. If this date change, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2024/25 application process in September 2023.

** 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 and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.*

Fraudulent Applications

The school, in liaison with Hertfordshire County Council, will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses. 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
- Council tax information shows a different residence at the time of application
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application

Proposed Timescales for 2024/25

| Secondary Key Dates | Date |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Closing date for online applications to be submitted to the LA | 31 Oct 2023 |
| Statutory deadline for receipt of paper applications | 31 Oct 2023 |
| Allocation information despatched to parents | 02 March 2024 |
| Date by which parents/carers may accept or reject place offered | 16 March 2024 |
| Date by which parents/carers return appeal forms | March 2024 (exact date TBC) |

This application policy is available in Bengali and other languages on request – please contact the School Office for a copy.

If you need help to complete the application form, please contact the School Office (01727 853047)

Appendix One

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 order².

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 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 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.

Appendix Two

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

Applications under this category 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 this category 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. An application under this category 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 this category 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.