Admissions Policy for September 2028

Fairfield High School

Approved by: **Signed by:**	Board of Directors Chair of Directors	 Sept 2027
Written by:	Jayne Conway, Deputy Head	Sept 2027

Updated with changes to oversubscription criteria to include reference to attendance at specific local primary schools. June 2025

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2028/2027

Transfer to Fairfield High School – September 2028

Introduction

Herefordshire will operate an inter-Local authority scheme for September 2028 with Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. However, in respect of Monmouthshire and Powys, the council will continue to exchange preference information with the allocation being determined by the school's home authority.

The following sections describe the proposed co-ordinated scheme for Herefordshire.

Application Form and Closing Date

Parents are invited to indicate 3 preferences on a common application form, which will also enable parents to give reasons for their preference. All preferences are treated as equal initially, and sent out as equal to other admission authorities. However, if more than one school place can potentially be offered to an individual applicant, the single offer is for the school the parent ranked highest.

The Herefordshire application form invites all parents resident in the County to name 3 preferred schools, in order of preference, by 31 October 2025, the National Closing date for secondary school applications. It is made clear that parents should name all schools for which they wish their child to be considered for a place, including any voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies and/or any maintained schools outside the County. There is agreement with Powys and Monmouthshire that the closing date of 31 October 2025 will be respected even if this date is different to their closing date. This will be important if a parent expresses a preference for a school outside Herefordshire.

Initial Allocation Process

By the end of the first week of November 2026, the Admission Office sends other admission authorities/Local Authorities details of applicants for their schools.

Admission authorities then apply their admission criteria, including any selection tests, and will send the Herefordshire Admission Office by the end of the first week in January 2027 a list indicating the order in which all children for whom applications to the school have been made have priority by reference to the over-subscription criteria.

Although all applications need to be assessed and grouped against the criteria, admission authorities of significantly oversubscribed schools need not give individual rankings to applicants in the lowest priority groups for admission, if there is no likelihood of being able to offer them a place after elimination of multiple offers. The Herefordshire Admission Office will draw up a similar list for any school for which it is the admission authority. After other admission authorities have sent their ranked lists to the Local Authority in whose area they are located, each local authority should have a list for each of its maintained schools.

Finalising the Allocation Arrangements

Herefordshire will then compare the lists for all schools in its area. When a child qualifies for one of the available number of places at more than one school, the Herefordshire Admission Office provisionally allocates a place at the school indicated by the terms of its co-ordinated scheme. It also

adjusts the list for any other school for which a preference was expressed by that parent, moving another child who was previously not allocated a potential place up the list to the provisional place, which has been vacated.

By the end of the second week in January 2027, the Herefordshire Admission Office (whose own decisions on which school to offer, in the event of multiple potential offers, will have been made in accordance with its model scheme, i.e. the school ranked highest by the parent) will also have received similar notifications from other local authorities of any places which those local authorities or schools in their areas can offer in response to any preference expressed by one of their residents. Monmouthshire and Powys will not have a co-ordinated scheme in place by September 2028, but they will supply information to Herefordshire on applicants applying for schools in the county.

Herefordshire has agreed that the appropriate authority will make, where the highest ranked school is situated in Monmouthshire or Powys, the offer of the place which is likely to be before the official date of **1st March 2027**. When this situation arises the Herefordshire Admission Office will only confirm that an offer has been made by another local authority. That confirmation will be sent on **1st March 2027**.

Clearly, if no preferred school in the home local authority can be offered, the Herefordshire Admission Office need not look for an alternative place if it knows that another Local Authority will be making an offer.

Late Applications

Between 31st October 2026 and Monday 12th January 2027 (final allocation list) it is likely that the Herefordshire Admission Office will receive late applications. The council has agreed within its co-ordinated scheme to accept these applications, on the understanding that the delay was reasonable, for example, a service family moving to the Credenhill Garrison or a family moving into the area. Because the individual circumstances will vary from application to application, the determination of the Director for Children and Families or their nominee will decide what is reasonable. In the case of another admission authority the determination will be made by the Governing Body.

Applications received after 12th January 2027 will be placed on a waiting list based on the oversubscription policy. Allocations will be made against the preference order as vacancies occur although the Herefordshire Admission Office will endeavour to offer a suitable school at a reasonable distance to the child's home where vacancies exist. However, parents will be able to appeal against the decision that an offer to their preferred school has not been made.

Offer of a Place

If any child looks like remaining unplaced, the Herefordshire Admission Office will consider how to place them in schools within its area, having regard to any reasons expressed by the parent for their (unsuccessful) preferences.

Each local authority then sends the schools that it maintains, the final lists of students to be allocated places.

On **Monday 1st March 2027 – the 'National Offer Day'** for secondary schools – it writes to every resident parent who filled in its secondary application form, to tell them of their allocated school place. Where the school in question is its own admission authority, the local authority must state that the offer is being communicated on behalf of that school's governing body.

APPENDIX A

Admissions Arrangements for Academic year 2028/2027

Oversubscription Criteria

The oversubscription criteria list (A) below applies to all schools where Herefordshire Council is the admissions authority, except for Priority 4, which is a criterion that applies particularly to this school.

(A)

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or an Educational, Health & Care Plan which names a particular school will be allocated places, after which places are allocated according to an agreed set of criteria, in strict order of priority.

Priority 1: Looked after children[1] and previously looked after children[2] who have since been adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order[3] or special guardianship order,[4] including those children 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.

Priority 2 -Children living within the **defined catchment area*** of the school or **attendance in Year 6 at one of the following specified primary schools in the county of Herefordshire**: Peterchurch, Longtown, Michaelchurch Escley, Ewyas Harold or Clifford.

Priority 3 - Sibling connection - Children who have a **sibling**** at the preferred school not only at the time of application but also when the child is due to start.

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[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's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

[3] A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

[3a] 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).

[5] 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.

[6] 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's Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders).

[7a] A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Priority 4 –Children*** of staff*** in **either or both** of the following circumstances: a) where the member of staff has been employed at this school (Fairfield High School) for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission is made; b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at this school (Fairfield High School) for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Priority 5 - 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.

Priority 6 -Distance***** -Children who live **nearest** to the school by the shortest available walking route.

General Notes:

- No priority is given to students living outside but attending a primary school within the catchment area of the relevant high school, i.e. the determining factor is the child's home address, unless the student is in Year 6 **at one of the following specified primary schools in the county of Herefordshire**: Peterchurch, Longtown, Michaelchurch Escley, Ewyas Harold or Clifford.

- 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 or attendance at one of the specified primary schools second, brothers and sisters third, children of staff fourth, exceptional circumstances fifth, then according to distance, each assessed as indicated above.

- If the admission of the top two categories can be satisfied, but there are insufficient places for all out of area brothers and sisters, priorities will be decided first by reference to children of staff, then exceptional circumstances, then according to distance.

- 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 or attending one of the specified primary schools. In this situation the places will be allocated in the sequence of the criteria listed above, i.e. first to children with brothers and sisters who would still be at the school in the September in which the applicant would begin secondary education, next to children of staff, then to students 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 and Families 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. 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, stepbrother or sister, or a child of the parent's/carer's partner, and in every case the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address.

*** Children of staff are defined as natural/adopted or stepchildren/children of co-habiting partners, living with the staff member or elsewhere.

**** Staff are defined as any person employed directly by this school (Fairfield High School) on a permanent contract i.e. teaching, support, admin or site. Ancillary staff (eg IT support, canteen staff) not directly employed by the school, but who may carry out some/all of their duties at FHS, are NOT included in this definition.

***** **Distance is measured by the shortest available walking route (using road and/or made-up footpath) using the nearest network node from the property address point to the nearest network node at the main school entrance gate.** 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. **(updated Herefordshire LA 140722).**

Appendix B

Information and timetable for appeals for secondary schools

Fairfield High School follows the Herefordshire Local Authority regulations for appeals, which are below:

If your child is not given a place at one of your preferred schools, you can appeal the decision.

Download and complete appeal refusal of a school place form

It is very important that a fair and independent process is in place for parents to appeal against decisions made by an admissions authority.

Most appeals involve the transfer of students from primary to secondary schools each September.

Parents can also ask for their child to be admitted to any school in any school term. For example if a family has recently moved home. However, only one appeal per child for a particular school is allowed in each school year. See Appendix C.

The appeal process we use follows strict national guidance. An appeal is given if we are unable to offer your child a higher preference of school or any of your preference(s) of school, and we have offered to the nearest school with availability.

School admission appeals timetable September 2028 entry:

Allocation day for secondary schools is **Monday 2nd March 2028.**

The deadline for lodging appeals for secondary schools is **Friday 27th March 2028**.

Appeals lodged after this date will be heard within 40 school days of the appeal deadline or 30 school days of being lodged, whichever is the later date. Most school appeals will be heard before the school summer holidays for children starting secondary schools where possible. **School appeals are unlikely to be heard through the summer holidays.**

For further advice on making an appeal, please contact the admissions officer on 01432 260925 or email schooladmissions@herefordshire.gov.uk

Appendix C

Applying for a secondary school place mid-year.

Please use the link below to the Herefordshire Local Authority website for further information:

Secondary school admissions – Herefordshire Council