



Section 1 – General Principles

Ridgeway Academy is a mixed comprehensive school in Welwyn Garden City for children aged 11 – 18. Students will be admitted at the age of 11+ without reference to ability of aptitude using the criteria below. The main principle of admission to Ridgeway Academy is to maintain the character of the school as a mixed comprehensive, providing for the needs of young persons who live in Welwyn Garden City and the surrounding area. The school will endeavor to allocate places to students whose parents wish them to attend Ridgeway Academy, provided they can be accommodated within the school's admission limits on student numbers. There can be no guarantee that such a place will be available.

The published admission number (PAN) for Year 7 for September 2026 will be **180**.

If the school receives more applications than it has places available, places will be allocated under the oversubscription criteria rules in section 2. These will be applied in the order in which they are printed below. A School Admissions panel may be formed to determine whether evidence provided meets the relevant criteria.

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school must be admitted and will count towards the admission numbers.

Section 2 – Oversubscription criteria (see section 3 for explanatory notes)

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 order².

Rule 2: Medical

Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a compelling medical reason for attending the school.

A School Admissions panel will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

Rule 3: Sibling

Children who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, unless the sibling is in the last year of the normal age-range of the school (ie Year 13).

Rule 4: Children of staff

Rule 5: Children living **in the priority area** for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, co-educational and non-partially selective.

Rule 6: Children living **in the priority area** who live nearest to the school.

Rule 7: Children living **outside the priority area** on the basis of distance, with those living nearest to the school given priority.

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above.

Tiebreak process

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto the HCC admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority. This process will be independently verified.

Section 3 – Explanatory notes and Definitions

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 order².

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 2, Section 7 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

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.

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.

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.

Rule 2: Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a particular medical need to attend the school

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change in the medical condition since the initial application was submitted.

All schools in Hertfordshire have experience in dealing with children with diverse 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 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.

A School Admissions panel will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule.

Rule 3: Definition of sibling

For applications to schools using Hertfordshire County Council's admission criteria, a sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after and, in every case, living permanently² in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts or have been offered and accepted a place.

If a place is obtained for an older child using **fraudulent information**, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

² 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 placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.

If an applicant lives at more than one address, the sibling must also reside at the same address for the majority of the school week. The sibling's address will be verified by the school

Multiple Births

The admission authority, will admit over a school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place at a school and the other twin/multiple birth child has applied but not been allocated.

To maximise the chances of your children being allocated places at the same school, it is recommended that you list the same schools in the same order across all applications. Please be aware that it is not possible to allocate a place at a school that is not ranked on the application form, unless a non-ranked allocation is offered.

Rule 4: Children of staff

The school will admit a child of a member of staff provided that:

- a) the member of staff (defined below) 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, or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

For the purposes of satisfying these criteria, a member of staff is defined as a member of the full-time teaching staff, or of the part-time teaching staff with a 50% and above timetable, or a member of the full-time support staff (on a 38 week and above contract), or of the part-time support staff who work 50% and above as determined by their role (on a 38 week and above contract) whose role and activities can be demonstrated to provide a significant impact on student achievement at the school. A School Admissions panel will determine whether the member of staff meets the requirements for this rule.

Children of staff must live at the same address as the member of staff on a permanent basis. This definition does not include contract staff. Where a service such as catering has been 'in house' and is subsequently 'contracted out', children of staff will not be eligible for admission under this criterion. This definition does not include peripatetic staff employed by HCC.

Rule 5 – Definition of 'nearest school' for secondary admissions

The definition for rule 5 is "the nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, co-educational, and non-partially selective.

Note – non-partially selective means that the school does not offer any places based on academic ability.

Coeducational schools/academies which select partially on ability are:

- Dame Alice Owen's School
- Parmiter's School

- Queens' School
- Rickmansworth School
- St Clement Danes School

Rules 5 to 7 – Priority Area

The coeducational priority areas in the admission rules are based on the following towns, parishes/unparished areas. Academies and foundation schools (agreed or proposed) that will be retaining the County Council's priority areas as part of their admission arrangements for 2026/27 have been included for information but are marked with an asterisk*

Priority area	Towns/Parishes/Unparished areas	Schools
Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Potters Bar and Brookmans Park	Ayot St Peter, Codicote, Essendon, Hatfield, North Mymms, Potters Bar, South Mimms and Ridge, Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn, Woolmer Green	Monks Walk*, Onslow St Audreys*, Ridgeway Academy*, Stanborough*

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. Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they **must** be able to demonstrate that they 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 where the child lives 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 the child's living arrangements change after you apply and they now spend the majority of the school week living at a different address, you must provide evidence of the new permanent address.

We may ask for proof of your address at any time. If, following an initial investigation and/or any investigation by/with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service, the county council concludes that a fraudulent address has been used, correspondence confirming this decision will be sent to the applicant. We will explain the decision-making process and the action that will be taken with the application. We will also confirm which address will be used as the child's permanent home address for admission allocation purposes.

If we receive more than one application with different address details and **parents don't agree**, 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, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address but contain 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.

If duplicate applications are made to different LAs for the same child, those LAs will liaise and share information. The child's home LA will determine if the 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 2026/27 transfer application process is 2 December 2025 for secondary and upper applications and 2 February 2026 for primary, junior and middle applications. If these dates change, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2026/27 application process in September 2025.

*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.

Fraudulent applications

We will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referring cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. We will take action 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;
 - Official/public records show 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.

Address Visits

Where suspicions lie as to the validity of an address, the Admissions & Transport Team may make unannounced visits to the applicant’s claimed address or any other address suspected to be the normal permanent residence of the child’s primary carer or the address where the child resides for the majority of the week. The aim of these visits is to verify that the address information provided on the application form is accurate. All visits will be made by two members of the Admissions & Transport Team.

If an address appears to be unoccupied at the time of a visit, a letter will be left confirming that an attempted visit took place. This letter will ask the occupant to contact the Admissions & Transport Team within 24 hours to confirm receipt of the letter and details of the occupant. It is reasonable to expect that an applicant living at the address stated on the application form can respond within 24 hours. If contact takes longer than 24 hours, the applicant will be asked to explain why and provide evidence why they did not respond within the specified time.

Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions

A ‘straight line’ distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child’s house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data

is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residence.

Maps showing address points for individual residences and school are available on request from the Admissions & Transport Team.

Applications for children* from overseas

All children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years) in England have a right of access to education. However, where a child is in England for a short period only, for example less than half a term, it may be reasonable to refuse admission to a school.

An application for a school place will only be accepted for such children currently overseas if, for In Year applications, proof is provided that the child will be resident in Hertfordshire within two weeks. In Year allocations are made on the assumption that the child will accept the school place and be on roll within that timescale.

For the secondary transfer processes, applications will not normally be accepted from, nor places allocated to, an overseas address. The exception to this (for both In Year and transfer processes) is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants (and from military families who are residents of countries with a Memorandum of Understanding with the UK). In these cases Hertfordshire County Council will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Hertfordshire County Council Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria

Applications will also be considered, and places offered in advance for these families, if the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date but does not provide a quartering or unit address because the family will be residing in private accommodation. In these cases, if the family does not already have a permanent private address in Hertfordshire, the military base or alternative “work” address in Hertfordshire will be used for allocation purposes. If the family already has an established alternative private address, that address will be used for admission purposes as long as the parents provide evidence of the address and that the child will be living there.

We will also consider accepting applications from children* whose family can evidence intent to return to and/or permanently reside in Hertfordshire prior to the start of the new academic year. These applications, if accepted, will be processed from the overseas address until sufficient evidence is received to show the child is permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Evidence must be submitted at the time of application.

Evidence submitted after the date for late applications (2 December 2025) for secondary transfer process) cannot be taken into account before National Allocation Day. Decisions on these applications will be made by a panel of senior officers and communicated with parents within 6 weeks of the closing date for applications.

If an applicant owns a property in Hertfordshire but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, the Hertfordshire address will **not** be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children, than those mentioned above, from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are permanently resident in Hertfordshire. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application, in addition to proof of Hertfordshire address, for example a council tax bill or 12 month rental agreement.

**Children who hold full British Citizen passports (not British Dependent Territories or British Overseas passports) or have a UK passport describing them as a British citizen or British subject with the right of abode and normally have unrestricted entry to the UK. Freedom of movement into the UK for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens ended at the end of*

2020. EEA (Irish citizens aside) and Swiss national children entering the UK after the end of 2020 are now treated the same as other foreign nationals. This means they will no longer have the right to enter the country to access a state-funded school unless they fall within certain immigration categories. Find out more about [visas and immigration](#) and the [EU Settlement Scheme](#) for European Economic Area and Swiss citizens.

Children Seeking Admission Outside their Chronological Year Group

Students will be admitted to Ridgeway Academy in Year 7 at the age of 11 irrespective of physical or academic ability or age 12 if they are summer born children where a family chose to delay their entry to Reception by an academic year. It is Ridgeway Academy's policy for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group as far as possible, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case". Such evidence must be submitted to Helen Smith, Admissions Officer, at the school.

Applications from summer born children who initially started Reception a year later than normal and who remain educated out of year group, will automatically be accepted and processed as "out of year group" when the child moves to another community or voluntary controlled school, for example from an infant to junior school or through the secondary transfer process.

In liaison with Hertfordshire County Council the School Admissions panel will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. If such an application is accepted it does not constitute an offer of a place, the application will then be processed by HCC in accordance with the admissions criteria. The Committee will make decisions based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the Headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group.

There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Governors, Headteacher and senior leadership of individual schools.

The School Admissions panel of schools responsible for their own admissions (academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools) are ultimately responsible for making this decision for applications made to their school.

Section 4 – Continuing Interest, In Year Admissions and Appeals

Continuing Interest

After places have been offered, Hertfordshire County Council will maintain a continuing interest (waiting) list. A child's position on a CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child's place on the list can change as other children join or leave it. The county council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they

are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form (to retain a CI application after this time parents must make an In Year application).

The school is committed to taking its fair share of vulnerable children who are hard to place, in accordance with locally agreed protocols. Children admitted under the protocol will be prioritised above those on the CI list and can be admitted over PAN.

In Year Admissions

The school will remain part of the county council's coordinated In Year admissions scheme. Application forms can be accessed via www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions. Application forms are also available from the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043. A new In Year application must be made at the end of the academic year to ensure the parent is on the Continuing Interest list. The county council will write to the parent/carer with the outcome of their application and if they have been unsuccessful will include details to enable them to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals.

Appeals

All unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Hertfordshire parents wishing to appeal, should log onto their online school application and click on the link "register an appeal". Allocation letters will provide the code for logging appeals for Hertfordshire parents who don't apply online. For out of County applications parents should contact the Customer Service Centre (0300 123 4043) who will provide the code for logging appeals.

Fair Access

The school is committed to taking its fair share of vulnerable children who are hard to place, in accordance with locally agreed protocols. Children admitted under the protocol will be prioritised above those on the CI list and can be admitted over PAN.

Section 5 – How to apply

All applicants must complete the Hertfordshire County Council's COMMON APPLICATION FORM (CAF) indicating your preferred schools, including Ridgeway Academy, in rank order of preference. The completed CAF should be returned online to Hertfordshire County Council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or by post to HCC, Admissions and Transport (Central Admissions), Postal Point CHR 102, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertfordshire SG13 8DF by 31 October 2025.

Families wishing to use either rule 2 (medical) or rule 4 (children of staff) will also need to complete a SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM (SIF) which is available either on the school website at <https://ridgeway.herts.sch.uk/admissions/> or on Hertfordshire County Council's website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or from the school on the Open Evening or via Helen Smith, Admissions Officer, who can be contacted on 01707 351350 or via the admissions e-mail – admissions@ridgeway.aetrust.uk. The completed SIF should be returned directly to Ridgeway Academy by 31 October 2025 marking the envelope "ADMISSIONS".

Section 6 – Sixth form oversubscription

Admission to the Sixth Form will be for any student (existing Ridgeway Academy or new to the school) who meets the minimum academic standards expected as set out in the Prospectus. The PAN for external students is 150.

Students wishing to apply for a place in the Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium will need to complete the application form inside the Prospectus folder. This form must be forwarded to the Head of Sixth Form of their chosen site by the deadline date indicated on

the form.

Sixth Form Oversubscription criteria (see section 3 for explanatory notes)

In the event of oversubscription to the Sixth Form, places will be offered by applying the following criteria in the order given:

- 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 order or a special guardianship order).
- Rule 2:** Medical
Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a compelling medical reason for attending the school.
- Rule 3:** Sibling
Children who have a sibling at the school at the time of application, unless the sibling is in the last year of the normal age-range of the school (ie Year 13).
- Rule 4:** Children of staff
- Rule 5:** Children living **in the priority area** for whom it is their nearest Hertfordshire maintained school or academy that is non-faith, co-educational and non-partially selective.
- Rule 6:** Children living **in the priority area** who live nearest to the school.
- Rule 7:** Children living **outside the priority area** on the basis of distance, with those living nearest to the school given priority.

These rules are applied in the order they are printed above.

Continued interest list: all unsuccessful applicants will be added to the school's continued interest list. Any places which become available will be allocated in accordance with the admission rules set out in this document in relation to Sixth Form entry and the oversubscription criteria.

All unsuccessful Sixth Form applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Once a parent has received written notification from the school with its decision to refuse admission, please email school.appeals@hertfordshire.gov.uk. Ridgeway Academy must admit any student who is admitted through the appeal process.

Tie break: in the event of two identical applications, the tie break will be random and this method will be independently witnessed.