

Ad Astra Academy Trust

School Admissions Arrangements

Ad Astra Academy Trust wish to propose changes to their school admissions arrangements for their Hartlepool schools for the 2022/23 academic year. The consultation period will be from 15th December 2020 to 26th January 2021.

The oversubscription criteria are applied when a school receives more applications than places available.

Ad Astra Academy Trust is the admission authority for all its constituent schools and is therefore responsible for setting its own admission arrangements.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR 2021/22

In the first instance, places will be awarded to those pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan where the school is named as the most appropriate educational setting for the child. The remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:

Oversubscription Criteria:

1. Those children who are looked after children and previously looked after children (*previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order*).
2. Those children who have brothers or sisters who will be attending the school in September 2021.
3. Those children who live in the school's admission zone.
4. Those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school.
5. Those children who live closest to the school as determined by a 'straight line' distance measurement; from the (ordnance survey) address point for the child's home to the (ordnance survey) address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Tiebreaker: If more children qualify under a particular criterion than there are places available, priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school (as described under criteria 5).

If the changes below are determined they would be effective from 2022/23 admissions round.

- a) by introducing a new criterion for children previously in state care outside of England, to coincide with recent advice from the Department for Education.
- b) by removing any reference to children with a Statement of Special Education Needs, as Statements have now been replaced fully by Education, Health and Care Plans.

- c) by removing reference to ordnance survey address point.
- d) adding explanation of the process to be used to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.

PROPOSED ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR 2022/23

In accordance with the Education Act (1996), children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the Plan.

The remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:

Oversubscription Criteria:

1. Looked after children and children who were previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order¹.
2. Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted².
3. Those children who have brothers or sisters who will be attending the school at the time of admission.
4. Those children who live in the school's admission zone.
5. Those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school.
6. Those children who live closest to the school as determined by a straight-line distance measurement; from the address point for the child's home to the address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Tiebreaker:

If more children qualify under a particular criterion than there are places available, priority will be given to those children who live closest to the school (as described under criteria 6). Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications, for example two applicants who live at an equal distance from the school, the Local Authority's computerised system will use random selection.

Definitions:

¹ A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in England, or is being provided with accommodation by a local authority in England 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.

An adoption order is an order made under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

A child arrangement order is an order made outlining arrangements as to the person with whom the child is to live under Section 8 of the Children Act 1989.

Special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians (Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

² A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

Sibling: Sibling refers to brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, stepbrother or sister, or the child of the parent/guardian's partner and, in every case, the child should be living in the same family unit at the same address. In all cases the responsible parent will hold the child benefit for those children permanently living at that address. A brother or sister living at the same address must be attending the preferred school at the same time as the child who is applying. *Please note, this criterion only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school*

Twins or multiple birth children: If you have more than one child who are twins or part of a multiple birth going through the application process this year, you must make a separate application for each child and indicate on each online or paper form that your child has a sibling also going through the process. For community and voluntary controlled schools, we will offer a place to the other child(ren) if one of your twins/multiple birth children is offered the last place available and you have applied to the same school for the other child(ren).

Distance: Distance will be measured by a straight-line measurement from the address point of the child's home address to the address point of the school, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority.

Admission Zone: All Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hartlepool have a defined geographic area called an Admission Zone. Do not assume that you live within a particular school's admission zone as some streets are split. To find out which admission zone you live in contact the School Admissions Team on telephone number 01429 523765 or 01429 523768. Please note, a child is not guaranteed a place at an admission zone school.

Medical Grounds/Exceptional Circumstances: A panel of specialist officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this criterion. If you think your child has a particular medical or social need to go to a certain school, you must provide supporting evidence from a doctor, psychologist or other professional involved with your child. The supporting evidence must relate specifically to the school you are claiming medical grounds/exceptional circumstances for, and clearly demonstrate why it is only that school that can meet your child's needs in a way that no other school can. If you are applying on-line for a place under this criterion, please send your supporting evidence to the Admissions Team by the National closing date, which should include your child's name and date of birth.

NB: Exceptional social reasons do not, in the view of the Authority, include domestic inconvenience arising from parents' work patterns, child-minding problems, separation from particular nursery/primary school friends. Problems of this kind are widespread and cannot be classed as exceptional. Medical reasons do not include temporary conditions. They are permanent medical conditions which require special treatment available at the preferred school only. Medical evidence must be provided, and the Authority's officers must be satisfied that the child would suffer to a significant degree if he/she went to any other school.

NOTES:

Criteria 1 Applications

- Applications from children who are looked after must be accompanied by a letter from the Social Worker confirming the legal status of the child and the reasons for the school preferences. Any change of legal status and/or placement arrangements must be notified to the Admissions Team.
- Applications for previously looked after children must be accompanied by a copy of any Special Guardianship Order, Adoption Order or Child Arrangements Order.

Criteria 2 Applications

Applications for children previously in state care outside of England must provide evidence of their child's previously looked after status with accompanying paperwork to evidence this eg a UK adoption order or a copy of the adoption order from the child's country of origin.

Criteria 3 Applications

To obtain a school place under the sibling criteria the sibling must still attend the school at the time when the child for whom the place is sought joins the school. This criterion only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school.

Criteria 5 Applications

A panel of officers will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The evidence must relate specifically to the school applied for under Criteria 5 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs. Criteria 5 applications 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 Hartlepool 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 Criteria 5 are agreed. All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:

- specific professional evidence that justifies why only one school can meet a child's individual needs, and/or
- professional evidence that outlines exceptional family circumstances making clear why only one school can meet the child's needs
- if the requested school is not the nearest school to the child's home address clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate
- medical cases – a clear explanation of why the child's severity of illness or disability makes attendance at only one specific school essential.

Evidence should make clear why only one school is appropriate.

Examples of cases which have been accepted under Criteria 5

- A child with limited mobility who is only able to walk to their nearest school, as their admission zone school is further away.
- A child for whom only one school is suitable due to child protection issues.

Examples of cases which have not been accepted under Criteria 5

- Case made for continuity of child-minding arrangements, such as using a childminder that children are already familiar with who caters for children attending certain schools, or childminding by family members living close to a specific school. These cases were not upheld because they are not exceptional. Many families rely on complex childminding arrangements.
- Cases made for children with specific learning and/or behavioural needs where the professional evidence submitted is not school specific. All schools are able to support children with a wide variety of individual needs. If a child's individual needs warrant an Education, Health and Care Plan, this will name the appropriate school.
- Medical cases where even though there is a severe illness, more than one school could deal with the child's needs.

How to apply under Criteria 5

- Parents/guardians should submit all relevant information including professional evidence, with their application. If applying online, written information should be received before the closing date for applications and include the child's name and date of birth. Information

provided after the closing date will only be considered when there are significant changes of circumstances.

- Applications under Criteria 5 will only be considered when supported by a letter from a professional involved with the child or family, for example, a doctor, psychologist or police officer. Supporting evidence should demonstrate why only one named school can meet the social/medical needs of the child or family.
- Applications under Criteria 6. Should it not be possible to separate two or more applications the Local Authority's computerised system will randomly select.

Any comments or feedback on the admissions arrangements can be made in writing to Ad Astra Academy Trust, Hub Two, The Innovation Centre, Venture Court, Queens Meadow Business Park, Hartlepool, TS25 5TG (Telephone 01429 874552), or email enquiries@adastraacademytrust.com