

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY OF HIGHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL 2024/25**

Highfield Middle School is an academy and now part of the recently formed Cheviot Learning Trust. Cheviot are not proposing any changes to our admissions policy for 2024/2025.

The Trust is the admission authority for the School and is responsible for determining the School's admissions policy. The published admission number (PAN) for entry into Year 5 at Highfield Middle School is 120. Where the School receives more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)<sup>1</sup> (formerly known as a Statement of Special Education Needs <sup>2</sup>) naming the School will be admitted.

### **Oversubscription criteria**

1. 'Looked after' children <sup>3</sup> or 'previously looked after' children i.e. children who were previously looked after but ceased to be because they were adopted <sup>4</sup> or became subject to a child arrangements order (formerly a residence order)<sup>5</sup> or a special guardianship order.<sup>6</sup>

2. Children with an exceptional social or medical need <sup>7</sup> (for example, where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only attend the school).

3. Children living in the school's catchment area.<sup>8</sup>

4. Children living in the school's greater catchment area who have a sibling already in the school who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

5. Children living in the School's greater catchment area. <sup>9</sup>

6. Children living outside the School's catchment area [and greater catchment area] with a sibling <sup>10</sup> who (a) attends Highfield Middle School at the time of application and (b) will be attending Highfield Middle School at the time of admission.

7. Children who attend any of the local first schools in Cheviot learning trust at the time of application, namely:

- \* Mickley First School
- \* Prudhoe Castle First School
- \* Broomley First School
- \* Whittonstall First School
- \* Wylam First School



\* Ovingham C of E First School

8. Children who attend any of the other feeder schools <sup>11</sup> at the time of application, namely:

\* Adderlane Academy

\* Prudhoe West Academy

9. Other children.

### **Tie break**

Within each oversubscription criteria priority will be given to children with a sibling who

(a) attends the school at the time of application and

(b) will be attending the school at the time of admission.

Priority will then be given to those children who live closest to the school measured as a straight line (i.e. "as the crow flies") from the front door of the child's home <sup>12</sup> address to the school's main entrance using Northumberland County Council's computerised measuring system. But, as between two or more children living the same distance from the school, places will be offered by random allocation. The random allocation will be verified by someone independent of the School.

### **Applications in the normal admissions round**

Northumberland County Council is responsible for coordinating the allocation of school places in the normal admissions round for children living in Northumberland. Parents<sup>13</sup> should apply to Northumberland County Council (or to their home local authority if they live outside Northumberland) using its (or the home local authority's) common application form before the published deadline.

In allocating school places, priority will be given to those children where the application was submitted and received before the published deadline.

### **Late applications**

If an application is received after the closing date, the application will be treated as late unless exceptional circumstances apply. The admission authority will consider whether any exceptional circumstances apply, taking account of any evidence you may provide, provided that such evidence is received before 31 January and, if the admission authority determines that exceptional circumstances apply, the admission authority will consider the application alongside those applications received on time. Examples of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances may include a family who has just moved into the area, in which case the admission authority may require proof of ownership (e.g. a tenancy or lease agreement or a contract for sale) or, in the case of members of Armed Forces, confirmation of the posting (e.g. an



official letter stating the relocation date and a postal address or quartering area address applicable to the child).

If the admission authority determines that exceptional circumstances do not apply, the application will not be processed until the first round of school offers have been made. Parents should note that submitting an application late is likely to reduce the chance of being offered a place at the school.

### **Equal preference**

The admission authority operates an equal preference system for the processing of applications. This means at the first stage there will be no distinction between first, second or third preference applications. Therefore, all applications will be considered equally against the school's admission policy and oversubscription criteria. If a child qualifies for a place at more than one school, the parent's highest ranked preference will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

### **Offers**

In the normal admissions round parents will be notified of the outcome of their application on national offer day. If you applied online, you will be sent an email; if you completed a paper application, a letter will be sent by 2nd class post.

### **Withdrawing an offer**

The admission authority may withdraw an offer if it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or misleading application. Where the parent has not responded to the offer, the admission authority will give the parent a further opportunity to respond and explain that the offer may be withdrawn if the parent does not do so. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of misleading information, the application will be re-considered and a right of appeal offered if an offer is refused.

The admission authority will not withdraw a place once a child has started at the School except where that place was fraudulently obtained. In deciding whether to withdraw the place, the admission authority will take account of the length of time that the child has been at the School.

### **Waiting lists**

If your child has not been offered a place at the school, the school will put your child's name on a waiting list. Children are given a position on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when the child's application was made or received. If pupil numbers subsequently fall below the school's published admission number, a place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list at that point except that priority is always given to looked after children, previously looked after children, and those children allocated a place at the school in accordance with Northumberland County Council's Fair Access Protocol. This means that a child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another child



subsequently applies for a place at the school and has greater priority under the oversubscription criteria or in accordance with Fair Access Protocol.

The School will hold a waiting list for one term in that academic year ending on 31 December; no list will be held by the school after this date and new in-year applications will need to be submitted.

### **In-year admissions**

The school's governing body, as its admission authority, and Northumberland County Council have agreed that the Council will coordinate in-year applications for places at the school; parents should therefore make in-year applications via the Council. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their in-year applications and, where a place is not offered, informed of their statutory right of appeal.

### **Fair access protocol**

The school is committed to trying to provide a place for children who are vulnerable and/or for whom it can be hard to allocate school places because of their specific circumstances, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the admission authority may prioritise a child where admission is requested by Northumberland County Council under the locally agreed protocols. The admission authority may offer a place in such circumstances even if it would result in the number of pupils exceeding the published admission number.

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

Parents may wish to seek a place for their child outside of the child's normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. If so, parents should contact the school to discuss the child's specific circumstances. The admission authority will then make a decision about admitting the child outside the child's normal age group in the light of the relevant circumstances and in the best interests of the child, taking account of (amongst other things) the parent's views; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, the child's medical history and the views of any medical professional or psychologist; whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether the child may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely; the views of the school and its head teacher. When informing a parent of its decision on the year group the child may be admitted to, the admission authority will set out clearly the reasons for its decision. Parents will not be given any lower priority for making any such request.

Please note: although parents have a statutory right to appeal against the admission authority's refusal to offer a place at the school, this right does not apply if the admission authority has offered the child a place at the school albeit not in the parent's preferred age group.

### **Right of appeal**

Parents have a statutory right of appeal if, following an application, the admission authority does not offer the child a place at the school. Parents will be given more information about how to appeal when they are informed of the decision not to offer their child a place.

## **NOTES AND DEFINITIONS**

**1** An Education, Health and Care Plan made by a local authority under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 specifying the special educational provision required for a child.

**2** A statement made by a local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 specifying the special educational provision for a child.

**3** 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.

**4** Adoption includes reference to children who were adopted 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).

**5** Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replaced residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.

**6** 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.

**7** [Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body or a medical professional, psychologist or equivalent professional involved with the family or the child. The professional body or the medical professional, psychologist or equivalent professional must be independent of both the family and the School. The evidence must relate specifically to the School and the child or family and must explain in detail why the School is the only school or the best school (as opposed to any other school) which can meet the particular needs of the child or family.]

**8** For details of the School's catchment area please contact Northumberland County Council or the School's office.

**9** For details of the School's greater catchment area please contact Northumberland County Council or the School's office.

**10** For these purposes a 'sibling' means (a) natural siblings, half siblings, step siblings, adoptive siblings and foster siblings, whether or not they are living at the



same address; and (b) any child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same address. Where the School has available places for some but not all siblings from a multiple birth (including twins), the admission authority will exercise its discretion to offer all those children a place even where the total number of offers would then exceed the published admission number.

**11** Children attending the School's feeder schools will not automatically be offered a place in Year 9. Parents must make a separate application for the child to transfer to the School's Year 9. The School cannot guarantee that all children attending its feeder schools will be offered a place at the School.

**12** For these purposes the child's home address, as stated in the common application form, shall be the residence where the child usually lives. Where a child's parents live apart and the child lives part of the week with each parent, the child's home address, as stated in the common application form, shall be the home of the parent who claims child benefit (or, if neither parent claims child benefit, the child's primary residence on the child's NHS records). The admission authority may require evidence (e.g. a council tax bill, a tenancy or lease agreement or a contract for sale) showing that a child's parent lives or is due to live at the child's home address stated in the common application form.

**13** For these purposes 'parent' has the meaning given in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 i.e.

- (a) a natural parent,
- (b) an individual who is not a parent but has parental responsibility (as defined in Section 3 of the Children Act 1989) for a child, or
- (c) an individual who has care of a child (i.e. the child lives with and is looked after by that person).