
Admissions Policy for entry to the 2025/26 academic year at Highfield Middle School

Highfield Middle School is an academy and part of Cheviot Learning Trust, which is the admissions authority for the school and is responsible for determining the school's admissions policy.

At Cheviot Learning Trust we welcome all pupils and places at our schools are offered in an open, fair, clear and objective manner. We work to the principle that any parent accessing our admissions arrangements will be able to understand easily how places for that school will be allocated, and will not be alienated or discouraged from applying based on admissions criteria.

The published admission number (PAN) for entry into **Year 5** at Highfield Middle School is 120.

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the School will be admitted.

Where the school receives more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the oversubscription criteria set out below.

Oversubscription criteria (in priority order)

1. 'Looked after' children or 'previously looked after' children i.e. children who were previously looked after but ceased to be because they were adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order (formerly a residence order) or a special guardianship order (see note 1) and **including children previously in state care outside of England** who have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted (see note 2).

2. Children with a normal home address (see note 3) in the school's catchment area, on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the catchment area by the appropriate admissions date. The school's catchment area as defined by Cheviot Learning Trust is [here](#) and also available on the Northumberland County Council "school catchment area digital maps" [here](#)

3. Cheviot Learning Trust Schools. Children with a normal home address (see note 3) outside the school's catchment area but who are on roll at a Cheviot Learning Trust school which is also an official feeder school of Highfield Middle School (namely, Prudhoe Castle First School and Mickley First School).

4. Highfield Feeder Schools. Children with a home address outside the school's catchment area, but who are on roll at a Prudhoe Partnership school which is also an official feeder school of Highfield Middle School (namely, Adderlane Academy, Prudhoe West Academy).

5. Siblings (see note 4). Children who have an older brother or sister who already attends Highfield Middle School and who are still expected to be on roll at the school on the admission date.

6. Other children.

Tie breaker

Siblings. In the first instance, children who have an older brother or sister who already attends Highfield Middle School and who is still expected to be on roll at the school on the admission date will be accorded higher priority between children in criteria 1 to 3 should the need arise.

Distance. Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight-line distance (**see Note 5**) between the home and the school, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 5 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The random allocation process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.

Multiple Births

Where the last place to be allocated would mean that a multiple birth sibling group, i.e. twins, triplets, or other multiple birth sibling groups would be split, the sibling will be accepted as an excepted pupil notwithstanding the school's published admission number.

Proof of Residence

Parents will be asked to provide proof of residency in the case of oversubscription. The address given must be where the child lives permanently. It must not be that of a childminder, grandparent, or other relative's address. If parents/carers share custody of a child then the Trust may request to see the court order, medical card or other evidence to establish where the child is resident for most of the time during weekdays. The Trust also reserves the right to withdraw a place at a school if information relating to address or any other matter is found to be false or misleading.

How to apply and further information

Northumberland County Council is responsible for coordinating the allocation of school places in the normal admissions round for children living in Northumberland. Parents and carers should apply to Northumberland County Council (or, if they live outside Northumberland, to their home local authority) using the online portal and the common application form before the published deadline.

Equal preference

The Trust 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 to 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 second class post.

Withdrawing an offer

The Trust 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 false 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 false or 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 obtained by false or misleading information. 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. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. 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

Cheviot Learning Trust, as the admissions 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 application and, where a place is not offered, informed of their statutory right of appeal. The admission authority may admit children in-year even if their admission would then exceed the school's published admission number.

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 headteacher. 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, it should be noted that, if a place in the requested age group is refused but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

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

Note 1

By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of a Local Authority or being provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of its social services function. An adoption order is one made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A ‘child arrangements order’ is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A ‘special guardianship order’ is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order).

Note 2

Children previously in state care outside of England means children who have been looked after outside of England by a public authority, a religious organisation or another provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. The care may have been provided in orphanages or other settings. In the case of children adopted from state care overseas, the admissions authority will require evidence that a child falls within this criterion by asking the child’s parents or carers for appropriate evidence of their previously looked-after status.

Note 3

By normal home address, we mean the child’s home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child’s parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school

week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgement about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with their GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the parent's name and the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on false or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is wrongly used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, Northumberland County Council (or, if the parents live outside Northumberland, their home Local Authority) must be informed. If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the forthcoming move (for example, an executed contract for sale or a signed tenancy agreement) before considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

However, in the case of families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas, we can accept an official letter declaring the relocation date and may use the address at which the child will live or, if requested by the parents, the unit or quartering address as the child's normal home address.

Note 4

By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 5

The distance from the front door of the child's home to the main gate of the school will be the deciding factor with preference being given to those whose home address is nearest to the school as measured in a straight line ('as the crow flies'). The distance checker is contained within the EMS school admissions software using GIS data. Distance checking is an integral function within the



school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement. This will be based on the child's normal home address.