



BELSWAINS PRIMARY SCHOOL
ADMISSIONS POLICY

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2025

Next Review: Autumn Term 2026

DW Reviewed: 23 July 2025

The admission policy of Belswains Primary School is to follow that as laid down by Hertfordshire County Council and the Government.

The school will admit to its current admission limit of 60 pupils for all year groups, except Nursery, where the limit is 26. Applications should be made in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council procedures for Reception class intake (and all other year groups) and parents will need to apply through Herts County Council -

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schoolsandhttps://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/schooladmissionseducation/school-admissions> .

However, Nursery applications must be made directly to the school – please see separate Nursery Admissions Application link on school website or contact the school office (01442 264324).

If the school is at any time over-subscribed, the following guidelines are laid down in order.

Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 requires the governing bodies of all maintained schools to admit a child with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) that names their school. If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined below will be used to prioritise applications.

Oversubscription criteria

Rule 1: Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, 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. Previously looked after children are those who were looked after but ceased to be so because of being adopted or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. 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 this rule.

Rule 2: Medical or Social Children for whom it can be demonstrated have a particular medical or social need to go to the school. 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 Rule 2 and must clearly demonstrate why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs.

Rule 3: Linked School - Belswains is not a linked school.

Rule 4: Sibling Children who have a sibling on the roll of the school or linked school at the time of application. This applies to reception through to Year 5 in infant, junior and primary schools; and from reception through to Year 3 in first schools.

Rule 5: Nearest School Children for whom it is their nearest school or academy. This includes all schools except those which allocate places on the basis of faith (membership or practice) before allocating on the basis of distance/location.

Rule 6: Distance Children who live nearest to the school. Children not considered under rule 5 will be considered under rule 6. These rules are applied in the order they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tie break will be used by applying the next rule to those children. Further details are available upon request from the school office.

Hertfordshire County Council's 'straight line' distance measurement system is used for all home to school distance measurements. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system. 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 residences using a computerised mapping system.

These rules are applied in the order that they are printed above. If more children qualify under a particular rule than there are places available, a tie break will be used by applying the next rule to those children. If more children qualify under criteria 5 than there are place available, priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school. Where there is a need for a tiebreaker where two different addresses measure 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.

Twins/Multiple Births: Every effort will be made to accommodate twins and other "multiple birth" applications whenever possible.

Continuing Interest: After all places have been offered, parents may wish to register their child for the 'continuing interest' (waiting) list. This will be maintained by Belswains for nursery applications, and by Herts County Council for all other Year groups. A child's position on a continuing interest 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.

Definitions:

In respect of the above categories, the Governors use the same definitions as Hertfordshire, set out in their admissions literature and website.

The following definitions apply to terms used in the admissions criteria:

Rule 2: Children looked after and children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to child arrangements order or a special guardianship order. Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012.

These children will be prioritised under rule 2.

Highest priority will also be given to children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

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 function (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 2.³

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 2.

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 2. Applications made for these children, with suitable supporting professional evidence, can be considered under rule 3.

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.

³ This definition has been amended in accordance with paragraph 1.7 (footnote 17) of the School Admissions Code that came into force on 19 December 2014.

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(1) or previously looked after (2) and, in every case, living permanently 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.

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.

1. Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.
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 short term or bridging foster placement.

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 and/or the family own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months.

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 which the child lives at for most of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, the address of the parent/carer that claims Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit will be considered as the child's main residence.

If a family is not in receipt of Child Benefit/Tax Credit alternative documentation will be requested.

If a child's residence is in dispute, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes.

Fraudulent applications

Herts County Council and Belswains Primary School will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored, and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. In the case of Nursery applications Belswains Primary School will act 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.
- Council tax information shows 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.

Age of Admission and Deferral of Places

Hertfordshire County Council's policy is that children born on and between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 would normally commence primary school in Reception in the academic year beginning in September 2026. All Hertfordshire infant, first and primary schools provide for the fulltime admission of all children offered a place in the Reception year group from the September following their fourth birthday. If a parent wants a full-time place for their child from September (at the school at which a place has been offered) then they are entitled to that full-time place.

Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age (5 years of age). Summer born children are only able to “defer” entry to Reception class until the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer was made.

Where parents wish, children can attend part-time until they reach compulsory school age. Any parents wishing to accept a part-time place or deferred entry should contact Belswains Primary directly to discuss their child’s requirements.

Summer born children (1st April – 31st August) – Entry to Reception

Legally, a child does not have to start school until the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Following guidance issued by the Department for Education on 8 September 2015 the county council has amended its policy for summer born children. An example: Children born between 1 April 2022 and 31 August 2022 are categorised as “summer born” and if parents/carers do not believe that their summer born child is ready to join Reception in 2026 they may delay their application until September 2027.

These applications will be processed in the same way as all other reception applications received at that time; there is no guarantee that a place will be offered at a child’s preferred school.

If parents wish to delay their application for a Reception place, they are advised to discuss their child’s needs /development with their current early years or nursery provider. If parents wish their child to remain in their existing nursery school or class for a further year (rather than moving into the Reception year group) they must let their current school know before the Nursery admission deadline date of Wednesday 11th March 2026.