



## **The Hills Academy Admissions Policy 2026**

The Hills Academy is a 420 place mixed Academy School catering for children between the ages of 3 and 11. The Governors will admit up to the Admission Number of 60 pupils in each year group at any one time.

Pupil places are normally requested in January each year to start in Reception in September. Children will be admitted into the Reception Class in the September following their fourth birthday. Admission to the school at other times will be processed under In Year Admission arrangements.

### **Principles**

The Governing Body is committed to the principle of maintaining the comprehensive nature of the academy. They reserve the right to respond to changes introduced by National and Local Authority initiatives.

### **Admission Arrangements**

We encourage parents/carers to make an informed choice about which school is suitable for their child(ren) and therefore encourage visits to the school before submitting an application.

Information for parents on application procedures and detailed timetables is available by clicking on these hyperlinks to either the [Bedford Borough website](#) or the [school website](#).

### **Normal admissions**

Normal admissions to The Hills Academy are arranged through the co-ordinated scheme operated by the Bedford Borough Council Schools Admission Service and therefore all applications must be made to them.

The online service and the application form is available from the end of October. The deadline for applications is in January each year – the exact date is on the Borough website. It is important for applications to be received on time. Separate application forms must be filled in for each child in a family. Parents will be notified in writing or by email during April by the Borough Council if they have been allocated a place in the Reception Year for September. Late applications will be processed after all of those that were received on time.

There are separate arrangements for nursery admissions which are outlined below. **A nursery place does not guarantee a place in the Reception Year.**

### **Admissions above the published admission number**

Should there be more applications than places, the following criteria will be used to determine how places are allocated:-

1. All 'looked after' children and all previously 'looked after' children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority of the school) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see definitions);
2. Children living in the catchment area\* with siblings at the school (see definition of sibling)
3. Children of members of staff at the school\*\* (see definition)
4. Other children living in the catchment area
5. 'Very exceptional' medical grounds (see definition)
6. Other siblings (see definition)
7. Any other children.

If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than the number of available places, the tie break will be the distance the pupil lives from the The Hills Academy

school, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the pupil's home to the Headteacher's office. The Governors will not give priority within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.

The Local Authority will normally offer a place at the catchment area school if parents apply for a place at that school during the normal admissions round. However, a place at the catchment area school cannot be guaranteed. If a pupil moves into the catchment area outside the normal admissions round (or after the allocation process has begun) it may be more difficult to offer a place at the catchment area school if this would mean exceeding the admission number. In such cases, an offer of a place will normally be made at the nearest Local Authority maintained school to the pupil's home address which caters for pupils of the same age and has places available.

Pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full.

### **Appeals/Waiting Lists**

Parents of pupils not offered a place at the school will have the right of appeal to an independent Admissions Appeal Panel. The school is not able to exceed class numbers of 30 in year R, 1 and 2. Any child refused a place at the school will be placed on a waiting list which will be prioritised according to the admissions criteria. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be maintained until the end of the autumn half term.

### **Definitions:**

**'Looked after' children from Outside of England** 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.

**'Looked after' children** A 'looked after' child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

**Previously 'looked after' children** A previously 'looked after' child is one who immediately after being 'looked after' became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An 'adoption order' is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

**'Sibling'** A sibling is defined as a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner, and in every case the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

**'Children of members of staff at the school'** This is a staff member who has been employed by The Hills Academy for two years or more at the time when the admissions form is completed or for a member of staff who is recruited into a role that fills a demonstrable skills shortage.

**'Very exceptional' medical grounds'** – '*Very exceptional*' medical grounds refers to cases where there are **exceptional** medical reasons which make it **essential** that a child should attend a particular school and where the preferred school is the **only** school locally that could meet the child's needs. A medical report from the child's doctor or consultant must be submitted with the application form, setting out valid medical reasons why it is essential for the child to be admitted to the school in question and the difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school. The Governors reserve the right to seek further information in order to determine whether it is essential for a child to be admitted to the preferred school on medical grounds. Admission on medical grounds cannot be considered where the medical condition relates to that of a parent/carer, brother or sister or other relative/childminder.

**'Home address'** A pupil's home address will be regarded as the address of the parent/carer with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/carers at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the pupil is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Monday to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against original official documentation, e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity, water) a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

## **In Year Admissions**

Requests for admission into other year groups should be made on the 'In Year' application form which is available from the Borough website and parents should send this back to the Borough Council who contact the school.

The Bedford Borough Admissions Forum has agreed the following exceptions which may result in the admission number for a school being exceeded:

- The admission of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs which names the school, when that pupil has either been assessed or moved into the area outside the normal admissions round;
- The admission of pupils in accordance with the In-Year Fair Access Protocol;
- The admission of pupils who have moved into the area, where there is no other suitable school within a reasonable travelling distance, or where the admission of an additional catchment area child would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. Before admitting children under this exception, governing bodies that are their own admission authority should consult their Local Authority who will be able to advise whether the first of these conditions applies;
- The admission of a looked after child or a previously looked after child (as defined) outside of the normal admission round.
- The admission of a child in very exceptional circumstances in which the Local Authority and the Headteacher are in agreement that not to agree to admit the child would be perverse.
- The admission of a twin or children from multiple births provided the admission would not cause a breach of infant class size limits

## **Admission into the Nursery Class (3+)**

Admission Number to Nursery Class (3+): 1:15

The Hills Academy admits children to the Nursery class in September.

The Hills Academy has a Nursery class and currently there are places for 30 children in the morning and 30 children in the afternoon.

Children may be admitted into the Nursery class in September after their third birthday. The majority of the intake will be in September with a limited number of children accepted in January if there are spaces. They may attend for up to five government funded sessions a week and additionally extra sessions can be paid for by the parent. If a family meet the criteria, additional sessions may be government funded. The morning session starts at 8.40am until 11.40am. If you would like your child to stay for lunch there are places for 30 children. You may collect your child at 12.30pm. The afternoon session starts at 12.15pm until 3.20pm unless your child is having lunch before the session when they may be brought in at 11.40am.

Please request a form from the school office to indicate your interest and the sessions required.

**The school administers applications into the Nursery class. Acceptance into the Nursery class does not guarantee a place in the Reception Classes in the September.**

The places are allocated on a first come first served basis with priority given to those children who meet the admissions criteria.

## **Catchment Area**

To check whether you live in the catchment area please check the [Bedford Borough website](#).