



Rickmansworth School

In Year Admissions Policy

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PART 1. OVERVIEW

Intent

This policy sets out the principles and procedures which Rickmansworth School will apply to all those applications for places in Year 7 which are received after the published deadlines and for admission to Years 8 – 13.

A reference copy of this policy is kept on the shared drive and it will be brought to the attention of all members of staff;

Review Process

This policy statement and the accompanying organisation and arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Tony Walker

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Matthew Flectcher

HEADTEACHER

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PART 2. POLICY

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the principles and procedures which Rickmansworth School will apply to all those applications for places under the following circumstances:
 - 1.1.1. those applications for places in Year 7 which are received after the published deadlines; and
 - 1.1.2. those applications for admission to Years 8 – 13.
- 1.2. Such admissions are termed In-Year Admissions.

2. The Offer of School Places

- 2.1. The School's in-year admission arrangements for school places will work within the agreed scheme of our in-year coordination. The governing body remains responsible for the allocation of all places in accordance with the School's published admission rules and all in year applications for, and allocations to, the School must be made directly to the school.
- 2.2. The Fair Access Protocol (FAP), which addresses the needs of hard-to-place pupils, takes precedence over all other considerations regarding admissions. The School may not cite oversubscription as a reason for not admitting a pupil under the FAP and is required to give hard-to-place pupils priority for admission over others on a waiting list or awaiting an appeal.
- 2.3. Except for 2.2 above, the School reserves the right not to offer a place where this would result in its roll exceeding its Published Admission Number (PAN).
- 2.4. Applicants who are not offered a place have the right of appeal if they have not already appealed for the same year group in a school year.

3. Late Applications for Places in Year 7

- 3.1. The School's admission criteria for places in Year 7 are described separately and can be found on the reverse of the School's green application form and in Rickmansworth School Today. The School is traditionally over-subscribed and so these criteria determine how places are allocated.
- 3.2. The published deadline for applications to be received by the School varies from year to year but is usually in October. The School will endeavour to assess late applicants using the criteria under which they have applied.

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However, if the application has been received too late for inclusion in the scheduled assessment tests no other arrangement will be made and the application will be assessed on the basis of the information provided to the Local Authority (LA) and on the Supplementary Information Form.

- 3.3. The School will not consider applications from those who ranked another school higher than Rickmansworth on the LA's secondary transfer form and were allocated that school by the LA. However, such applicants still have a right of appeal. This does not apply to the second round of Continuing Interest where applicants may change their preferences.
- 3.4. Immediately prior to the commencement of the academic year, the LA will wipe all data from the continuing interest lists. If a parent wishes their child to remain on the continuing interest list following the commencement of the academic year, they will be required to re-apply directly to the school. If they do not do this, their child will not be considered to be on the continuing interest list and should a vacancy arise, it will not be offered to them.
- 3.5. Places granted on appeal are at the time in addition to the PAN.
- 3.6. When a child leaves the year group a vacancy may exist. The School will allocate the vacancy by applying the criteria for admission in Year 7 in the order in which they are published. In the event of a tie, the offer of a place will be made to the applicant's permanent home AddressBase Premium address point and the AddressBase Premium address point of the School. Measurements of distance are made electronically by the Local Authority and supplied to the School, using an Ordnance Survey based interactive map.

4. Applications for Places in Years 8-10

- 4.1. At the start of Year 8, all places should be filled for that year group. Before the start of term, the School would normally expect to be advised of those who are not returning and therefore would fill those places from the waiting list.
- 4.2. Parents seeking a place in any Year group after the start of Year 8 should first apply to directly to the school and then complete an In-Year Supplementary Information Form and return it to the Admissions Officer.
- 4.3. Notwithstanding 4.2. above, when a vacancy exists and the School has more than one applicant for it, applicants, who must be resident in the UK, will be ranked according to the following criteria:
 - 4.3.1. those in public care (please see 5 below);
 - 4.3.2. those who have moved into the local area, defined by postcodes beginning WD1, WD2, WD3, WD4, WD5, HA6 2 and HA6 3;

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- 4.3.3. the child of a parent who is a permanent member of the school staff (as defined in the Admissions Code);
 - 4.3.4. those who have a current sibling at Rickmansworth School
 - 4.3.5. those who have a sibling who has accepted a provisional place in the Sixth Form;
 - 4.3.6. those who wish to transfer from other schools; other applicants¹.
- 4.4. Where no vacancy exists, parents will be advised of their right to appeal if they have not already appealed for this year group during the academic year.

5. Looked After Children

- 5.1. Rickmansworth School places a wider interpretation upon the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and offers priority placement to all children who are currently or have previously been looked after, irrespective of date.
- 5.2. Looked after children are those who are or have been:
- 5.2.1. in the care of a Local Authority, but ceased to be so because they were adopted under the terms of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46) or became subject to a Child Arrangements Order (such as is defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by Section 12 of the Children's and Families Act 2014 wherein any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a Child Arrangements Order; or
 - 5.2.2. the subject of Special Guardianship Order under the Section 14A of The Children Act 1989. Section 14A defines a Special Guardianship Order as an Order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's Special Guardian or Guardians; or
 - 5.2.3. provided with accommodation by a Local Authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).
- 5.3. 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 Criterion 1.

¹ Places will be offered to applicants who qualify under 4.3.2 BEFORE an applicant from outside of the local area as defined above, irrespective of the nearness of the applicant's permanent home Addressbase Premium address point.

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- 5.4. The School Admission code refers throughout to the **UK care system and as such, Local Authority shall be defined within the confines of the United Kingdom.**

6. Applications for Year 10

- 6.1. Parents must ensure that they have obtained, read and understood the School's prospectus for GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 before making an application. Copies may be obtained from the School.

7. Admission to Year 11

- 7.1. Unless the circumstances are exceptional, the School will not usually consider applications for Year 11 because it is part way through public examination coursework.

8. Admission to 6th Form (Years 12 and 13)

- 8.1. Parents must have obtained, read and understood the contents of the Sixth Form prospectus before submitting an application. Priority for Sixth Form places is given to pupils already attending Rickmansworth School but each year some places are offered to those applying from elsewhere. Further details are given in the School's Policy for Admission to the Sixth Form and the Sixth Form Prospectus.

9. Assessment of applications

- 9.1. In applying these admission arrangements, 'permanent home address' will be defined as the permanent place of residence in the United Kingdom of the parent with whom the applicant spends the majority of his or her time. The permanent home address must be the address where the applicant is living at the time of application and before the closing date for applications.

Where parents/carers share responsibility for part of the week, then both permanent home addresses must be quoted. The School may check the authenticity of the address stated. Proof of residence or further information may be requested and must be provided.

In previous years there have been a number of fraudulent applications made for the school and in most cases these were families residing within close proximity. In order to ensure a fair and equitable process, the Governors will request that all applicants allocated a place within our distance criteria (1 and 2) provide proof of their permanent residence.

- 9.2. The Governing Body reserve the right to investigate any applicant where an address may be considered as temporary and/or fraudulent.

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In all cases noted below, it must be demonstrated that any ties with a previous property are relinquished. The School in association with Hertfordshire County Council will begin investigative procedures in the following circumstances:

- 9.2.1. When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
 - 9.2.2. When a child is attending a school situated in a different authority to that of the residential address;
 - 9.2.3. When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
 - 9.2.4. When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
 - 9.2.5. When a family move residence at any point during the application process;
 - 9.2.6. When one or more of the following applies:
 - 9.2.6.1. The family has moved from a property where their application was less likely to be successful; or
 - 9.2.6.2. The family has returned to an existing property which was occupied prior to the closing date of applications;
 - 9.2.6.3. The family live or lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than 18 months) over the application period and in particular if the end date of the term of the tenancy precedes the commencement of term;
 - 9.2.6.4. Council tax information shows a different residence at the time of application;
 - 9.2.7. When a child starts at the School and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.
 - 9.2.8. When a child starts at the School and they change address within the first academic year.
- 9.3. In the case of 9.2.7 above, if it is found that the family have returned to an existing property, such an application will be investigated and if deemed to have been made fraudulently, the Governors may withdraw the offer of a school place and/or refuse future applications made on behalf of the applicant's siblings.

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- 9.4. In all instances as set out above, the applicant may be at risk of the offer of a place being withdrawn as a result of an application that has been investigated and deemed to have been made fraudulently.
- 9.5. ‘Permanent Home Address’ is also applicable where a family lives aboard a narrowboat or barge defined for these purposes as “houseboat”. Such application will be required to be supported by the relevant documentation from The Canal and River Trust including, but not limited to, proof of permanent mooring rights and craft licence/standard canal and river licence. Seasonal mooring permits are not considered proof of Permanent Home Address due to their transitory nature.

Applications from children from overseas

An **Secondary Transfer** application for a school place will not normally be accepted from overseas addresses. Although some Local Authorities will accept overseas applicants, the co-ordinating authority for this School, Hertfordshire County Council, will not allocate a school place to a child that is not resident in the UK.

The exception to this is for children of UK service personnel and crown servants. In these cases the co-ordinating authority for this School will allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address, for consideration of the application against oversubscription criteria.

If an applicant owns a property in the UK but is not living in it, perhaps because they are working abroad at the time of application, such address will not be accepted for the purposes of admission until the child is resident at that address.

Other children from overseas do not generally have automatic right of entry to the UK. An application for a school place will not therefore be accepted until they are resident in the UK. Proof of residency such as an endorsed passport or entry visa will be required with the application.

- 9.6. Application under ‘children of a permanent member of school staff’ must be submitted by the staff employee parent. A member of staff must either have been i) employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made or ii) recruited to fill a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
- 9.7. ‘Sibling(s)’, ‘Brothers’ and ‘sisters’ wherever mentioned in the admission criteria are 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 or previously

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looked after² and in every case living permanently³ in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

- 9.8. Where applications are made on behalf of twins and only one twin qualifies for admission the School will admit both children conditional on both twins attending the school. If the qualifying twin withdraws, then the second place is forfeit.
- 9.9. ‘Parents’ are natural parents, parents by legal adoption or foster parents.
- 9.10. All applications are assessed with respect to nearness of the applicant’s permanent residence to the School. However, only those with a realistic possibility of being considered for a place under this criterion will be subject to a detailed ‘straight line’ distance measurement which is used in all home to school distance measurements for community and VC schools in Hertfordshire. Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. 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.

10. Verification of Applications (See also 9 “Assessment of Applications” above)

- 10.1. To ensure fairness to all applicants the Governors may take steps to verify that the information given in applications is correct.
- 10.2. The School will verify applications **by reference to the Local Authority** and may request parents to confirm their residence by providing two of the following documents dated within the preceding three months:
- a utility bill or council tax bill and a credit card or bank statement.
- 10.3. Each document must be addressed to one of the parents and contain his or her forename and not just initial(s).
- 10.4. In the absence of all the above, for reasons such as a recent house move, the School may require an affidavit authorised by a solicitor.
- 10.5. Should the School be unable to establish to its satisfaction one specific address as the applicant’s permanent home address, then the applicant’s permanent

² 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.

³ 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 very short term or bridging foster placement.

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home address shall be deemed to be the permanent home address given at the time of enrolment at the primary school where the applicant is enrolled on the date of the application to the School. See also 9 above.

11. Children Out Of Year Group

- 11.1. The School's policy is for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance*⁴ which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".
- 11.2. If parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they should, at the time of application, submit supporting evidence from relevant professionals working with the child and family stating why the child must be placed outside their normal age appropriate cohort. DfE guidance makes clear that "it is reasonable for admission authorities to expect parents to provide them with information in support of their request – since without it they are unlikely to be able to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case".
- 11.3. The School's governing body, as the relevant admission authority, will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the information submitted. The governor's decision will be based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents, the Headteacher, the child's social, academic and emotional development and whether the child has been previously educated out of year group. There is no guarantee that an application will be accepted on this basis. If the application is not accepted this does not constitute a refusal of a place and there is no right to an independent statutory appeal. Similarly there is no right of appeal for a place in a specific year group at a school. The internal management and organisation of a school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership of the school.

12. Late Applications

- 12.1. Late applications are those received by the School from the Local Authority after their published closing date published.
- 12.2. Late applications **for Secondary Transfer** shall be assessed under all criteria except where the application has been received too late for assessment by test to be undertaken at the published times in the co-ordinated scheme.

⁴ "Advice on the admission of summer born children" December 2014

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- 12.3. Applications for **Secondary Transfer** received from the Local Authority after places have been offered (see 13) shall be placed on the waiting lists and will be ranked in order using the published oversubscription criteria. Late applicants will not be disadvantaged since no priority is given to children based on the date of receipt of their application or on the date when their name was added to the waiting list.

13. Changes of Circumstances

- 13.1. Applicants for **Secondary Transfer** are required to notify both the Local Authority and the School immediately in writing of changes in their circumstances including their address and contact numbers. Proof of address will be required by the Local Authority.
- 13.2. Changes in the circumstances of one applicant will not normally adversely affect the application of another.

14. Waiting Lists (Continuing Interest List)

- 14.1. Once the initial decisions to offer places have been made, a waiting list of the applicants who have not been allocated a place will be kept regardless of their wish to appeal. For Year 7, this list ranks in descending order the names of applicants according to the published criteria. Where applicants have applied under more than one criterion, they are likely to have different positions under each criterion. Applicants on the waiting list will be assessed under the published criteria in order, where (1) is high. For Years 8-11, this list ranks in descending order the names of applicants according to their proximity to the School (distance).

15. Right of Appeal

- 15.1. Parents who are unsuccessful in their application for a place for their child have a right of appeal. The appeal process is managed by the LA on Rickmansworth School's behalf. An Admissions Appeals panel will be convened in accordance with the Code of Practice and has the power to instruct the School and the LA to make additional places available where they consider a compelling appeal has been made.

The Admission Appeals panel is independent of both the LA and Rickmansworth School and its decisions are binding on both parties. No applicant is prejudiced by going to appeal.

- 15.2. There are two types of Appeal: Secondary Transfer Appeals apply to applications for places in the forthcoming September Year 7 cohort (current Year 6 students) and during Year 7. Appeals for places in Years 8 to 13 at any time are classed as In-Year Appeals.

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- 15.3. Unsuccessful appeals do not compromise an applicant's position on the waiting lists.
- 15.4. Places granted on appeal are at the time in addition to the PAN.