



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

# ADMISSIONS POLICY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27

Aspiration – Respect – Excellence

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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# HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

## ADMISSIONS POLICY 2026-27

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is an 11 – 18 co-educational comprehensive academy. This document details the policy to be followed for admissions to Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre prepared in accordance with the DfE School Admissions Code 2021.

### 1. Year 7 Entry

- 1.1 The admissions number for entry in September 2026 is 250. Reading Borough Council may request Highdown to take an additional number of students. The GLF Trust will consider this request and publish any changes to the admission number.
- 1.2 The academy uses the Reading Schools Admission Team which publicises the academy to parents in the same literature as for other Reading schools.
- 1.3 The academy will participate in the co-ordinated arrangements made by Reading Borough Council Local Authority. Parents/carers wishing to send their children to Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre should submit an application to their home Local Authority and follow the guidance of that Local Authority regarding deadlines for submitting the application. This information will be published in Local Authority admission guides.
- 1.4 In line with the co-ordinated admission arrangements of Reading Schools Admission Team applications received after the published deadline (31 October 2025) will be treated as a 'late' application and be considered after the on-time applications have been allocated. If there is good reason i.e. the family has moved to the area after the closing date or the illness of a single parent prevented them submitting an on-time application the application will be treated as on-time if submitted by 31 December 2025. Applications received after that time will be late applications.
- 1.5 Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, in line with the School Admissions Code 2021 has agreed that the over-subscription criteria will no longer give priority according to order of preference and will consider applications on equal preference basis against the over-subscription criteria.

If there are more applicants than places available, applications will be prioritised in accordance with the following over-subscription criteria;

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the academy will be allocated a place above all other applicants

a). Looked after children or previously looked after children. A *'looked after child'* or a *child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order including those 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. 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).*

b). Services children

- c). Children who have strong medical or social grounds for admission (see definition of social medical grounds below)
- d). To support Highdown staff, their children may access a preferential place after EHCP and Services children. This applies to Highdown employees employed at the academy on a permanent basis for a minimum of 12 months the time at which the application for admission is made.
- e). Children whose permanent home address is in the designated area of the academy who has an older sibling(s) who will still be attending the academy in Years 8-11 in September 2026
- f). Children whose permanent home address is in the designated area of the academy
- g). Children who do not live in the designated area who will have an older sibling(s) who will still be attending the academy in years 8-11 in September 2026.
- h). Other applicants

### **Tie –breaker**

If the academy does not have enough places for all applicants in a particular category – places will be allocated to those living nearest to the academy measured in a straight-line between the data point of the home and the data point of the academy. The data point is the unique address point for each property supplied by Ordnance Survey. The distance between the two points is measured using Reading Borough Council’s mapping software. The data point for the home and the academy can be seen on Reading Borough Council’s website. If there is no other way of separating the application according to the admissions criteria and to admit both or all of the children would cause the legal limit to be exceeded, the local authority, on behalf of the governing body, will randomly select the child to be offered the final place by drawing lots.

### **Definitions**

#### **Sibling**

Siblings are children who have either the same mother or father, or they are children who live together in a family unit and with their parent/carers(s). Siblings must also live at the same address as each other. If they do not live at the same address, then they are not treated as siblings.

#### **Home address**

The home address is the permanent address of the parent/carer(s) and their child. That is taken to be the address of the parent/carer who is statutorily responsible for the child and is assumed to be the address where the child spends the majority of their time, even if he or she lives at a different address for some days of the week. Further clarification of home address is provided by Reading Schools Admission Team in the guide for Parents & Carers issued at the time of application.

#### **Strong Medical/Social Grounds**

Children with a chronic medical condition or strong social grounds which is fully supported by written confirmation from the professional person involved in the case, and which states that Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is the only academy that the student can attend because of the medical or social reasons.

#### **Multiple Births**

In the event that it is possible to offer a place to one child and not others, the Trust would agree to allocate additional places beyond the admission number to accommodate children of multiple birth. In these circumstances, in the event of vacancies occurring after allocation day the Trust would not allocate any further places until the number is below the published admission number.

Highdown will admit students out of year group as per the DfE School's Admissions Code, section 2.17. Parents should make the case for wanting an out of year admission and the academy will give this appropriate consideration and will make a decision based on the best interests of the student concerned.

Furthermore, the academy may recommend an out of year admission for a student in response to the emotional and educational interests of that student. This could be, for example, where a student has been educated out of the British system and there are gaps in education or where there has been a sustained period of school absence due to illness.

### **Armed Forces Children**

Highdown School and Sixth Form centre wishes to recognise the Armed Forces Covenant which is a promise between the Government, the National and the Armed Forces. It's there to make sure that people in the Armed Forces Community aren't disadvantaged because of their service, and that the people who have given the most receive special consideration for the sacrifices they have made for the country.

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to look out for any problems these families might face because of their part in the Armed Forces Community, and then to assist in finding solutions to those problems. A family may be disadvantaged when applying for a school place (during service or upon leaving service). When an application is made from the Armed Forces Community and a place cannot ordinarily be offered, the Service children's criteria will give the child a higher preference after Looked After Children and children with an EHCP.

## **2. Waiting Lists**

After 1 March 2026 a 'waiting list' will be administered if the academy has more applicants than places available. A child's position on the waiting list is determined by applying the over-subscription criteria.

Positions on the waiting list may go up or down due to student withdrawals or new or revised applications and no account is taken of the length of time spent on the waiting list.

Waiting lists will be maintained until such time as the policy is changed, to fill places that may become available during the school year.

Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to Highdown in accordance with an in-year fair access protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

## **3. In-Year admissions**

Applications for entry to Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 after the end of the routine admissions round (ending on 31 August 2025) are processed as in-year applications and applications will be co-ordinated by Reading Schools Admission Team according to published admission arrangements.

The local authority will aim to notify the parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days, but they **must** be notified in writing within 15 school days.

Parents wishing to apply for a place at the academy should obtain an in-year application from Reading Schools Admission Team.

If there are students on a waiting list, then the student will be placed on that waiting list in a position determined by application of the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Year 7. Students will be admitted from the waiting list in order as space becomes available.

If there is no student on the waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the Academy Trust will determine whether a place can be offered to the applicant. If at the time of this determination the academy has applications from more than one student for admission to the same year group, all the applications will be ordered according to the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Year 7 and will be considered in that order. If you *have any queries please contact the School Admissions Team on 0118 937 3777 or email: [admissions@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:admissions@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)*

In reaching a decision on an application for admission to a full year group, the Academy Trust will normally refuse a place unless they are statutorily obliged to admit the applicant or the application is covered by Reading Borough Council's Fair Access Protocols.

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter in the same way as detailed in the normal round of admissions.

## 4. Sixth Form Entry Policy

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre operates an open policy for entry to the Sixth Form. Applications from students wishing to enrol in our Sixth Form who have studied their GCSEs and Technical qualifications at different institutions are considered alongside those from existing students at Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre.

The general criteria for acceptance is that the applicant must meet the entry requirements for the preferred study programme and subject eligibility.

To study A-Levels, students must attain five or more passes at grade 4 or above (or equivalent). Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre offers Level 3 and Level 2 Technical Study Programmes which require fewer passes at GCSE level. Specific entry criteria and subject eligibility criteria are indicated on our Academy website.

Students must pass their exams at the end of Year 12 in order to continue to study the subject in Year 13, although it is desirable to achieve at least a D grade at this stage. If students are at risk of not achieving passes at the end of A-Level courses, students will be required to have a formal interview with the Head of Achievement for the Sixth Form. Appropriate guidance will be given and may include ending studies at Highdown.

## 5. Appeals

Parents refused a place for their child in all years groups of the school, are entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Information about this process will be given in the decision letter sent either by Reading Borough Council on behalf of the Trust or by the Academy. Students and parents can appeal for places in the Sixth Form.

As per Reading Schools Admission Team guidance, applications from the Fair Access Protocol Panel will take priority for admission over other students awaiting an appeal for admission.

## 6. Permanent Exclusion

### **Students who are currently part of the process leading to permanent exclusion and apply for an in-year admission to Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre**

As per guidance from Reading Schools Admission Team, Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre hold the right to extend the in-year admissions application timeframe to facilitate the processing time and completion of permanent expulsion. Upon completion of this process, Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre will process the application as per the above in-year admissions information looking to ensure local authority guidance is in place to support any possible successful admission.

## 7. Students with a visual impairment

### **Students wishing to apply for a place in the Visual Impairment Unit**

Students who wish to apply to Highdown for a place in the Visual Impairment Unit (VIU) must follow the application process as dictated by their local authority's EHCP application procedure. Highdown will then complete additional consultation on the needs of the students. This will include gathering information from specialists and professionals, facilitating a school visit and meeting with parents. We will make a recommendation about whether we can meet the needs of the student. Students wishing to apply to the VI Unit must have an EHCP which stipulates VI as the main need.