



STUDENT ADMISSIONS 2026-27

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Contents

Purpose, Values and Aims of Highfields School.....	2
Year 7 admissions	3
Over-subscription.....	3
Admission to the sixth form	4
Over-subscription for the sixth form.....	4
Definitions.....	6

Purpose, Values and Aims of Highfields School

Our Core Purpose

To be an inclusive, happy community that values every individual and inspires them to achieve their full potential.

Our Values

Inclusion, fairness and equality
Respect and tolerance
Celebration of achievement
Personal reflection, honesty and mutual trust
Care for our environment

Aims – to achieve our core purpose and values we aim to:

- Respect all students and staff as individuals
- Celebrate diversity and promote equality
- Provide appropriate levels of challenge
- Develop understanding and enjoyment of learning
- Support and encourage individuals to make a valuable contribution to society
- Be a reflective school seeking continuous improvement
- Play an active part in our community
- Nurture physical and emotional well being
- Promote a happy, safe and stable environment



Year 7 admissions

Highfields School is a 11-18 comprehensive school which values a broad curriculum including the Performing Arts.

Parents/carers can apply for admission to the school for year 7 by applying online through www.derbyshire.gov.uk/admissions or by phone by calling 01629 533190. They will be invited to state their preference for any three schools and to give their reasons. Applications must be received at the local authority by **31 October**.

The school has no involvement in the process by which the new year 7 Intake up to the Published Admissions Number (PAN) are selected for admission. This is the province of the local authority alone.

The offer of places will be made by the local authority to parents/carers of all children concerned on the same day. This day is the same nationally, **and for admissions the date is the nearest working day to 1 March of the year prior to admission**. Places are offered on a full-time, permanent basis.

A place cannot be guaranteed for any child whose parents/carers apply after the closing date. This includes a child who moves into Highfields' normal area after that date.

If a child is refused admission to Highfields School, the parents/carers have formal rights of appeal.

The proposed published admission number (PAN) for year 7 in September 2026 is 210.

Children with a statement of special educational need or education, health and care plan (EHCP) that names Highfields School will be admitted first.

Over-subscription

Subsequently, where the number of applications for admission exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit until the number of offers we make matches our PAN of 210 or any number above our PAN which has been determined by the governors and to which the Local Authority have been notified in accordance with 1.4 of the Admissions Code of Practice:

1. A current '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.
2. Children living in the normal area served by the school at the time of application and admission who have brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of application and admission
3. Children living in the normal area served by the school at the time of application and admission

4. Children not living in the normal area served by the school but who have brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of application and admission
6. Other children whose parents have requested a place

When in the case of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 above, choices have to be made between children satisfying the same criteria, those children living nearest to the school (measured by straight line distance) will be given preference.

Admission to the sixth form

(including admission number for those admitted for the first time)

The admission number for the sixth form for all candidates will be 125.

GCSEs are an important indicator of how students are likely to achieve at A Level. Entry requirements for study in the sixth form are set out below. However, where there are other personal circumstances to take into account, we will listen carefully to teachers' recommendations of the academic potential of the student to achieve at A Level.

Entry into sixth form is based on academic ability in the combination of A Levels or other courses students are wishing to study. Students will be expected to have an average of a Grade 4 across all their GCSEs. This is the mean average. This is calculated by adding up all the point scores from each GCSE subject and dividing by the number of subjects taken.

Maths and science A Levels:

To take A Level maths you will need Grade 7 at GCSE.

To take further maths A Level, you will need a Grade 8 at GCSE.

To take a science subject at A Level you will need a maths GCSE at Grade 6 or above, and also a Grade 6 in that science subject at GCSE (or grade 6,6 in trilogy science).

English:

To take A Level English literature or English language you will require Level 5 or better in English literature or English language GCSE (as appropriate).

The number of places available for external candidates for sixth form entry in year 12 is up to 30.

Priority in the first instance for entry into our sixth form will be given to children with a statement of special education needs or education, health and care plan (EHCP) that names Highfields School.

Over-subscription for the sixth form

Where the number of applications for admission exceeds the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children, in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014, which states that all admission authorities must give highest priority to this group of children. Further details can be found under the 'Definitions' section in this policy.

2. Children who already attend the school and meet the academic entry criteria.
3. Children who do not presently attend the school and meet the academic entry criteria. In the event of an over-subscription of the above criteria, proximity to the school will be used with those living nearer being given priority. Distance measurements are measured by a standard straight line distance calculated to within two metres. This measurement is taken from the postal address file, normally the house front door. For Highfields School, the grid reference is taken from the nearest gate or entrance to the school's lower site - Starkholmes. This applies equally to those living inside and outside the County's boundary. No priority is given to siblings in this criteria.

Definitions

Looked after and previously looked after children

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 in accordance with section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of making an application to a school.

Previously looked after children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a residence order or special guardianship order). This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 and children who were adopted under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Child arrangements orders are defined in section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. 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.)

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.

Residence

This is defined as the child's permanent place of residence which is deemed to be the residential property at which the child habitually resides with the person or persons having parental responsibility for the child at the time of completion of the application form. Informal arrangements, even between parents/carers, will not be taken into consideration. Addresses of other relatives or friends will not be considered as the place of residence even when the child stays there for all or part of the week.

Proof of permanent residence (minimum 12 months tenancy agreement in the case of rented accommodation) and other evidence from the court regarding parental responsibilities in these matters may be required. If a parent lives in rented accommodation within the catchment area yet still owns another property within 20 miles of the school, the address of the owned property will be taken as the place of permanent residency, even if it is rented out to a third party.

Sibling

The governors define sibling as being those children who live as brother and sister at the same address. This includes biological siblings, half-siblings, step-siblings, foster siblings or legally adopted child living at the same address as the child. The sibling link only applies if the sibling is in year 7-11 at the time of admission.

Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' to include; all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person by virtue of a court order; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or a young person by virtue of a court order.

Catchment Area

This includes our historical catchment area, which has remained unchanged for many years and comprises of the combined catchment areas of our family (linked) primary schools. See Appendix 1

Linked schools

These are All Saints' CE Federation, Darley Dale Primary, St Joseph's Catholic Primary, St Giles C of E Aided Primary, Darley Churchtown C of E Primary, South Darley C of E Primary, Elton C of E Primary, Castle View Primary, Lea Primary School, Matlock Bath Holy Trinity C of E Controlled Primary, Winster C of E Primary and Tansley Primary School.

Closing date

This is the deadline for the application of the Common Application as defined by the Local Authority in their coordinated scheme.

Late applications

Late applications are those submitted after the closing date for the coordinated admissions scheme and will be dealt in accordance with that scheme. Late applications will be considered up to the date specified in the coordinated scheme providing the applicant can evidence that they have moved into the area after the closing date for applications or can establish at the time of completing the form that there were exceptional reasons for missing the closing date. Examples include family bereavement, hospitalisation, family trauma. Supporting evidence may be required.

When the school is informed by the local authority that a place has been offered, the local authority will write to the parent(s) seeking written confirmation that they will take up the place. If this confirmation is not received within 14 days, the school will notify the local authority that the offer of a place should be withdrawn and offered to the child ranked highest on the waiting list.

Waiting list

If, after the offer of places has been made, the school is over-subscribed, all unsuccessful applicants will be placed on the waiting list which will be administered by the governors of the school in partnership with the local authority for the duration of the coordinated admissions scheme. Your position on this waiting list will be determined by the school's published over-subscription criteria. The waiting list will remain open until 31 December in the year of admission for entry into year 7 and will be administered by the local authority. No waiting lists for any other year are maintained.

It should be noted that for criteria 2, 3 and 5 in the main school which use random allocation, a fresh round of random allocation must be used each time a place is to be offered from the waiting list. This is outlined in 1.35 of the Admissions Code of Practice. Late applicants will be ranked on the waiting list from the place of residency at the time of the Common Application submission deadline.

Independent Appeals

Parents/carers have the right to an independent appeals panel if you are not happy with the outcome of your application. Repeat applications in the same academic year will not be considered unless there is a significant and material change in circumstances and only then at the discretion of the governors. Parents/carers wishing to appeal should write to the Admissions Office, Upper Lumsdale, Matlock, DE4 5NA within 20 school days of notification.

Coordinated admission scheme

All applications for places in the normal year of entry are made on the Common Application. Applications must be made through your home local authority. For entrance to the school in September 2026 the closing date of the coordinated admission scheme is 31 October 2025, preceding admission to secondary school. Places are allocated on 1 March 2026.

Applications outside the normal year of entry

All applications made outside of the normal year of entry should be made directly to the school on the school website and will be administered by the governors. In the event of a place being available in the appropriate year group an offer of a place at the school will be made. If no place is available, the parent/carer will be informed of this along with the right of appeal for the refusal of a place.

Tie breaker

In the event of the need for a tie breaker in any of the over-subscription criteria listed in this policy, random allocation will be used. If a child is offered a place as a result of random allocation yet also has a sibling of the same age seeking a place and residing at the same address, the sibling will also be offered a place.

Random allocation

This is achieved by using the random number generation feature in Microsoft Excel. Each child's name is listed in a spreadsheet and assigned a random number. The numbers are then ranked with the lowest number being given the highest preference. This process is overseen by a person independent of the school.

Withdrawing an offer of a place

Any offer of a place found to be made on the basis of inaccurate information can be withdrawn. Such examples would include fraudulent applications, intentionally misleading applications, a false claim to residency in the catchment area and the failure of a parent/carer to respond to an offer of a place within 14 days.

Admission of children outside their normal age group

Parents/carers may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group if, for example, the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health. This also applies to parents/carers of summer born children (1 April to 31 August). When applying for a place parents/carers need to make it clear that they are seeking a place outside of the child's normal age group and they should clearly state why. Parents/carers should supply any relevant supporting information such as the child's academic, social and emotional development, the child's medical history and the views of a medical professional, and whether the child has previously been educated out of their normal age group. You will be informed in writing of the governors' decision with clear reasons for this decision. Parents/carers have a right to appeal if their request is refused by not if a place is offered at the school but it is not the parents/carers preferred age group.

It should be noted that 2.10 of the Admissions Code of Practice makes it clear that admission authorities must not provide any guarantees to applicants of the outcome of their application. In accordance with 2.10 of the Admissions Code of Practice our governors make no promise or commitment to any family that a place can be offered for their child.