

**STATUTORY
CONSULTATION ON
SECONDARY
ADMISSIONS
2003-2004**

**Admission rules for Community Secondary
Schools in Hertfordshire for the 2003-2004
school year**

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You can also get additional copies of the document and respond electronically on the County Council website at www.hertsdirect.org.uk.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In November last year the County Council undertook an informal consultation about the rules it uses for admissions to over-subscribed community secondary schools. More than 20,000 copies of the proposals were circulated for comment and we held a series of public meetings, which were attended by 950 people. We received 1,205 written response forms (a 6% return rate) and 101 letters. All of the proposals received some degree of support and a summary of what people said is included in Appendix A on pages 8 and 9. We are very grateful to those who took part in the process.

The County Council is required by law to formally consult on its school admission arrangements each year. The purpose of this document is to explain the rules that it proposes to introduce for admissions to community secondary schools for the school year beginning September 2003 and to invite comments from as many interested parties as possible. These proposals take the results of the informal consultation into account and contain a number of changes to the current rules on which we want to hear your views.

What we hope these latest proposals will achieve is :-

- a set of rules that are clear and help parents to understand at which school they have the best chance of securing a place
- greater opportunity for those parents who want their child to attend a local school
- the maximum possible number of parents securing a place at a ranked school

Section 6 on page 7 gives details of how to respond to the consultation and a separate response booklet is attached to help people make their comments.

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

The feedback we received during the informal consultation was that the public meetings were a very helpful way of explaining the proposals and helping people decide how to respond. We very much want to hear your views on the scheme that we now propose to operate from September 2003.

The following public meetings have been arranged for all interested parties.

11 February	Hertswood School, Cowley Hill, Borehamwood
12 February	Barclay School, Walkern Road, Stevenage
14 February	Hemel Hempstead School, Heath Lane, Hemel Hempstead
25 February	Sandringham School, The Ridgeway, St Albans
26 February	Kings Langley School, Love Lane, Kings Langley
28 February	Bishop's Hatfield Girls School, Woods Avenue, Hatfield
4 March	Chauncy School, Park Road, Ware

5 March	Sir John Lawes School, Manland Way, Harpenden
6 March	Hitchin Girls' School, Highbury Road, Hitchin
7 March	Sheredes School, Cock Lane, Hoddesdon

Please note that these meetings will start promptly at 7.30pm. They will cover both the admission arrangements proposed in this document and proposals for the home to school transport policy for children aged 5 to 16. Please feel free to attend whichever meeting is most convenient for you.

SECTION 3: FORMAL PROPOSALS FOR ADMISSIONS IN 2003-2004

The rules that the County Council proposes to operate in September 2003 for admission to oversubscribed community secondary schools are as follows:-

3(a): RULES FOR CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS

- Rule 1:** Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school
- Rule 2:** Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school
- Rule 3:** Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application.
- Rule 4:** Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties.
- Rule 5:** Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies
- Rule 6 :** Children who live in the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.
- This rule will be applied until 90% of places at the school have been allocated.
- Rule 7:** Children who live in the priority area who live closest to the school.

Rule 8: Children who live outside the priority area and who would have further to travel to another non-faith co-educational school than the one applied for. Where more children qualify under this rule than there are places available, places will be allocated to those who live nearest to the school.

Rule 9: Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.

3(b): PRIORITY AREAS FOR CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS

On the basis of further modelling work and comments made in the informal consultation process, it is proposed to introduce 13 priority areas for co-educational schools. These are based on the pattern of first rank applications from individual parishes and towns during the last 3 years and are as follows :-

- (1) Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth
- (2) Buntingford, Puckeridge and Royston
- (3) Hertford and Ware
- (4) Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Broxbourne and Hoddesdon
- (5) Baldock and villages
- (6) Hitchin and Letchworth
- (7) Stevenage
- (8) Welwyn, Hatfield and Potters Bar
- (9) St Albans
- (10) Harpenden and villages
- (11) Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead
- (12) South West Herts
- (13) Hertsmere West

More details of these areas are included in Appendix B on pages 10 to 14. If you have any alternative suggestions to make about these proposed Priority Areas then please include them in the Response Booklet.

3(c): RULES FOR SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS

Rule 1: Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the school

Rule 2: Children who can prove they have a particular medical or social reason for attending the school

Rule 3: Children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of application

Rule 4: Children of staff permanently employed at the school where the Local Authority has determined, in consultation with the Governing Body, that this is necessary to reduce recruitment and/or retention difficulties.

Rule 5 : Children who live in the priority area for the school and who demonstrate an aptitude in the area of the school's specialism (with those demonstrating the greatest aptitude being given priority). This rule to apply to 10% of places in those schools determined by the LEA following consultation with their Governing Bodies

Rule 6: Children who live in the priority area. Places will be allocated to each parish or town in proportion to the number of applications made. In the event of there being more applications than places available to a particular parish or town, places will be allocated in the following order:-

- (i) to those who would have to travel further to another non-faith maintained school than the one applied for.
- (ii) to those living closest to the school

Rule 7: Children living outside the priority area who live closest to the school.

3(d): PRIORITY AREAS FOR SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS

The proposed priority areas for single-sex schools are based on the pattern of first rank applications from individual parishes and towns during the last 3 years. They also take into account the fact that a number of respondents stressed the point that Priority Areas need to be the same in towns where there are both boys' and girls' schools.

Details of the proposed areas are included in Appendix C on pages 15 to 17. If you have any alternative suggestions to make about these proposed Priority Areas then please include them in the Response Booklet.

SECTION 4: HOW THE RULES ARE APPLIED

- a) The rules will be used only when a school is over-subscribed. In other words, if there are sufficient places in a school for all applications, then everyone who applies will be offered a place.
- b) Every parent will be asked to rank 3 schools. Each ranking will be considered separately against the rules for the school. If a child qualifies for more than one school then s(he) will be offered a place at the highest ranked school.
- c) The rules will be applied in order. If more children qualify under any rule than the number of available places, then, where necessary, the next rule will be

used as a tie break to decide who qualifies most strongly. A detailed example of how the rules would operate is shown as Appendix D on page 18.

- d) At the end of the allocation process, if the last place at a school has been allocated to a sibling who is in the same year group, then an additional place will be created above the admission limit in order to ensure that siblings do not have to be split. This place will be removed if the number to be admitted falls back to the admission limit.

SECTION 5: HOW THE RULES WILL OPERATE

- a) Rule 1 is designed to ensure that children with special educational needs attend the most appropriate school. Decisions about which school to name in a Statement will be based upon an Annual Review following the procedures laid down in the SEN Code of Practice.
- b) Rule 2 requires parents to provide independent evidence of their child's exceptional medical or social needs. This will be moderated by an independent panel, which will look at all applications under the rule across the county.
- c) Rule 3 means that children from the same family can attend the same school even though the family may live outside the school's Priority Area.
- d) The purpose of Rule 4 is to help schools reduce staff recruitment and retention difficulties. For this rule to be applied to a particular school, the Governing Body will need to be able to justify it to the Local Authority. The type of evidence needed to do this would include information about the history of recruitment and /or retention difficulties at the school; the impact or likely impact on educational or other standards, and numbers of relevant staff who have children of the appropriate age.

The Governing Bodies of schools seeking to use this rule will be asked to review its justification during each Autumn Term and to advise the Local Authority of their views in time for statutory consultation the following spring.

- e) Rule 5 applies only to schools which have been determined by the Local Authority to have a specialism in a prescribed subject. This will include schools that are already within the government's "specialist schools" programme. At present the prescribed subjects are art, languages, sports and technology.

The Governing Bodies of such schools will be able to select up to 10% of pupils by aptitude. The Local Authority, in consultation with the Governing Body, will identify suitable aptitude tests and arrange for them to be administered as part of the admissions process between 1 November and 15 December. Priority will be given to those demonstrating the greatest aptitude.

The Governing Bodies of schools eligible to use this rule will be asked to advise the Local Authority of their views during the Autumn Term in time for statutory consultation the following Spring. Additionally the Governing Body of any non-specialist school wishing the Local Authority to determine that it has a specialism should allow ample time for such a request to be evaluated.

- f) When measuring distances for Rules 6 to 9 (6 and 7 for single-sex schools) we will use a computerised mapping system which produces “designated routes” using made up roads and paths.
- g) When calculating whether a child would have a longer journey to an alternative school and qualify for a place under Rule 6, the Authority will measure distance from the nearest non-faith coeducational school to the child's home.

For example:

There is one place left at School A and two children, Laura and Greg, both want it. We will measure the shortest designated route from each child's home to School A. We will also measure the distance from their homes to their nearest alternative school (School B).

	Distance to School A	Distance to School B	Extra distance to school B
Laura	2km	3km	1km
Greg	1.8km	900m	0

In this case, Laura would be offered the place at School A ahead of Greg. Even though she lives 2km from School A, it is her nearest school and she would have to go past it to get to School B.

Although Greg lives closer than Laura to School A, his closest school is School B. Therefore, he does not have an extra journey to get to another school.

- h) When applying Rule 6 for single sex schools, all of the places remaining in each school after the application of rules 1 to 5 will be allocated to parishes and towns in the priority area in proportion to the number of applications made.

This will result in the widest possible spread available of places (The 25% distribution of places mentioned in the initial consultation did not achieve this).

If there are more applications than available places, then places will be allocated within each parish or town firstly to those who would have to travel further to another non-faith maintained school than the one applied for, and then to those living closest to the school.

If all of the available places at the school are not taken up through this rule, then those remaining will be allocated to children living outside the Priority Area using Rule 7 (children living closest to the school).

For example
Newcliff Abbot Girl's School is a popular school with 180 places. It has 207 applications, of which 195 come from the Priority Area

Places are allocated on the following basis :-

- Rule 1 2 children
- Rule 2 0 children
- Rule 3 49 children
- Rule 4 2 children
- Rule 5 0 Children
- Rule 6 127 places available for 152 pupils.

The places available under Rule 6 are allocated as follows :-

	No applications	% total applications	No. places allocated
Parish A	21	14%	18
Parish B	3	2%	3
Parish C	17	11%	14
Parish D	12	8%	10
Parish E	4	3%	3
Town A	65	43%	54
Town B	30	25%	25
Total	152	100%	127

SECTION 6: HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

We want to hear the views of as many people as possible on these proposals. Please let us have your comments and suggestions in the Response Booklet **no later than Friday 15 March 2002**. Please note that it will not be possible to take account of any responses received after this date. Responses should be returned to :-

**Louise Vickery, Hertfordshire County Council, Room 35, County Hall
Hertford, SG13 8DF**