



Sandringham School

Admissions Criteria for the Academic Year September 2024 – August 2025



Section 1 – General Principles

Sandringham School is a mixed comprehensive school in St. Albans for children aged 11-18. The school has a strong academic tradition in all areas of the curriculum with an additional focus on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) as well as the performing and visual arts. Students will be admitted at the age of 11+ **without** reference to ability or aptitude using the criteria below. The main principle of admission to Sandringham School is to maintain the character of the school as a mixed comprehensive school, providing for the needs of young persons who live in St. Albans and the surrounding areas. The school will endeavour to allocate places to students whose parents wish them to attend Sandringham School, provided they can be accommodated within the school's admission limits on student numbers. There can be no guarantee that such a place will be available.

The published admission number (PAN) for Year 7 for September 2024 will be **240**.

If the school receives more applications than it has places available, places will be allocated under the over-subscription criteria rules. These will be applied in the order in which they are printed below. A School Admissions Panel may be formed to determine whether evidence provided meets the relevant criteria. If there are fewer applications than places available, the school will allocate places to all who have applied.

We have a separate admission policy for sixth form students.

Children with an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan that names the school must be admitted and will count towards the admission numbers.

Section 2 – Oversubscription Criteria

- Rule 1** Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, 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 or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.
- Rule 2** Medical. Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a compelling medical reason for attending the school.
- Rule 3** Sibling. Children with a sibling already at the school at the time of application where there is a reasonable expectation that the sibling will continue to be attending the school at the start of the new academic year.
- Rule 4** Children of staff.
- Rule 5** Children who live nearest to the school.

Tie Break

When there is a need for a tie break where two different addresses are the same distance from a school, in the case of a block of flats for example, the lower door number will be deemed nearest as logically this will be on the ground floor and therefore closer. If there are two identical addresses of separate applicants, the tie break will be random. Every child entered onto the HCC admissions database has an individual random number assigned, between 1 and 1 million, against each preference school. When there is a need for a final tie break the random number is used to allocate the place, with the lowest number given priority.

Twins/Multiple births:

Sandringham School will admit over the school's published admission number when a single twin/multiple birth child is allocated a place at the school.

Section 3 – Explanatory notes and definitions

Children in public care (children looked after) (rule 1)

Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and these children will be prioritised under Rule 1. Highest priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order¹ or a special guardianship order². Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under rule 1 if the child's previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire's "Virtual School".

A 'child looked after' 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 (section 22(1) of The Children Act 1989).

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1. Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified in law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under rule 1.

Children who were not 'looked after' **immediately** before being adopted, or made the subject of a child arrangements order¹ or special guardianship order², **will not** be prioritised under rule 1.

The child's previously looked after status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

- i) to have been in state care in a place outside of England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
- ii) to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted.

A child is in "state care" if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by:-

- a) a public authority,
- b) a religious organisation, or
- c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

1 Child Arrangements Order – under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

2 Special guardianship order – under 14A of the Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians

Medical (rule 2)

Rule 2 applications will only be considered at the time of the initial application, unless there has been a significant and exceptional change in the medical condition since the initial application was submitted. All Hertfordshire schools have experience in dealing with children with medical needs and few applications under Rule 2 are agreed.

A School Admissions Panel will determine whether the evidence provided is sufficiently compelling to meet the requirements for this rule. The supporting evidence needs to demonstrate why only Sandringham School can meet the medical needs of the child.

Applications for children who were not “looked after” immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order may be made under this rule.

All applications are considered individually but a successful application should include the following:-

- a) For medical cases - a recent letter from a medical professional giving a clear explanation of why the child’s severity of illness or disability makes attendance at Sandringham School essential.
- b) If Sandringham School is not the nearest school, the supporting professional evidence should give clear reasons why the nearest school is not appropriate.

Sibling (rule 3)

A sibling means 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 looked after¹ and in every case living permanently² in a placement within the home as part of the family household, from Monday to Friday at the time of this application. This definition of sibling does not include cousins. The sibling rule will not apply where a sibling is in Year 11 and where the school believes that the sibling does not have a reasonable expectation of meeting sixth form entrance criteria at the time of application. The rule will not apply where a sibling is in the final year of the normal age range of the school (i.e. Year 13).

A sibling must be on the roll of the named school at the time the younger child starts. If a place is obtained for an older child using fraudulent information, there will be no sibling connection available to subsequent children from that family.

¹ 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.

² 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.

Children of Staff (rule 4)

The school will admit a child of a member of staff provided that:

- a) the member of staff (defined below) has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

For the purposes of satisfying these criteria, a member of staff is defined as a member of the full-time teaching staff, or of the part-time teaching staff with a 50% and above timetable, or a member of the full-time support staff

(on a 38 week and above contract), or of the part-time support staff who work 50% and above as determined by their role (on a 38 week and above contract) whose role and activities can be demonstrated to provide a significant impact on student achievement at the school. A School Admissions Panel will determine whether the member of staff meets the requirements for this rule.

Children of staff must live at the same address as the member of staff on a permanent basis.

This definition does not include contract staff. Where a service such as catering has been 'in house' and is subsequently 'contracted out', children of staff will not be eligible for admission under this criterion. This definition does not include peripatetic staff employed by HCC.

Children who live nearest to the school (rule 5)

All remaining places will be allocated to children living nearest to the school using the straight line distance measurement provided by Hertfordshire County Council's GIS system.

Home address

The address provided must be the child's current permanent address at the time of application.

- "At the time of application" means the closing date for applications
- "Permanent" means that the child has lived at that address for at least a year

Where a family has not lived at an address for a year, they must be able to demonstrate that they own the property or have a tenancy agreement for a minimum of 12 months* and the child must be resident in the property at the time of application.

The application can only be processed using one address. If a child lives at more than one address (for example due to a separation) the address used will be the one where the child lives for the majority of the time. If a child lives at two addresses equally, parents/carers should make a single joint application naming one address.

If a child's permanent residence is disputed, parents/carers should provide court documentation to evidence the address that should be used for admission allocation purposes. If two applications are received, with different addresses and/or different preferences, neither will be processed until the address issue is reconciled.

It is for a child's home LA to determine address. If two applications, with different addresses are received from the same LA, it will be for that LA to determine permanent address. If two applications are received from two different LAs, the above process will be used.

If two different applications are received for the same child from the same address, e.g., containing different preferences, parents/carers will be invited to submit a joint application or provide court documentation to evidence the preferences that should be used for the admission process. Until the preference issue is reconciled neither application will be processed.

For the transfer application rounds, if the initial differing applications (one or both) were received "on-time", an amended joint application will also be considered "on-time" if received before the "late deadline". If the amended joint application is received after the late date, it will be treated as "late". The late deadline for the 2024/25 transfer application process is 2nd December 2023 for secondary and upper applications. If this date changes, amendments will be published on the HCC admissions web pages at the start of the 2024/25 application process in September 2023.

** If, because of the nature of the agreement, it is not possible to provide a 12 month tenancy agreement, alternative proof of address will be requested and verified as necessary with the Shared Anti-Fraud Service.*

Other than children applying under Oversubscription Criteria 1 – 4, parents may be required to provide proof that the home address submitted is the permanent residence of the child. Please **DO NOT** send this at the time of application, it will be requested later. The school reserves the right to withdraw places or offers if fraudulent or intentionally misleading information is given. Please refer to our Guidance for Verification of Permanent Home Address for Oversubscription Criteria 5. This can be viewed on our admissions section of the school website at www.sandringham.herts.sch.uk

Fraudulent applications

Sandringham School will do as much as possible to prevent applications being made from fraudulent addresses, including referred cases to the Shared Anti-Fraud service for further investigation as necessary.

Address evidence is frequently requested, monitored and checked and school places will be withdrawn when false information is deliberately provided. Sandringham School will take action in conjunction with the Local Authority in such cases which would include, for example:

- When a child's application address does not match the address of that child at their current school;
- When a child lives at a different address to the applicant;
- When the applicant does not have parental responsibility;
- When a family move shortly after the closing date of applications when one or more of the following applies:
 - The family has moved to a property from which their application was less likely to be successful;
 - The family has returned to an existing property;
 - The family lived in rented accommodation for a short period of time (anything less than a year) over the application period;
 - Official/public records show a different residence at the time of application.
- When a child starts at the allocated school and their address is different from the address used at the time of application.

Parents/carers will need to show that they have relinquished residency ties with their previous property and they, and their child(ren) are permanently residing at the address given on the application form.

Home to school distance measurement for purposes of admissions

A 'straight line' distance measurement is used in all home to school distance measurements. 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.

Children Seeking Admission Outside their Chronological Year Group

Students will be admitted to Sandringham School in Year 7 at the age of 11 irrespective of physical or academic ability or age 12 if they are summer born children where a family chose to delay their entry to Reception by an academic year. It is Sandringham's policy for children to be educated within their correct chronological year group as far as possible, with the curriculum differentiated as necessary to meet the needs of individual children. This is in line with DfE guidance which states that "in general, children should be educated in their normal age group".

For children other than summer born delay entry, if parents/carers believe their child(ren) should be educated in a different year group they must, 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”. Such evidence must be submitted to Lesley Dunkley, Admissions Officer, at the school by no later than 31st October 2023.

A School Admissions Panel will decide whether the application will be accepted on the basis of the evidence submitted. If such an application is accepted it does not constitute an offer of a place, the application will then be processed by HCC in accordance with the admissions criteria. The Panel will make decisions based upon the circumstances of each case including the view of parents/carers, 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. The internal management and organisation of the school, including the placement of pupils in classes, is a matter for the Headteacher and senior leadership.

Section 4 – How to apply

All applicants must complete the Hertfordshire County Council’s **COMMON APPLICATION FORM (CAF)** indicating your preferred schools, including Sandringham, in rank order of preference. The completed CAF should be returned online to Hertfordshire County Council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions or by post to HCC, CHR 102, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertfordshire SG13 8DQ by 31st October, 2023.

Families wishing to use either rule 2 (medical) or rule 4 (children of staff) will also need to complete a **SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM (SIF)** which is available either on the school website at www.sandringham.herts.sch.uk or from the school on the Open Evening or via Lesley Dunkley, Admissions Officer, who can be contacted on 01727 799560 or via the admissions e-mail – admissions@sandringham.herts.sch.uk. The completed SIF should be returned directly to Sandringham School by **31st October, 2023** marking the envelope “ADMISSIONS”.

Section 5 – Continued interest lists, in-year admissions and appeals

Continued interest (Waiting lists): all unsuccessful applicants (who do not gain a place at a higher ranked school) will automatically be added to the schools continued interest list. Any places which become available will be allocated in accordance with the admission rules set out in this document. Continued interest lists will be held for every academic year group, until the end of the academic year.

Sandringham School uses Hertfordshire County Council to maintain a continuing interest (CI) (waiting) list for the school. A child’s position on a CI list will be determined by the admission criteria outlined above and a child’s place on the CI list can change as other children join or leave it. The county council will contact parents/carers if a vacancy becomes available and it can be offered to a child. Continuing interest (waiting) lists will be maintained for every year group until the summer term (date to be specified and confirmed to parents at the time of allocation). To remain on the CI (waiting) list after this time, parents must confirm they are still interested in a place by completing an In Year application form.

Sandringham must admit any student who is admitted through the appeal process, or who is the subject of a ‘direction’ by the Local Authority, and will consider Fair Access Requests on a case by case basis, admitting children under fair access over PAN, if necessary. Any such pupils take precedence over the continued interest list.

Appeals: all unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal to an independent panel for a place to be made available for their child. Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire’s online system should log in to their online application and click on the link “register an appeal”. Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals and click on the link “log into the appeals system”.

In Year Admissions:

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The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals

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Section 6 – Sixth Form admissions

Admission to the Sixth Form will be for any student (existing Sandringham or new to the school) who meets the minimum academic standards expected as set out in the Sixth Form Prospectus. The PAN for external students is **150**.

Applications should be made by completing the BSV Application Form and submitting the same directly to the school addressed to Louise Grubb, Sixth Form Administrator, Sandringham School, The Ridgeway, St. Albans, Herts. AL4 9NX by Friday, 3rd February 2024.

In the event of oversubscription to the Sixth Form places will be offered by applying the following criteria in the order given:-

Rule 1 Children looked after and children who were previously looked after, 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 or became subject to a child arrangements order or a special guardianship order.

Rule 2 Medical. Children for whom it can be demonstrated that they have a compelling medical reason for attending the school.

Rule 3 Sibling. Children with a sibling already at the school at the time of application where there is a reasonable expectation that the sibling will continue to be attending the school at the start of the new academic year.

Rule 4 Children of staff.

Rule 5 Children who live nearest to the school.

Continued interest (waiting list): all unsuccessful applicants will be added to the school's continued interest list. Any places which become available will be allocated in accordance with the admission rules set out in this document in relation to Sixth Form entry and the over-subscription criteria.

All unsuccessful Sixth Form applicants have the right to appeal and Sandringham must admit any student who is admitted through the appeal process. The governors' admissions panel will oversee all sixth form appeals. Any such pupils take precedence over the continued interest list.

Tie break: In the event of two identical applications, the tie break will be random.

The last date for admission to the Sixth Form will be 30th September 2024.

For further guidance regarding the definitions of the above, see section 3 of this document.