The Holt School Admissions Policy and Arrangements for the Academic Year 2024-25

The Holt School is an 11–18 girls' comprehensive school, with a co-ed sixth form and this document details the policy to be followed for admissions to The Holt School. Please note that living in or moving to the designated catchment area of the school cannot guarantee a place at the school.

Year 7 Entry

The admissions number for entry in September 2024 is 240.

The school uses the Wokingham Borough Council Admissions Service which publicises the school to parents in the same literature as for other Wokingham schools. The school will participate in the co-ordinated arrangements made by Wokingham Borough Council. Parents/carers wishing to send their children to The Holt School 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 and the school's website**.**

Applications received after the published deadline (31 October 2023) 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 may be treated as on time, provided it is received by 31 December 2023. In such instances evidence will be required to be considered by an Admissions Panel.

The Governing Body are required to admit all students with an Education, Health & Care Plan that name The Holt School and meet the specified academic requirements; these students will be admitted first.

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

A Looked after children or previously looked after children[1].
B Children who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their admission to The Holt School[2]
C. Children of staff at the school, where the member of staff is the legal parent and guardian of that child and
i) where the member of staff 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
ii) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage[3]
D Children whose permanent home address is in the designated area of the school and who have a sibling or step sibling at the time of application, who have one or more parents in common, or any other child, for whom the parent has parental responsibility, living at the same address, who are expected to be at the school when the applicant will enter the school. If the only relevant sibling is, or all relevant siblings are, in Year 11, then it must be the intention of the family that the relevant sibling or one of the relevant siblings is due to continue to study at the school in Year 12.
E Children whose permanent home address is in the designated area of the school.
F. Children who do not live in the designated area and who have a sibling or step sibling at the time of application who have one or more parents in common, or any other child for whom the parent has parental responsibility, living at the same address, who are expected to be at the school when the applicant will enter the school. If the only relevant sibling is, or all relevant siblings are, in Year 11, then it must be the intention of the family that the relevant sibling or one of the relevant siblings is due to continue to study at the school in Year 12.
G. Children whose parents have a preference for single sex education[4]
H. Any other children

Note 1:

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 function (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

A previously looked after child is a child who was looked after by a local authority but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became the subject of a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Childrens Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). It also includes children who have been provided with child arrangement orders (previously known as residence orders) under the provisions of section 14 of the Children & Families Act 2014 which amends section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and children with a special guardianship order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian under section 14A of the Children Act 1989. This also includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Applications received under the Criterion A must be made by the person with parental responsibility for the child (e.g. the child's social worker, acting on behalf of the local authority for a looked after child) and will need to be supported by the following official documentation, as applicable:

- Confirmation by the home local authority that the child is looked after or
- Confirmation by the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the issuing of one of the above orders

Note 2:
When submitting applications under category B (exceptional medical or social needs as grounds for admission) the application cannot be considered if it is not declared that the application is under this criterion and there is not written independent professional evidence. This evidence needs to be from a doctor, hospital consultant, psychologist, or social worker and must explain the reason why the school is the most suitable, the difficulties caused if the child had to attend another school and the reasons why it is essential that they attend this school rather than any other. Further information may be requested by the school. All supporting documentation must be received by 31 December 2023 for consideration prior to the main allocation of places. An admissions panel will consider the supporting evidence provided and will advise the applicant of its decision; the panel's decision is final. Any evidence received by the school admissions team after 31 December will not be taken into account in the main allocation of places but may, if agreed by panel, affect the applicant's position on a school's waiting list.

Note 3:
The term staff includes support and teaching staff on a permanent contract. A demonstrable skills shortage will be if any post has had to be advertised more than once or if there are no more than four viable applicants for a post. It is the responsibility of the staff member to indicate this on the common application form.

Note 4
Applicants who support their application by including on the form a statement demonstrating their preference for single sex, where the only alternative (co-educational) is available in the child's local area. If the school is oversubscribed on this criterion preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

Multiple Birth
Where the application of oversubscription criteria would result in splitting children with either the same birth dates or children born in the same academic year from the same family, then places will be offered even if this will result in the school going above its admission number.

Tie –breaker
Living in the designated area does not guarantee a school place as there may be more applications from parents living in the designated area than places available. Where this is the case, the following tiebreaker will be applied to decide which of the applicants can be offered places, and the waiting list order.

Within criteria **D** and **E** above, priority will be given to the applicants whose permanent home address is the shortest distance from home to The Holt School.

Priority will be given within any of the above oversubscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to the preferred school in terms of radial (straight line) distance. Distances will be measured consistently and will be measured as a straight line between the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) address points for the respective home address and school, using the Easting and Northing for each address point. These are then used to calculate the distance between the two address points using a 'direct distance mathematical routine' within the Capita ONE system used by the council's School Admissions Team into which the LLPG address points are imported. This calculates the distance from the values created through this process using Pythagoras' Theorem by measuring the distance in metres between the Easting and Northing for each end address point then multiplied by 0.000621317 to convert to miles. It should be noted that this calculation may not be exactly the same as that created by a Geographical Information System (GIS) product as the GIS product may build in a formula to allow for the curvature of the earth. This curvature does not begin to affect distance values until the distance is least 10 miles.

Residency Requirements

Home address

Applications are processed on the basis of the child's single permanent home address living with parent(s) or a carer/legal guardian at the closing date for applications. Reference to council tax records will be made to determine a single address for consideration of a place under criteria D or E. It is for the applicant to satisfy the school that they live at the address stated.

Applicants will be asked to declare that the address used will be their place of residence beyond the date of the pupil starting school. The school reserves its right to carry out further investigation and require additional evidence and to

reject applications or withdraw offers of places, if it believes it has the grounds to do so. In such cases, the applicant will have recourse to putting their application through the independent appeals process.

It is important to declare if there is to be a change of address prior to the child starting school. If the applicant already owns a property which is in the process of being sold, we are able to accept the address of the new property only on submission of the appropriate evidence in support e.g. exchange of contracts letter on both the new property and, , disposal of their current property. The latest date for submission of evidence to support a move is 31 December 2023. If the move takes place later or evidence is submitted later, the school will only be able to consider this information after the initial allocation of places has taken place and treat the new address for waiting list purposes.

If an applicant owns a property which they do not occupy and/or rent out and reside in another property that they own, within, or nearer to the designated area of the preferred school, then it is for the applicant to provide sufficient evidence that the address of the property they reside in is the family home, to allow that address to be used for determining designated area status.

Applicants are required to advise of any change of circumstance at any time prior to the child starting school. If the applicant does not declare such arrangements, or a different address is used on the application where the child does not usually live; it will be considered that a false declaration has been made and it may be decided to decline to offer a place at a particular school, or normally withdraw the offer of a place.

Temporary Addresses

A temporary address cannot **ordinarily** be used to obtain a school place. Temporary addresses will only be considered where evidence is provided of a genuine reason for the move. **Without being exhaustive**, special circumstances that might lead to a temporary address being considered might include:

- A family's principal home is unoccupiable because of fire or flood
- A family does not have access to a permanent or principal home in the borough. This may be because;
    - The family are refugees;
    - They are looked after children;
    - Families have faced eviction

A temporary address will be used until a permanent address is confirmed at which point an application/allocation would be revisited.

Split living arrangements

Where a family claims to be resident at more than one address, justification and evidence of the family's circumstances will be required e.g. split residence order or legal separation documentation. The application must be completed by the parent, at an address which is owned, leased or rented, where the child lives for the majority of the school week. This is based on the number of school nights a child spends at the home (Sunday night 1800hrs to Friday 0900hrs). The School Admissions Team will assess to apply the appropriate single home address for the allocation of a school place. The information provided will be considered by an admissions panel of at least two officers and their decision is final. It is recommended that consensus is reached by both parents and child on the school preferences to be expressed and it should be noted that only one offer letter will be sent to the main applicant unless otherwise requested and agreed by both parents.

Applicants from abroad

An application for a school place can be made from applicants applying for a school place for their child from abroad, provided that they can provide evidence of their right of abode. The address used will be the address where the child is living at the closing date for applications unless evidence is provided that the family is returning to a property that they own in the Borough by 31 December 2023. Third party written evidence confirming the details and timing of the relocation will be required. Adjustments will be made to any waiting lists, if the family returns later, prior to the start of school. Further advice on the documentation required can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

Service Families

Families of UK service personnel (and other Crown Servants) who are not yet living in the area will be able to make an application if it is accompanied by an assignment order declaring a relocation date and intended address.

Changes of preference

Parents who wish to amend the application before the closing date will be allowed to do so as long as they put their request in writing to the home authority School Admissions Team or amend their online application by the closing date.

Parents who wish to amend their application after the closing date should put their request in writing to home Local Authority School Admissions Team. No consideration will be given to their request until after the offer date.

Admissions outside the normal age group

Out-of-age-group admissions will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Holt School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Holt School. Where refused parents will be informed of their statutory right to appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

Accepting or declining the offer of a place

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the local authority within two weeks from the date of the offer letter. If a form is not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Parents are requested to advise the local authority at any stage, if they are not accepting the place for any reason.

Waiting Lists

After 2 March 2024, a 'waiting list' will be administered by the Local Authority if the school has more applicants than places available. A child's position on the waiting list is determined by applying the oversubscription criteria as described above. Positions on the waiting list may go up or down due to pupil 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 September 30th of Year 10, to fill places that may become available during the school year. Parents will receive annual requests to see if they wish to remain on the list. Children who are the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit or who are allocated to The Holt School in accordance with an in-year fair access protocol will take precedence over those on the waiting list.

In Year admissions to Years 7-11

Applications for entry to Year 7 after the end of the routine admissions round (ending on 31 August) and applications for entry into Year 8 to Year 11 at any time are processed as in-year applications and applications must be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council according to published co-ordinated admission arrangements and timescales. See www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions.

Parents wishing to apply for a place at the school should obtain a copy of their common application form from Wokingham Borough Council. This should be completed and returned to Wokingham Borough Council in accordance with its instructions. Wokingham Borough Council has been commissioned to consider applications on behalf of the school in accordance with the school's admissions policy and following confirmation by the school will notify the parent of the outcome of the application on behalf of the school.

If there are pupils on a waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the pupil will be placed on that waiting list in a position determined by application of the criteria used in determining initial admissions to Year 7. Pupils will be admitted from the waiting list in order as space becomes available.

Waiting lists will be retained by the local authority to fill places that may become available during the school year until September 30, of Year 10. Parents will be asked to inform the local authority if they wish to remain on waiting lists and will receive annual requests to see if they wish to remain on the list. The local authority holds the waiting list for The Holt School.

If there is no pupil on the waiting list for the year into which the applicant is seeking admission, then the governing body will determine whether a place can be offered to the applicant. If at the time of this determination the school has applications from more than one pupil 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.

Any decision to admit in-year will be based on whether admitting another child will prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Out-of-age-group admissions in other year groups will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be

reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Holt School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Holt School.

Accepting or declining the offer of a place

Parents are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the local authority within two weeks from the date of the offer letter. If a form is not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Parents are requested to advise the local authority at any stage, if they are not accepting the place for any reason.

Unsuccessful applicants must confirm they wish to be placed on the waiting list.

Appeals (applicable to Years 7 to 11)

Students refused a place 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 by the local authority on behalf of the school. Appeals against the decision not to admit a child should be sent on the appropriate appeal form within 20 school days from the date of the letter refusing a place (in the case of Year 7) or in line with the appeal timetable published by Wokingham Borough Council. The decisions of the appeals panel are binding on the school.

In the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school will not consider any further application for admission, nor is there any right to a further appeal for admission, within the same academic year (September 1 to August 31) unless there is an exceptional situation resulting in a significant change of circumstance relevant to the applicant.

Sixth form admissions

The school accepts applications from boys and girls to the sixth form. Students must be between the ages of 16 and 18 years old on the 31st August in the relevant funding year.

For admission to the Sixth Form, students will be required to achieve at least 5 GCSEs grade 4 to 9. In addition, each course has specific entry requirements as detailed in the school sixth form prospectus.

Internal Students

All students attending the school at the end of Year 11, will be offered places in the Sixth Form provided they meet the academic requirements of the school and they will be offered places on the courses they wish to follow provided that they meet the specified academic requirements for those courses and provided there are spaces available. Courses will not run if there are too few students enrolled on to it. Minimum and maximum course numbers will be decided by The Holt senior leadership team, and may vary by course. These students have priority over external students.

External Students

The Holt Sixth Form will offer a minimum of 10 places for external students in September 2024 but more places may be available subject to the take-up by internal applicants. External students will be offered places when spaces are available in the school sixth form and on the courses they wish to take, provided they have met the specified academic requirements. When applicants can be offered a place at the school but a course they wish to pursue is full, they will be offered an alternative course.

Children above compulsory school age and their parents, have the right to make a separate school sixth form application.

Making an application

Those seeking a place in the school's Sixth Form starting in Year 12 in September 2024 should complete the school's Sixth Form Application form, which will be available on the school's website from October 2023 and the deadline for submission will also be published at this time.

Personal guidance meetings may be arranged with students and their parents to discuss the options open to the student and to help the student decide on the suitability for them of particular courses. Such meetings play no part in the allocation of places, which are determined solely by the application of the criteria below.

Late applications

If an application is received after the deadline, this will be considered 'late'. Late applications will be considered after the allocation of places and notified after the main allocation date. All late applicants must be on roll by 29th September 2024, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Exceptional circumstances will apply when the application is received before the date parents are notified of places and there is a valid reason that the application could not have been made by the due date, e.g. because of hospitalisation of a parent or a family has just moved into the area. In such instances, evidence will be required.

Criteria for admission

The Governing Body will admit all applicants for whom there are places available on courses they wish to pursue provided they meet the entry requirements and the specific subject academic requirements. Should there be more applicants than places, then places will be allocated to pupils who fall into the following criteria in order of priority. Within each criterion applicants will be ordered according to the distance they live from the school measured as a straight line between the Land and Property Gazetteer address points for the home address and the school, using the local authority's computerized mapping system. This is explained in the Year 7 policy. Students must have the legal right of residence in the United Kingdom at the start of their study programme.

The Governing Body are required to admit all students with statements of special educational needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan that name The Holt School in the statement and meet the specified academic requirements; these students will be admitted first.

Students already attending the school at the time of application are prioritised for entry to the sixth form. The following criteria referred to above will be applied to applicants who do not attend the school:
A Looked after children or previously looked after children[5].

B All other applicants meeting the academic requirements.[6]

Note 5: 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 function (see definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). A previously looked after child is a child who was looked after by a local authority but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became the subject of a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Childrens Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). It also includes children who have been provided with child arrangement orders (previously known as residence orders) under the provisions of section 14 of the Children & Families Act 2014 which amends section 8 of the Children Act 1989 and children with a special guardianship order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian under section 14A of the Children Act 1989. This also includes children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Applications received under the Criterion A must be made by the person with parental responsibility for the child (e.g. the child's social worker, acting on behalf of the local authority for a looked after child) and will need to be supported by the following official documentation, as applicable:

- Confirmation by the home local authority that the child is looked after or
- Confirmation by the local authority that last looked after the child confirming that the child was looked after immediately prior to the issuing of one of the above orders

Note 6: If there are insufficient spaces on any course for all those students who have expressed an interest and who have the appropriate qualifications, then places will be allocated on the same basis as used for admission to the main school.

Applicants who are unsuccessful at obtaining places on a particular course will be offered a place on an alternative course. Offers of places to external students will be subject to the school confirming date of birth or right of abode by examination of the birth certificate and/or student's passport, as appropriate.

Parents will be asked to declare that the address used in the application will be their place of residence beyond the date of the student starting at the school; the offer of a place may be withdrawn if false or misleading information is given. Supporting evidence of this declaration may be required in the case of there being more applications than can be accepted.

Out-of-age-group admissions will only be agreed where there is consensus that it is in the best interests of the child; the circumstances of each case will be considered individually. Such a consensus would be reached between the parents, schools concerned (the current school and The Holt School) and any relevant professionals asked for their opinion on the case by The Holt School.

Applications by students who wish to re-sit or re-take a full year will not be accepted as they are not generally eligible for funding. Exceptions to this may be considered if the student can demonstrate there are exceptional circumstances outside of the control of the student or the institution, such as a period of long term sickness. In cases such as these, students will be admitted at the discretion of the Co Headteachers, and will be asked to provide evidence of the exceptional circumstances

Accepting or declining the offer of a place.

Places are offered on the understanding that there is a commitment to meet the academic requirements of the school and the individual courses. Applicants are required to accept or decline the allocated place using the form sent with the allocation letter. The form must be returned to the school within two weeks from the date of the offer letter. If a form is

not received, there will be one further written warning and failure to respond may result in the place being withdrawn. Applicants are requested to advise the school at any stage if they are not accepting the place for any reason.

Enrolment

Students are required to enrol on their chosen courses during the allocated Enrolment Days at The Holt. Failure to enrol on their chosen courses in advance of the beginning to the school term, may result in the place being withdrawn. The completion of the relevant enrolment documentation denotes successful enrolment. Students who wish to change, or do not satisfy the course requirements, of their course choices, will be offered alternative appropriate courses, where available. Students wishing to study a course that is full will be placed on a waiting list. Admission criteria, as detailed above will be used to allocate any additional places.

Appeals

Anyone whose application is unsuccessful is entitled to appeal to an independent appeals panel. Information about this process can be obtained from the school.

General Contact information

Copies of the sixth form prospectus, application form for sixth form and the school admissions policy are available on the school website or from the school.

Email holtschool@holt.wokingham.sch.uk Telephone 0118 978 0165

Copies of Wokingham Borough Council documents, parent's guides and common application forms are available on its web site: www.wokingham.gov.uk/admissions. They can also be obtained from the School Admissions Team, whose contact details are given below. Any queries about Wokingham's admission arrangements should be addressed to the team.

Email schooladmissions@wokingham.gov.uk Telephone (0118) 974 6000
School Admissions Team
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