

Admissions Policy for Entry in 2027

Date Approved:

May 2026

Equality Impact Assessment:

May 2026

Post of Member of Staff Responsible:

Deputy Principal

Review:

March 2027

College Purpose & Mission

Hills Road provides an enriching academic pathway for the young people of Cambridgeshire, offering a nurturing and innovative community which develops creative and confident learners, resourceful and resilient individuals, and responsible and active citizens of the world.

College Values

Diversity, Excellence, Respect, Integrity, Community and Kindness.

1. The College

Hills Road Sixth Form College (HRSFC) is a state funded setting providing A level study programmes for 16- to 19-year-old students. The College's governing body sets its own policies and is solely responsible for admission of students to the College. The College belongs to the Further Education sector and therefore operates separately to the School or Academy Admissions Codes.

HRSFC's purpose, set out in the College 2024-2028 Strategic Plan is "to offer an academic pathway for growth to the young people of Cambridgeshire through an enriching educational experience that opens doors, hearts and minds."

HRSFC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming community, where all students are enabled to meet their full potential and are respected as individuals. We welcome applications from students irrespective of their race, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief or lack of religion/belief, disability, family responsibility, gender, or sexual orientation.

2. The students we support

Admission to the College's full-time Year 12 A level courses is for applicants in Year 11 or who are repeating Year 12. Students must be 16 or 17 years of age on 31 August of the year in which their A level programme commences.

HRSFC is a member of the Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership (CAP) and welcomes applications from any student within the Partnership that meets our entry criteria (see section 10). CAP includes the following secondary (11-16) schools:

Bassingbourn VC, Bottisham VC, Cambourne VC, Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology, Chesterton CC, Coleridge CC, Comberton VC, Cottenham VC, Ely College, Impington VC, Linton VC, Melbourn VC, North Cambridge Academy, Northstowe SC, Parkside CC, Sawston VC, Soham VC, St. Bede's Inter-Church School, Swavesey VC, The Netherhall School, Trumpington CC, VISTA Academy Littleport, Witchford VC.

Each year we aim to make approximately 500 offers to students studying at non-CAP schools. These students must live at a permanent address with their parents or legal guardians within a sustainable commute of the College at the point of application in January.

3. Advice and guidance

HRSFC provides information, advice and guidance to support students with their post-16 application journey. This includes but is not limited to:

- Open Events, held in the summer term of Year 10;
- Information evenings at CAP schools and some Non-CAP schools in the autumn term of Year 11;
- Offer of a Guidance Meeting in the spring term of Year 11 for applicants who are qualified or can make themselves qualified for at least three A levels by changing their subject choices;
- Invitation to a post-16 transition day for all offer holders in July; and
- Post-GCSE results advice at Enrolment for unqualified offer holders.

Offer holders who accept their place at Enrolment also attend a compulsory 'Getting Started' session (section 17) in September before starting full-time at the College.

4. The application process

HRSFC has two different routes for making an application depending on the school the applicant attends.

CAP schools: In line with other CAP post-16 centres in the Cambridgeshire area, HRSFC uses the online application platform MyChoice16. The applicant's school will create their account and support them to complete their application.

All other schools: Students must submit their application via Applica, the College's online application platform.

Applications from both platforms are available from mid-October each year. The closing date for CAP and Non-CAP applications in January is published on our website. There are two deadlines: the first for Non-CAP schools, and the second for CAP schools.

4.1 School reference and predicted grades

As part of the application, the applicant's current school will be required to provide a personal reference and predicted GCSE grades. Where an applicant has achieved actual GCSE grades (for example by sitting an exam early in Year 10), these should be included in the application. This information is automatically requested through both application platforms.

4.2 Updating predicted grades after the application closing date

HRSFC can only accept predicted GCSE grades submitted by the application deadline in January. We cannot update grades following the application deadline, even if more recent estimations become available, e.g., mock exam results. Schools are advised to contact the College directly if there are any issues relating to the data entry of grades.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the most recent and accurate predicted GCSE grades are submitted with their application.

5. Applicants with Special Educational Needs and Disability

HRSFC welcomes applications from students who may require additional support and endeavours to ensure that information and guidance is in an accessible form, in line with recommendations for accessibility made by organisations such as The Sutton Trust and Equally Ours. Should any applicant or their parents or legal guardians need any further support, please contact the Admissions department.

Applicants should ensure they have completed the relevant section in the application form covering medical conditions, disabilities, learning support and pastoral needs, so that guidance meetings can be arranged with an appropriate member of staff.

5.1 Applicants with an EHCP

Where applicants currently have an EHCP and intend to put HRSFC as their named first choice centre, their Local Education Authority must send a written placement consultation to HRSFC, along with a copy of the most recent annual review and up to date EHCP, so that we can ensure we are fully able to meet their needs. It is also important that a member of the College's Study Skills team is invited to the applicant's EHCP annual review in Year 11 to discuss transition planning.

Students with an EHCP will still need to meet the minimum entry Admissions Score and predicted GCSE grade requirements for their chosen A level subjects as specified on our website.

For further, please refer to the College's [Special Education Needs and Disability Policy](#).

6. Applicants with qualifications from outside the UK

Applicants with non-UK qualifications, for example, overseas qualifications, will be required to have the equivalence of their qualifications verified by UK ENIC (www.enic.org.uk). We may also require that the applicant sits a CAT4 test remotely under exam conditions with a member of our Admissions team, to help assess their level of written and spoken English and level of comprehension.

Please note, UK ENIC charge the applicant a fee for providing this 'Statement of Comparability'. In the case of a student with Refugee status, this fee can be reimbursed by the HRSFC. Other requests for financial support with a CAT4 test will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Should an applicant be unable to gain a Statement of Comparability and, if applicable, meet the required standard in the CAT4 test, the College reserves the right to withdraw their application due to the lack of comparable grade evidence or evidence that the applicant is likely to cope with the demands of the core study programme.

HRSFC is required to ensure that students are eligible for ESFA funding, which is guaranteed if they are living with a parent who:

- Has British citizenship and/or
- Has a right of abode/leave to enter the UK and/or
- Has a relevant work permit/visa and/or
- Is a foreign diplomat.

Please provide the relevant documentary evidence in relation to the above.

Applications from students who are not eligible for ESFA funding will have their application withdrawn by the College.

The College does not hold a licence to support applicants with Home Office Tier 4 status.

Where an applicant is eligible for ESFA funding but does not obtain a Statement of Comparability in relation to GCSE Maths or English, we may make a discretionary offer. Such applicants may be required to study GCSE Maths and English as part of the study programme with the College as a condition of funding.

7. Applicants who are home-schooled

Where an applicant is home-schooled and has not been able to study at least eight GCSE subjects, we will assess each application on a case-by-case basis. For example, in the past we have aggregated the predicted grades for those GCSEs being taken to create a proxy Admissions Score. The approach taken will be informed by the circumstances of the applicant which are likely to vary from case to case.

To support the application predicted grades and a reference will be requested. This needs to be supplied by a person with a professional relationship with the student, for example, an online teacher or subject tutor, and not a parent, relative or family friend.

8. Applications for transfer to A Level Courses mid-course from other schools and colleges

HRSFC offers two-year linear A level courses. Therefore, the College cannot accept students transferring part way through a year or transferring from another institution into the second year of study.

Any student who has already completed some or most of their first year of A level study elsewhere will need to submit an application to restart in Year 12 and achieve the criteria in section 10. Applicants must be 16 or 17 years of age on 31 August of the year their A level programme commences.

9. Making the application

9.1 Core Study Programme

The Hills Road 'Core Study Programme' for **all** Year 12 students includes:

- Three or four A level subjects
- Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- Future Ready (Tutorial) Programme
- Enrichment

9.2 Admissions Score and Predicted GCSE Grades

HRSFC has its own entry requirements for each A level course: a minimum GCSE grade and a minimum Admissions Score

At application in January, a student's current school submits predicted GCSE grades as part of their reference and any actual grades achieved early.

The Admissions Score is used to measure the overall academic strength of an application. It is the sum of:

- GCSE English Language grade x 2
- GCSE Mathematics grade x 2
- The next six highest predicted grades

The [Admissions Score Calculator](#) is available on our website.

Admissions Scores are different for each A level subject, but are grouped as follows:

- Minimum entry (most of our A level courses): 58, or 56 for CAP students
- Mathematics: 60
- Higher (Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science and Physics): 71, or 69 for CAP students
- Four A level Programme (including Further Maths): 78

To be fair to all applicants, we do not include the following in our Admissions Scores:

- Level 3 qualifications
- GCSE Further Mathematics
- More than two Level 2 vocational qualifications
- Short courses

10. Entry Criteria

Applicants need to satisfy the following entry criteria:

- The application is received by the closing date published on the College website. There are two deadlines: the first for non-CAP schools, and the second for CAP schools.
- Using the predicted GCSE grades provided by the current school, the application meets both the minimum Admissions Score and the minimum GCSE grade requirements for each A level course selected. Applicants must include a minimum of three A level subjects for which they meet the entry requirements.
- The applicant's overall combination of subjects at GCSE/IGCSE/vocational or equivalent qualifications provides a suitable foundation for progression onto their chosen A level programme.
- All applicants must apply from their permanent home address where they are living with their parents or legal guardians. To meet our safeguarding obligations, we have strict criteria around the definition of permanent home address. See section 11.
- For applicants who attend Non-CAP schools, the permanent home address must be within a sustainable commute of the College. The College reserves the right to make its own judgement of a sustainable commute, but this would typically be up to an hour each way and would include a review of local travel options.
- HRSFC is placed as first choice sixth form centre on the application, or second choice behind a CAP school sixth form, which include:

Bishop Laney Sixth Form; CAST Sixth Form; Cambridge Maths School; Cambourne Sixth Form; Chesterton Sixth Form; Comberton Sixth Form; Impington International College; Northstowe Sixth Form; The Oakes College Cambridge.

Please note: For clarity, Cambridge Regional College (CRC), The College of West Anglia, Peterborough Regional College and Long Road Sixth Form College are **not** CAP school sixth forms.

- The reference or supporting information provided by the applicant's school or college indicates no significant concern regarding their record of attendance, punctuality, behaviour, commitment to learning, relationships with students and staff, or aptitude for the proposed course of study. Please refer to section 14.2 Code of Conduct for further information.

11. Permanent home address

- Students must live with their parents or legal guardians at their permanent home address for the duration of their two-year A level course at Hills Road. Students are not permitted to live with other relatives, family friends or non-legal guardians, unless this arrangement constitutes the legal conferring of Parental Responsibility.
- A **permanent home address** is where the applicant lives with their parent/s or legal guardian/s during the normal school week.
- If an applicant has more than one permanent home address, they must add both to the Parental Contacts section of their application. In this situation, an

applicant or enrolled student's permanent home address is where they spend the normal school week with their parent or legal guardian.

- The College does not accept the following as a permanent home address:
 - Temporary accommodation, including staying with friends or relatives, non-legal guardians, school boarding houses, employer-owned accommodation, hotels, short-term tenancy agreements, or bookings made through online platforms such as Airbnb.
 - An additional property owned (empty or tenanted) or rented by the applicant's parents, legal guardians or other family members. This includes an additional address used by a parent or legal guardian due to work commitments, which may take them away from home during the week, or a second home, or a holiday home.
- Where the College deems it necessary, Admissions will check the student's permanent home address directly with the current school.
- The criteria in this section **does not** extend to applicants who live in rented accommodation as their permanent, long-term living arrangement or who have been relocated to a temporary address, for example by the Local Authority or a charitable organisation.
- In the case of Looked After Children, we recognise that an alternative living arrangement will be in place through the Local Authority.
- We reserve the right to withdraw an application, the offer of a place or an enrolled place, including after the start of term, if false, misleading or inconsistent information is supplied at any time, or if parents or legal guardians cannot provide satisfactory evidence when requested to do so.

12. Moving to the area after the January application deadline

Applicants who move to an area within a sustainable commute of the College after the January deadline must apply via the [Post-results process](#) in August.

Any student qualified by section 10 can apply to the College on GCSE Results Day, via our website. Places will be offered based on the space available in each subject.

Priority is given to CAP students who applied in January.

13. Guidance meetings

After applications close in January guidance meetings are held. They are hosted online, normally over a three-week period in late January and early February.

The College aims to invite applicants to a guidance meeting who meet the Entry Criteria in section 10, and who are qualified for the A levels they have applied for or can make themselves qualified for by changing their A level options if they would like to.

Should the College receive more applications than places available, the College will use the Oversubscription criteria in section 14.1, and meetings will be offered to applicants on this basis.

Applicants who are not progressed to the guidance meeting stage will be notified by email in January.

Guidance meetings are not compulsory, and attendance does not affect consideration for an offer.

13.1 The purpose of the meeting

Guidance meetings provide the opportunity for applicants to have an informal discussion with a member of our staff with regards to:

- A level subject combinations and future progression;
- The Year 12 'Core Study Programme'; Support and guidance at the College, including pastoral care, support for additional learning needs, and curriculum support.

No offers are made at guidance meetings.

13.2 Confirming A level subject choices

Applicants invited to a guidance meeting will be asked to complete an online Course Confirmation within 48 hours of the meeting, confirming their A level subject choices in preference order. Applicants are asked to confirm a minimum of three and maximum of five A level subjects that they are qualified to study.

14. Offer decision process

After guidance meetings take place, the College considers all applicants who have completed their Course Confirmation Form.

14.1 If the College is oversubscribed

If the number of applicants satisfying the Entry Criteria in section 10 exceeds the number of places available, consideration for offers will be made using the criteria listed below, and is the basis for our offer decision process:

- The applicant attends a Cambridge Area Partnership (CAP) school (see section 2);
- Applicants reviewed for Special Consideration, where one or more of the following apply*:
 - Requires additional support, has an EHCP or has special learning needs that warrant special consideration;
 - Is a Looked After Child or has care experience;
 - Is a student carer or parent;
 - Is or has been in receipt of Free School Meals funding in the last six years; or
 - Has extenuating circumstances deemed by the College to warrant Special Consideration.

- The applicant attends a maintained state school within Cambridgeshire, but not within CAP, and their home address is within a sustainable commute of the College;
- The available capacity of the subjects applied for by the applicant;
- The extent to which an applicant is recommended by their school or college, where an applicant's behaviour or attendance is outside our expected parameters,
- The distance the applicant lives from the College at the point of application. This distance will be measured as the crow flies. As the distance is based on the application pattern each year, it cannot be determined in advance.

* Special consideration: the College reserves the right to make discretionary offers to applicants, including those who may not have fully satisfied the Entry Criteria within section 10.

For the avoidance of doubt, provided that the applicant meets the minimum entry requirements for their chosen courses, the overall admissions score is **not** used as a basis to manage oversubscription.

14.2 Code of Conduct

The College takes a holistic approach to every application to determine whether an applicant should receive an offer.

Information regarding attendance in Year 10 and Year 11, punctuality, behaviour, commitment to learning, and relationships with other students and staff form part of the application to a CAP post-16 centre. An applicant's referee is required to submit this information on MyChoice16, and the application will not be progressed by the College without it.

Where an applicant may be qualified to study at the College but their referee has expressed concerns related to their attendance record, attitude to study, or relationships with other students and staff, or where any of these are considered outside of the College's expected parameters, additional contextual information will be sought from the current school. Please refer to the [Hills Road Student Code of Conduct](#) for information on our expected parameters.

14.3 Fitness to Study

Fitness to Study is designed to support offer holders into sixth form and ensure that HRSFC is the most appropriate setting for the next stage of their education.

We care about our students' wellbeing and are aware that there is a proven positive correlation between attendance and achievement. For this reason, the College has a target for attendance of at least 94% for all students across their 'Core Study Programme', (A level lessons, EPQ, Future Ready (Tutorial) Programme and Enrichment), supported independent learning sessions and compulsory workshops.

In addition, in line with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requirements, the College must recruit learners with integrity. This includes assessing each applicant and making a professional judgement about their potential to meet the qualification

requirements and successfully complete the course. Where an applicant may not meet the minimum entry requirements set out by the awarding body or may be unlikely to complete the qualification, this will be clearly communicated to them.

Should an offer holder have had a reduced timetable in Year 10 or Year 11 or have attendance below 80%, or inconsistent punctuality due to ongoing health or personal issues our Admissions team will contact the applicant and the school to request contextual information. This information will not be shared beyond essential key staff.

During the summer term of Year 11, these offer holders may be invited into the College with their parent or legal guardian to meet with pastoral staff and discuss their situation in confidence, to give them the opportunity to update us and ensure that we have the appropriate support in place before they start with us in September.

The offer of a place can be deferred to the following year where an offer holder has expressed a wish to do so and where the young person would still be within the age range to attract funding in a sixth form setting.

In addition, written confirmation from a doctor or other health professional in a support role, that they consider the applicant to be sufficiently well to meet the demands of A level academic study may be requested. Where requested, this information will need to be supplied before the end of the College's summer term.

14.4 Offer and Referral Notification

Applicants are notified by email at the end of March with the outcome of their application. These emails are also sent to parents and legal guardians. Emails with an offer include a link to a Course Confirmation Form, for applicants to accept or decline their offer from the College by the specified closing date, after which offers will be withdrawn.

Emails where an application has not been successful are sent at the same time. These include details of the College's Post-results process at Enrolment in August which offers an opportunity to re-apply to the College on GCSE Results Day.

15. Review and Appeal Procedure in March

15.1 Offer Review Process

The first stage of any potential Appeal would be to request a Review of the offer decision. This will be an initial process check to ensure that there have not been any errors made in the application of this Policy. Review requests should be directed to the Head of Admissions by email (admissions@hillsroad.ac.uk) within one week of receipt of our offer decision email. The outcome of a Review request will be supplied within one week.

15.2 Offer Appeal Process

The Appeal Process is available to those applicants who have been through the Review Process above but are not satisfied with the answer. Appeals should be sent in writing within three weeks of receipt of our original offer decision email. They should be sent to the Head of Admissions (admissions@hillsroad.ac.uk), with the subject title: Appeal for the attention of the Principal.

There are two legitimate grounds for appeal:

- i) Demonstrable evidence that the Admissions Policy has not been followed;
- ii) Provision of new significant evidence relating to decisions taken correctly under the Admissions Policy (please note, this does not include subsequent improved performance grades after the application deadline).

The Principal will review the application and evidence base and the decisions made in relation to it and will provide a response typically within one week of receipt of the Appeal. The Principal's judgement will be final in relation to the decision about whether to offer a place at the College and there is no further form of appeal.

16. Enrolment

At Enrolment in August, and for Post-results applications, (both of which open on GCSE Results Day) students use their actual GCSE grades.

Qualified applicants

Applicants holding offers with the College will have their places confirmed at Enrolment, in August, providing they meet the Entry Criteria in section 10 following receipt of their GCSE examination results.

Course change requests

Offer holders will be able to make course change requests as part of the Stage 1 Enrolment process, provided they are qualified for the A level subjects that they wish to move to. These requests are not guaranteed and are subject to course availability.

16.1 Unqualified Offer Holders

After receiving their GCSE results, if an offer holder does not meet the Entry Requirements for their offered A level courses, they should still complete Stage 1 Enrolment. They will be invited to a meeting with a member of staff to discuss their subject options.

In line with the Government's funding requirements, students without at least a grade 4 in either Mathematics or English GCSE (or overseas equivalent – see section 6) will be required to re-sit the relevant GCSE subject(s), with the College's support while they are with us.

17. Getting Started

All offer holders should attend the Getting Started sessions in September. These are compulsory for all enrolled students and offer holders will receive notification of them as part of Enrolment.

Linked Policies, Statements and Procedures

Single Equality Scheme

Fitness to Study Policy

Special Education Needs and Disability Policy (full time 16-19 students)

Document history

Please note any updates and changes using the document history– please add more rows as required without deleting any historical elements.

Date	Version	Author / Change	Date Approved	Approved by
April 2026	4.0	Louise Ecclestone, Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment/Ian Pryer, Deputy Principal	May 2026	Trustees
May 2025	3.0	Kate Allan, Head of Admissions/Ian Pryer, Deputy Principal	May 2025	Governors
October 2024	2.0	Louise Ecclestone Director of Marketing, Student Recruitment and Commercialisation	Oct 2024	Governors
May 2023	1.0	Louise Ecclestone Director of Marketing, Student Recruitment and Commercialisation	May 2023	Governors

EQUALITY ANALYSIS Initial Screening Form

(on completion this form is to be appended to the relevant policy)

1	Policy/process to be assessed: Admission of Full Time Students				
2	Date: 28.04.26			New/review: New	
3	CST lead: Ian Pryer				
4	Other EA team member/staff member responsible:				
5	What is the policy/process trying to achieve? A fair and transparent application process and entry criteria that every applicant must follow. The Policy details the information the College will require to assess if an applicant satisfies its entry criteria. The Policy has been checked for accessibility.				
6	Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy/process? Please state all applicable e.g. departments, teams, individuals including external. Admissions Information Systems (IS) CST The Deputy Principal The Principal				
7	Who does this policy/process affect and in what way? Indicate below.				
	Staff	The Policy explains to all staff the College's entry requirements and the criteria applicants must satisfy to be offered a place.			
	Incoming students and their parents/legal guardians	The Policy outlines the College's entry criteria, and the minimum entry required for every applicant. The Policy also presents the application and offer process that every applicant must follow, and the process that will be used if the College is oversubscribed.			
	Governors	The Policy explains the stages in the application process and the criteria applicants are required to satisfy. This enables Trustees to approve the admissions process and criteria for entry to the College.			
	Other stakeholders	CAP and Non-CAP schools can provide application advice and guidance to their students, based on the information included within the Policy.			
8	Please assess how this policy/process may affect different protected groups differently? (See below for complete list)				
	Group	+ve	-ve	Neutral	Evidence
	Age			x	

	Disability			x	Where barriers to prior achievement may have been experienced, the Policy includes that the College reserves the right to make discretionary offers to applicants who may not fully satisfy the criteria within section 10. Please see section 14.
	Gender			x	
	Gender reassignment			x	
	Pregnancy and maternity			x	An applicant who is a student parent can be considered for a discretionary offer where they do not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria. Please see section 14.
	Religion or belief (or none)			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
	Marriage or civil partnership			x	
	Race			x	
	Socioeconomic			x	An applicant who is in receipt of Free School Meals can be considered for a discretionary offer where they do not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria. Please see section 14.

	EHCP			x	Section 5 supports applications from students with EHCPs and sets out the College's minimum entry requirements. An applicant who has an EHCP in place can be considered for a discretionary offer where they do not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria. Please see section 14
	Carers			x	An applicant who is a young carer can be considered for a discretionary offer where they do not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria. Please see section 14.
	Ex-offenders			x	
	Children In Care			x	An applicant who is a Looked After Child or care experienced can be considered for a discretionary offer where they do not fully satisfy the College's entry criteria. Please see section 14.
	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Learners			x	
9	What other policies/processes are linked? Single Equality Scheme Fitness to Study Policy Special Education Needs and Disability Policy (full time 16-19 students)				

10	What information is available on the impact of this policy/process? How was this obtained? This is the sixth iteration of this policy, which was new in 2020.
11	What information/data is required to complete this analysis effectively? Admissions data from the past three application cycles.

Decision

Has the initial analysis identified a potentially adverse impact on any of the protected characteristic groups?

No

If yes, what action has been taken to address this?

- N/A

Is a full Equality Analysis required?

Yes/No



Signed (CST lead)

Date 28.4.26