

## **Cabinet**

**12 February 2025**

**School Admission Arrangements  
Academic Year 2026/27**



**Key Decision No. CYPS/2025/02**

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### **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services**

#### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide.

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to consider and approve the proposed admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2026/27 academic year.

#### **Executive Summary**

- 2 It is a mandatory requirement of the National School Admissions Code that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school.
- 3 All admission authorities must agree admission arrangements annually. However, if there are no changes proposed they only need to be consulted on at least every 7 years. The current admission arrangements were consulted on between 1 October to 31 December 2022. There is no need to consult this year other than where it is proposed that some Community and Voluntary Controlled schools have a reduction in the admission number. The proposed admission number for each Community and Voluntary Controlled School is detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

## **Recommendations**

- 4 Cabinet is asked to agree the following recommendations in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools when determining the admission arrangements for 2026/2027:
  - (a) that the proposed admission numbers as recommended in Appendix 2 for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools be approved.
  - (b) that the admission numbers advised by Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies be noted.
  - (c) that the admission arrangements in Appendix 3 be approved.

## **Background**

- 5 It is a mandatory requirement of the National School Admissions Code that all schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school (oversubscription). Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities. The Local Authority (LA) is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, while the Governing Body is the admission authority for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools and the relevant Trust for an Academy or Free School.
- 6 All admission authorities must agree admission arrangements annually. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements the admission authority must first consult on these arrangements. If there are no changes proposed, they only need to be consulted on at least every seven years. Consultation must be for a minimum of six weeks and take place between 1 October and 31 January of the year before these arrangements are to apply. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities, and the local community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.
- 7 Stakeholders are consulted on:
  - (a) the number of pupils to be admitted in each year group (the proposed admission number).
  - (b) the application and administrative procedures for admissions, including LA co-ordination with other admission authorities.
  - (c) the criteria to be used in the event of over-subscription.

## **Consideration**

- 8 There were no changes proposed to the current admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools that required public consultation.
- 9 All Governing Bodies/Trusts have considered the proposed admission number for their school. The proposed admission number for each Community and Voluntary Controlled School is detailed in Appendix 2 of the report which Cabinet will be asked to approve. The admission numbers for Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools, Academies and the UTC, South Durham are included for information.

## **Statutory Requirements and Future Implications**

- 10 It is a statutory requirement of all admission authorities that admission arrangements for 2026/27 are determined by 28 February 2025 and these must be published on their website not later than 15 March 2025 (Regulations 17 and 18 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012). The LA must receive a copy of the admissions arrangements of other authorities, including Academies, before 15 March 2025 and provide details on its website of where these can be viewed. Information on how to refer objections to the Schools' Adjudicator will also be available on the website.
- 11 The oversubscription criteria in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, for which no changes are proposed, are included in Appendix 3.
- 12 The LA must publish online, with hard copies available for those who do not have access to the internet, a composite prospectus for parents by 12 September 2024, which contains the admission arrangements for each of the state-funded schools in the LA area to which parents can apply. The prospectus was published on 2 September 2024.
- 13 The LA would be in breach of a statutory duty if admission arrangements were not determined by 28 February 2025 and published on the Council's website by 15 March 2025.

### **Background papers**

- School Admissions Code/Regulations - DfE

### **Other useful documents**

- None

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

There will be a breach of the statutory duty imposed on the Authority if admission arrangements are not determined by 28 February 2025 and published by 15 March 2025.

### **Finance**

Admission arrangements can impact on the number of pupils that are offered places in schools which is used as a basis for allocating school budgets.

### **Consultation**

Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with DfE Guidance.

### **Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty**

The School Admissions Code exists to ensure fairness and equity in school admission arrangements. An Impact Assessment of the admission arrangements on specific groups has been undertaken. There is no evidence of discrimination against any groups. A copy of the Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 4.

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable.

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable.

### **Staffing**

Implications are at school level.

### **Accommodation**

Relates to best overall use of school buildings.

### **Risk**

The risk to the LA is that there will be a breach of the statutory duty imposed if admission arrangements are not determined by 28 February 2025 and published by 15 March 2025.

## **Procurement**

Not applicable.

## Appendix 2: Proposed Admission Numbers 2026/27

Number	Community and Voluntary Controlled (inc. controlled Church of England - CE - and Endowed Parochial - EP) Infant, Junior and Primary Schools	Proposed Admission Number 2026/27	Recommendation to Cabinet
2540	Acre Rigg Infant	64	Agree
2205	Beamish Primary	15	Agree
2477	Bearpark Primary	15	Agree
3161	Belmont C of E Primary	45	Agree
2498	Belmont Cheveley Park Primary	30	Agree
2749	Benfieldside Primary	45	Agree
2737	Blackhall Primary	55	Agree
2146	Bournmoor Primary	25	Agree
2388	Bowburn Primary	75	Agree
2400	Broom Cottages Primary	45	Agree
2745	Bullion Lane Primary	45	Agree
2234	Burnopfield Primary	50	Agree
2232	Burnside Primary	30	Agree
2413	Butterknowle Primary	12	Agree
2706	Byerley Park Primary	30	Agree
2351	Byers Green Primary	15	Agree
2362	Cassop Primary	20	Agree
2133	Cestria Primary	60	Agree
3031	Chester Le Street C of E Primary	60	Agree
2440	Cockfield Primary	15	Agree
2434	Cockton Hill Infant	60	Agree
2433	Cockton Hill Junior	60	Agree
2278	Consett Infant	60	Agree
2277	Consett Junior	60	Agree
2185	Cotherstone Primary	12	Agree
2532	Cotsford Primary	30	Agree
2372	Coxhoe Primary	52	Agree
2308	Crook Primary	60	Agree
2385	Dean Bank Primary	30	Agree
2272	Delves Lane Primary	50	Agree
2747	Durham Gilesgate Primary	30	Agree
3168	Durham St Margaret's C of E Primary	60	Agree
2746	Easington Colliery Primary	81	Agree

<b>Number</b>	<b>Community and Voluntary Controlled (inc. controlled Church of England - CE - and Endowed Parochial - EP) Infant, Junior and Primary Schools</b>	<b>Proposed Admission Number 2026/27</b>	<b>Recommendation to Cabinet</b>
3063	Ebchester C of E Primary	15	Agree
2417	Escomb Primary	30	Agree
2401	Etherley Lane Primary	49	Agree
2368	Ferryhill Station Primary	15	Agree
2748	Finchale Primary	30	Agree
2751	Framwellgate Moor Primary	45	Agree
2319	Frosterley Community Primary	15	Agree
2301	Hamsterley Primary	7	Agree
2509	Hesleden Primary	19	Agree
2708	Horndale Infant	50	Agree
2734	Howletch Lane Primary	60	Agree
3183	Hutton Henry C of E Primary	15	Agree
2750	King Street Primary	30	Agree
2361	Kirk Merrington Primary	25	Agree
3213	Lanchester EP Primary	60	Agree
2455	Langley Moor Primary	30	Agree
2499	Laurel Avenue Primary	15	Agree
2259	Leadgate Primary	30	Agree
2472	Ludworth Primary	15	Agree
2108	Lumley Infant	60	Agree
2107	Lumley Junior	55	Agree
2442	Montalbo Primary	30	Agree
2116	Nettlesworth Primary	15	Agree
2481	Nevilles Cross Primary	42	Agree
2943	Newker Primary	60	Agree
2488	Newton Hall Infant	60	Agree
2003	North Park Primary	30	Agree
2330	Oakley Cross Primary	26	Agree
2470	Pittington Primary	30	Agree
2409	Ramshaw Primary	11	Agree
2125	Red Rose Primary	45	Agree
2000	Ropery Walk Primary	45	Agree
2744	Roseberry Primary	37	Agree
3524	Seaham Trinity Primary	60	Agree
2004	Seascape Primary	50	Agree
3520	Seaview Primary	49	Agree
2563	Sedgefield Primary	30	Agree
2473	Sherburn Primary	30	Agree



Number	Community and Voluntary Controlled (inc. controlled Church of England - CE - and Endowed Parochial - EP) Infant, Junior and Primary Schools	Proposed Admission Number 2026/27	Recommendation to Cabinet
3167	Shincliffe C of E Primary	30	Agree
2257	Shotley Bridge Primary	60	Agree
3527	Shotton Hall Primary	50	Agree
2536	Shotton Primary	60	Agree
3519	Silver Tree Primary	30	Agree
2394	Springmoor Grange School	90	Agree
3123	St Anne's C of E Primary	30	Agree
2419	St Helen Auckland Primary	30	Agree
2322	St John's Chapel Primary	8	Agree
3085	St Stephen's C of E Primary	30	Agree
3141	Staindrop C of E Primary	30	Agree
2313	Stanley (Crook) Primary	19	Agree
2743	Sugar Hill Primary	60	Agree
2316	Sunnybrow Primary	19	Agree
3522	Tanfield Lea Community Primary	50	Agree
2269	The Grove Primary	25	Agree
2423	Thornhill Primary	30	Agree
2438	Timothy Hackworth Primary	60	Agree
2426	Toft Hill Primary	30	Agree
2307	Tow Law Millennium Primary	20	Agree
2324	Wearhead Primary	6	Agree
2370	West Cornforth Primary	30	Agree
2114	West Pelton Primary	15	Agree
2475	West Rainton Primary	24	Agree
2043	Westlea Primary	38	Agree
2526	Wheatley Hill Community Primary	56	Agree
2326	Willington Primary	30	Agree
2531	Wingate Primary	60	Agree
2462	Witton Gilbert Primary	30	Agree
2329	Wolsingham Primary	30	Agree
2428	Woodland Primary	12	Agree
2733	Yohden Primary	30	Agree

<b>Number</b>	<b>Community Secondary Schools</b>	<b>Proposed Admission Number 2026/27</b>	<b>Recommendation to Cabinet</b>
4185	Belmont Community School	180	Agree
4200	Durham Johnston School	265	Agree
4200	Durham Johnston School Sixth Form	*50	Agree

\* Relates to admission limit for external students to Year 12 only. NB this need not be set if the school only receives ad hoc applications.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Roman Catholic (RC) Aided/Church of England (CE) Aided Primary Schools</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
3413	All Saint's RCVA Primary, Lanchester	30
3491	Blue Coat C of E Junior	60
3303	Bowes Hutchinson C of E Primary	10
3507	Our Lady Star of Sea RC Primary, Horden	17
3346	St Benet's RC Primary, Ouston	30
3472	St Francis C of E Junior	41
3513	St John's C of E Primary, Shildon	30
3501	St Joseph's RC Primary, Murton	30
3381	St Joseph's RC Primary, Stanley	30
3301	St Mary Magdalen RC Primary, Seaham	45
3401	St Mary's RC Primary, Blackhill	30
3461	St Mary's RC Primary, Barnard Castle	15
3470	St Mary's RC Primary, Newton Aycliffe	30
3165	St Oswald's C of E Primary, Durham	20

<b>Number</b>	<b>Primary Academies</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
2008	Acre Rigg Academy	67
2213	Annfield Plain Infant	40
2212	Annfield Plain Junior	42
2205	Beamish Primary	15
2411	Aycliffe Village Primary	26
3411	Bishop Ian Ramsey C of E Primary School	30
3511	Blessed John Duckett RC Primary	12
2233	Bloemfontein Primary	24
2357	Bluebell Meadow Primary	45
3525	Brandon Primary	50
2015	Browney Academy	25
2261	Burnhope Primary	15
2266	Castleside Primary	20
2210	Catchgate Primary	38
2002	Chilton Academy	55
2397	Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School	30
2208	Collierley Primary	28
2704	Copeland Road Primary	25

<b>Number</b>	<b>Primary Academies</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
2516	Deaf Hill Primary	26
2018	Dene House Primary	50
3182	Easington C of E Primary	30
2217	East Stanley Primary	34
2105	Edmondsley Primary	25
3406	Esh C of E Primary	15
2497	Esh Winning Primary	38
3130	Evenwood C of E Primary	15
2399	Fishburn Primary	30
3131	Gainford C of E Primary	15
3526	Greenland Community Primary	51
3121	Green Lane C of E Primary	30
2593	Hardwick Primary	30
2310	Hartside Primary	30
2318	Howden le Wear Primary	30
2302	Hunwick Primary	30
3134	Ingleton C of E Primary	15
2374	Kelloe Primary	21
2729	Langley Park Primary	30
2001	Middlestone Moor Primary	38
2025	Middleton in Teesdale Primary	25
2276	Moorside Primary	20
2024	New Seaham Primary	38
2453	New Brancepeth Primary	20
2311	Peases West Primary	15
2005	Pelton Community Primary	55
3516	Prince Bishops Community Primary	30
3409	Our Lady & St. Joseph's RC Primary, Brooms	17
3425	Our Lady & St. Thomas RC Primary, Willington	15
3504	Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary, Shotton	24
3510	Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary, Peterlee	45
3483 3488	Our Lady Queen of Martyr's RC Primary and St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor	30
2136	Ouston Primary	45
2016	Rosa Street Primary	30
2123	Sacrison Academy	30
2017	Shield Row Primary	30
2019	South Hetton Primary	30
2225	South Stanley Infant	60
2226	South Stanley Junior	52
2705	St Andrew's Primary	30
3344	St Bede's RC Primary, Sacrison	15
3465	St Chad's RC Primary	15
3444	St Charles' RC Primary, Tudhoe	30
3343	St Cuthbert's RC Primary, Chester le Street	30
3421	St Cuthbert's RCVA Primary, Crook	30
3300	St Cuthbert's RC Primary, New Seaham	30
3486	St Godric's RC Primary, Durham	30
3502	St Godric's RC Primary, Thornley	15

<b>Number</b>	<b>Primary Academies</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
3485	St Hild's C of E Primary, Durham	30
3506	St Joseph's RC Primary, Blackhall	13
3469	St Joseph's RC Primary, Coundon	25
3489	St Joseph's RC Primary, Gilesgate	22
3471	St Joseph's RC Primary, Newton Aycliffe	25
3461	St Mary's RCVA Primary, Barnard Castle	15
3470	St Mary's RCVA Primary, Newton Aycliffe	30
3384	St Mary's RC Primary, South Moor	21
3505	St Mary's RC Primary, Wingate	12
3441	St Michael's C of E Primary, Bishop Middleham	15
3407	St Michael's RC Primary, Esh	28
3404	St Patrick's RC Primary, Consett	60
3382	St Patrick's RC Primary, Dipton	25
3481	St Patrick's RCVA Primary, Langley Moor	15
3403	St Pius X RC Primary, Consett	15
3492	St Thomas More RC Primary, Belmont	17
3462	St Wilfrid's RC Primary	30
3442	St William's RC Primary, Trimdon	15
3087	Stanhope Barrington C of E Primary School	21
2010	Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery	55
3517	The Ribbon Academy, Murton	85
2523	Thornley Primary	30
2379	Tudhoe Colliery Primary	30
2009	Victoria Lane Academy	30
2742	Vane Road Primary	60
2328	Witton le Wear Primary	15
3518	Woodham Burn Community Primary	30
3523	Woodhouse Community Primary	30
2126	Woodlea Primary	30

<b>Number</b>	<b>Secondary Academies</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
4162	Bishop Barrington School	180
4693	Byron Sixth Form College	*Not Set
4001	Consett Academy	300
4001	Consett Academy – Sixth Form	*100
4214	Dene Academy	140
4192	Durham Academy	100
4191	Durham Sixth Form Centre	875
4280	Easington Academy	150
4150	Ferryhill School	165
4190	Framwellgate School Durham	270
4190	Framwellgate School Durham Sixth Form	*Not set
4010	Hermitage Academy	200
4010	Hermitage Academy Sixth Form	*Not set
4176	Greenfield Community College	150
4178	King James 1 Academy	161
4178	King James 1 Academy Sixth Form	*50

<b>Number</b>	<b>Secondary Academies</b>	<b>Admission Number 2026/27 Advised by Governing Body</b>
4000	North Durham Academy	250
4047	Park View School	240
4047	Park View School Sixth Form	*Not set
4128	Parkside Academy	180
4019	Seaham High School	240 (consultation to reduce to 220 ends on 31/1/25)
4231	Sedgefield Community College	195
4693	St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive, Peterlee	180
4694	St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Lanchester	240
4694	St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Lanchester (Sixth Form)	*80
4681	St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy	225
4681	St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy, (Sixth Form)	*Not set
4691	St Leonard's Catholic School	232
4691	St Leonard's Catholic School Sixth Form	*25
4008	Staindrop Academy	120
4011	Tanfield School, Specialist College of Science and Engineering	158
4007	Teesdale School and Sixth Form Centre	140
4007	Teesdale School and Sixth Form Centre (Sixth Form)	*Not set
4215	The Academy at Shotton Hall	230
4006	UTC, South Durham	Y10 150, Y12 150
4218	Wellfield School	196
4009	Whitworth Park Academy	220
4139	Wolsingham School	150
4175	Woodham Academy	220

\* Relates to admission limit for external students to Year 12 only. NB this need not be set if the school only receives ad hoc applications.

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

**2026/27**

## **OVERVIEW OF APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION TO ALL SCHOOLS**

For all schools, parents/carers must be invited to express at least 3 preferences on a common application form, in the rank order they wish their child to receive an offer of a place and invite parents to give their reasons for each preference. Application forms are obtainable from the County Council's website to download, if you do not have this facility you can contact School Places and Admissions to request an application form. Parents/carers can also apply through the on-line admissions application system accessed via the County Council website. Applications should be submitted to the LA by the published closing date. Places at any school are offered on the basis of equal preference rank order and where an offer is made it is for the highest ranked school at which the LA can offer a place.

The LA must inform other admission authorities of any application made for their schools and pass on any relevant supporting information. Each preference must be considered by the admission authority of the school concerned, where appropriate. The school should then provide the LA with a list of all children who have applied for a place, ranked in order of priority under the school's admission arrangements.

Parents/carers who are resident in one LA but who wish to apply for a place at a school maintained by another LA apply for a place through the maintaining LA's common application form. Neighbouring LAs must inform each other of applications received in respect of children from their LA area who wish to obtain a school place in another LA area.

The LA will then compare the lists for all schools in its area. When a child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at that school will be offered to the child. Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school is the highest ranked. Where the LA cannot offer a place at any of the preferred schools, the offer of a place will be made at the nearest school to the parental address that has places available.

If an application is unsuccessful, upon request a child's name may be placed on a waiting list which is kept for the full academic year. The position on the waiting list is determined in accordance with the published oversubscription criteria with no reference to length of time on the waiting list. If a place subsequently becomes available, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list. Parents/carers are also offered the right of appeal if they are not satisfied with the offer of a place.

The LA will accept applications which are received late only when there is evidence of a very exceptional circumstance which prevented submission by the stated deadline and only if the application is received before offers of places are made. These will then be treated in the same way as all other applications. In the event of a late application not being accepted or receipt is after the offer of places has been made, then places will be offered at the nearest school with places available.

All applications for school places during the normal admission round must be co-ordinated by the maintaining LA.

## 2026/27 CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEME - PRIMARY

This Scheme is made by Durham County Council (Durham LA) under The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and the Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014.

A separate Scheme exists in relation to secondary schools.

### ***Interpretation***

1. In this Scheme -

“The LA” means Durham County Council acting in its capacity as local education authority.

“The LA area” means the area in respect of which the LA is the local education authority.

“School” means a Community, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation, or Voluntary Aided school or an Academy.

“Admission Authority” means the LA in respect of any of the schools which is a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, the Governing Body of the school in respect of a Voluntary Aided school or a Foundation school and the relevant Trust for an Academy.

“Parent” means any person who holds parental responsibility for a child and with whom the child normally lives.

“Suitable school” means the nearest available school which offers an efficient full-time programme of education appropriate to the individual child’s age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs, in the view of the Authority.

2. The Scheme shall be determined and processed in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
3. The Scheme will apply for the admission arrangements for the school year commencing September 2026.
4. The Scheme shall apply to every primary school in the LA area (except special schools).



## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **PART 1 - THE SCHEME**

1. There will be a common application form supplied by the LA for the purpose of enabling parents living in County Durham to express up to three preferences for their child to be admitted to a primary, infant and, where appropriate junior school in County Durham or to a school or schools in another LA area for the academic year 2026/27.
2. The common application form must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences for the purposes of Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 by parents who are resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child:
  - a. to be admitted to a maintained primary school and Academy within the LA area (including Voluntary Aided Schools).
  - b. to be admitted to a maintained primary school and Academy located in another LA's area (including Voluntary Aided Schools).
3. The common application form will invite the parent to express up to three preferences including where relevant any schools outside the LA's area, in the rank order in which they wish their child to receive an offer of a place and invite parents to give their reasons for each preference.
4. The common application form will explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place. Furthermore, that places at any oversubscribed school will be offered on the basis of equal preference rank order and that where an offer is made it would be for the highest ranked school at which the LA as the admission authority or on behalf of the admission authority of a Voluntary Aided School or an Academy, was able to offer a place. Annex 1 lists those Governing Bodies/Trusts which are the Admission Authority for schools or Academies to which this Scheme applies.
5. The common application form will explain that where the LA could not offer a place at any of the preferred schools, the offer of a place will be made at the nearest school to the child's home address that has a place available.
6. The common application form will specify a closing date and where it must be returned. Governing Bodies of Aided Schools or the relevant Trust for Academies, as the Admission Authority, must notify the relevant LA of any application made direct to them in error whether or not the parent lives in County Durham.
7. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that a common application form is available on request from the LA and from its website. The facility to apply on-line will also be made available via the LA's website.

8. The common application form will include a supplementary section to be completed by parents who express a preference for a Voluntary Aided School to enable them to provide any relevant additional information.

### **Processing of Applications**

9. Completed applications should be made to the LA by 15 January 2026.
10. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances will be accepted and treated as on time applications as long as they are received on or before 5 March 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of good reason include: when a single parent has been ill for some time or has been dealing with the death of a relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a County Durham property as the main property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered, and each case decided on its own merits. Parents must, however, provide clear evidence for the LA to consider as to why they could not apply during the preference period. The determination of the LA will be final.

### **Determining offers in response to the applications**

11. The LA will make the offer of a school place to the parent of every child living in County Durham commencing primary education in September 2026 who applies for a place at a maintained school/academy.
12. The LA will determine the offer of a potential place for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in County Durham in its capacity as the Admission Authority **having no regard to order of preferences**. For Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies or schools in another Local Authority area, the relevant Admission Authority will inform the LA of the potential offer of a place. Durham LA will then be responsible for making the offer of a place in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 15 of this Scheme.
13. By 6 February 2026, the LA will share the applications with the Admission Authority for each of the schools indicated on the applications.
14. By 6 March 2026, the Admission Authority for each school will provide the LA with the ranking of applications, in accordance with their admission criteria, of all pupils who applied for a place at the school, indicating those who can be offered a place and those (if any) who cannot. The LA will then match this ranked list against the ranked list of the other schools nominated.
15. By 13 March 2026, the LA will match the provisional offers of places against each parent's ranking and proceed as follows:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at that school will be offered to the child.
  - Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school is the highest ranked.
  - Where none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the nearest suitable school with a place available.
16. No later than 13 March 2026 the LA will inform other LAs of places in County Durham schools/Academies to be offered to their residents and on 16 April 2026 the LA will inform its schools/Academies of the pupils to be offered places at their schools/Academies.
17. On 16 April 2026, the LA will write to all parents in County Durham to whom the offer of a place can be made, notifying them of the offer of a place at:
- a. one of the preferences on the application; or
  - b. the nearest suitable school with places available.
18. The LA's communication will advise parents that they need only to contact the LA if they are not satisfied with the offer of a place, whereupon they will be informed that they have the right of appeal if they so wish. The communication will include contact details for the LA and those nominated Voluntary Aided schools or Academies where they could not be offered a place, so that they can if they wish lodge an appeal with the Governing Body or Academy Trust. The communication will also explain that their child's name will be placed on the waiting list for a place at the preferred school(s). The communication will also state, where relevant, why a place could not be offered at a higher ranked school.
19. On 7 May 2026 the LA will reallocate any places that may have become available since 16 April 2026, strictly in accordance with the relevant published oversubscription criteria.
20. From 8 May 2026, children's names will be placed on a waiting for an oversubscribed school to be offered places if they become available. The waiting lists for all schools/Academies/ will be maintained by the relevant admission authority and any places which become available will be offered strictly in accordance with the published admission criteria of the appropriate admission authority. Waiting lists will be maintained for the school year. If parents want their children to remain on a waiting list for subsequent years, they must inform the LA in writing or via email.

## **PART 2 - LATE APPLICATIONS**

21. Applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2026 and on or before 5 March 2026 will be considered and, as far as possible, offered a school place on 16 April 2026. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances will be accepted and treated as on time applications provided they are received on or before 5 March 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin (see paragraph 10).
22. For applications received between 6 March 2026 and 4 May 2026 inclusive, the LA will, on 7 May 2026 the re-allocation day, offer a place in accordance with parental preference, where possible, and if not possible, at the nearest school with places available. These will be considered equally along with all other applicants that are on the waiting lists.
23. For applications received between 7 May 2026 and 31 August 2026 inclusive, offer/refusal communications will be sent out within 14 days of the LA receiving the application form. Any parent approaching a school direct must be referred to the LA. The LA will offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of rank that has a place available, or if this is not possible, at the nearest suitable school that has a place available. For those who do not receive a higher preferred school the waiting lists will continue to operate.

## **PART 3 - IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS**

24. Applications received on or after 1 September 2026 will be treated as in-year admissions.
25. The LA will, upon request, send a suitable form for parents to complete when applying for a place for their child at any school. All relevant admission authorities will consider any application that is made (making reference to any waiting lists that are in operation) whether via an application form or through a parent's direct approach to any school, and then notify the LA, if appropriate, of the outcome. Parents whose applications are refused will be offered a right of appeal.
26. The LA will monitor in-year applications and intervene as appropriate to ensure that applicants are placed in a school without undue delay.
27. Parents may ask for their child's name to be kept on a waiting list, to be offered places if they become available at any school to which they have expressed a preference. The waiting lists - unless Aided Schools or Academies chose to maintain the waiting lists themselves - will be maintained by the LA and any places which become available will be offered strictly in accordance with published admission criteria of the appropriate admissions authority. Waiting lists will be maintained for the school year. Any offer of a school place will always be made by the LA.

#### **PART 4 – ADMISSION OF CHILDREN BELOW COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE AND ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP**

28. A child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March, and 31 August. A child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their fourth birthday.
29. There is flexibility for parents who do not feel their child is ready to start school before compulsory school age. They may defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year following their child's fourth birthday, providing they do not defer beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the start of the final term of that school year. Alternatively, their child may attend school part-time until they reach compulsory school age.
30. Children born in the summer term, 1 April to 31 August, are not required to start school until a full school year after the point at which they could first have been admitted – the point at which other children in their age range are beginning year 1. While most parents are happy for their child to start school in the September following their fourth birthday, some parents will have concerns about whether their child will be ready for school at this point and will consider delaying their entry to Reception until compulsory school age.
31. Admission authorities will 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. This should demonstrate why it would be in the child's interests to be admitted to reception rather than year one. In some cases, parents may have professional evidence that it would be appropriate for them to submit, for example, when a child receives support from a speech and language therapist. However, there is no expectation that parents will obtain professional evidence that they do not already have. Admission authorities must still consider requests that are not accompanied by professional evidence. In such cases the supporting information might simply be the parent's statement as to why they have made their request.
32. Where a parent wants their child to be admitted out of their normal age group, the admission authority has two separate decisions to make:
  - it must first decide on the age group the child should be admitted to
  - only once that decision has been made can it apply its oversubscription criteria to decide whether a place can be offered in that age group.
33. Although it is not always easy for admission authorities to make a decision about a child more than a year before the point at which they may be admitted, particularly as it is difficult to know what progress they may make in the intervening period, parents should know the outcome of their request for admission out of the normal age group in time to make an informed decision about whether their child will start school before compulsory school age.

34. The process in place:

- requires the parent to make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time, but enables them to submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time;
- ensures that the parent receives the response to their request before primary national offer day.

35. If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

36. Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

37. One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the usual year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools.

38. Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the headteacher to decide how best to educate them. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a child who has been admitted out of their normal age group to be moved to their normal age group, but in others it will not. Any decision to move a child to a different age group will be based on sound educational reasons and made by the headteacher in consultation with the parents.

39. Where a child has been educated out of their normal age group, the parent may again request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to junior or secondary school. It will be for the admission authority of that school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. The admission authority will make a decision based on the circumstances of each case and in the child's best interests and will bear in mind the age group the child has been educated in up to that point.

40. Where an application for September 2026 has been received by 15 January 2026 for a child's admission to Reception instead of Year 1 (which is the child's normal age group cohort) and this has been agreed, the application will be considered alongside all other applications that are received by this date. The application will not have lower priority on the basis that the child is being admitted outside their normal age group.

## SCHEDULE 2

### Timetable for Admissions to Primary Schools/ Academies/Free Schools – September 2026

1 September 2025	Parents' Guide to School Admissions, Common Application Form and on-line portal are made available to parents.
15 January 2026	Closing date for return of applications to the LA.
6 February 2026	LA shares applications with neighbouring LAs. Own admission authority schools can view their applications on-line.
6 March 2026	The relevant admission authority for neighbouring LA schools provides the LA with the ranking of applicants. Own admission authority schools rank their applicants on-line.
13 March 2026	LA allocates places in accordance with relevant admission/oversubscription criteria and informs other LAs of places in County Durham to be offered to their residents.
16 April 2026	LA makes offers to parents and schools can view on-line the pupils to be offered places at their schools. Those parents not receiving a higher or any preferred school will have their child's name placed on those waiting list/s.
7 May 2026	Any places that become available since 17 April are reallocated to parents.
8 May 2026	Waiting lists continue to operate.

## ANNEX 1

The Governing Bodies of the Voluntary Aided Schools listed below are Admission Authorities to which this Scheme applies:

<p>Blue Coat CE Junior Bowes Hutchinson's CE Primary Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary St Francis CE Aided Junior St Hild's College CE Aided Primary</p>	<p>St John's CE Aided Primary St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Murton St Oswald's C.E. (Aided) Primary</p>
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The Trusts of the Academies listed below are Admission Authorities to which this Scheme applies:

<p>New Seaham The Ribbon, Murton Victoria Lane, Coundon Cleves Cross Primary Rosa Street Academy South Hetton Primary South Stanley Infant South Stanley Junior Bloemfontein Primary Chilton Primary St. Joseph's RCVA Primary, Newton Aycliffe Stanhope Barrington C of E Primary St. Mary's RCVA Primary, Wingate Bluebell Meadow Primary St Godric's RCVA Primary, Durham</p>	<p>Acre Rigg Academy (Junior) Tudhoe Colliery Primary Stephenson Way Academy Browney Academy Dene House Primary Shield Row Primary Greenland Community Primary Sacriston Academy Ouston Primary Hartside Primary Our Lady of the Rosary RCVA Primary St William's RCVA Primary, Trimdon Ingleton C of E Primary St. Godric's RCVA Primary, Thornley St. Bede's RCVA Primary, Sacriston</p>
<p>Our Lady Queen of Martyr's RCVA Primary, Newhouse St Cuthbert's RCVA Primary, Chester le Street Esh C of E Primary St Benet's RCVA Primary St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Stanley Annfield Plain Junior St Patrick's RCVA Primary, Dipton St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Coundon St Cuthbert's RCVA Primary, New Seaham St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Gilesgate St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Blackhall Our Lady &amp; St Joseph's RCVA Primary Evenwood C of E Primary Howden le Wear Primary St Patrick's RCVA, Primary, Consett Blessed John Duckett RCVA Primary</p>	<p>St Joseph's RCVA Primary, Ushaw Moor St Chad's RCVA Primary  St Michael's RCVA Primary, Esh St. Mary's RCVA Primary, Blackhill Annfield Plain Infant East Stanley Primary St Charles' RCVA Primary, Tudhoe Our Lady &amp; St Thomas RCVA Primary St Thomas More RCVA Primary Our Lady of Lourdes RCVA Primary St Mary's RCVA Primary, South Moor St Pius X RCVA Primary St Michael's C of E Primary, Bishop Middleham Brandon Primary St Wilfrid's RCVA Primary</p>



Moorside Primary  
Langley Park Primary  
St. Mary's RCVA Primary, Newton  
Aycliffe  
St. Cuthbert's RCVA Primary, Crook  
All Saints RCVA Primary  
Burnhope Primary  
St. Mary Magdalen RCVA Primary  
St. Joseph's RCVA Primary, Murton  
Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary  
Sedgefield Hardwick Primary  
Witton le Wear Primary  
Easington C of E Primary  
Vane Road Primary  
Woodham Burn Community Primary  
Peases West Primary  
Pelton Community Primary  
Castleside Primary  
Catchgate Primary  
Fishburn Primary  
Gainford C of E Primary  
Esh Winning Primary  
Thornley Primary  
St. Andrew's Primary  
Edmondsley Primary  
Copeland Road Primary  
Hunwick Primary  
Prince Bishops Primary  
Woodhouse Community Primary

New Brancepeth Primary  
St. Mary's RCVA Primary, Barnard  
Castle  
St. Patrick's RCVA Primary, Langley  
Moor  
Middleton in Teesdale Primary  
Middlestone Moor Primary  
Collierley Primary  
Green Lane C of E Primary  
Beamish Primary  
Deaf Hill Primary  
Kelloe Primary  
Middleton in Teesdale Primary  
Aycliffe Village Primary  
Woodlea Primary

## **2026/27 CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEME - SECONDARY**

This Scheme is made by Durham County Council (Durham LA) under The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and the Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2014.

A separate Scheme exists in relation to primary schools.

### ***Interpretation***

1. In this Scheme -

“The LA” means Durham County Council acting in its capacity as local education authority.

“The LA area” means the area in respect of which the LA is the local education authority.

“School” means a Community, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation, or Voluntary Aided school, or an Academy.

“Admission Authority” means the LA in respect of any of the schools which is a Community or Voluntary Controlled school, the Governing Body of the school in respect of a Voluntary Aided school or a Foundation school and the relevant Trust for an Academy.

“Parent” means any person who holds parental responsibility for a child and with whom the child normally lives.

“Suitable school” means the nearest available school which offers an efficient full-time programme of education appropriate to the individual child’s age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs, in the view of the Authority.

2. The Scheme shall be determined and processed in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
3. The Scheme will apply for the admission arrangements for the school year commencing September 2026.
4. The Scheme will apply to every secondary school in the LA area (except special schools).

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **PART 1 - THE SCHEME**

1. There will be a common application form supplied by the LA for the purpose of enabling parents living in County Durham to express up to three preferences for their child to be admitted to a secondary school in County Durham or to a school or schools in another LA area for the academic year 2026/2027.
2. The common application form must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences for the purposes of Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 by parents resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child:
  - (a) to be admitted to a maintained secondary school or an academy within the LA area (including Voluntary Aided schools and Foundation schools);
  - (b) to be admitted to a maintained secondary school or an academy located in another LA's area (including Voluntary Aided schools and Foundation schools).
3. The common application form will invite the parent to express up to three preferences including where relevant any schools outside the LA's area, in the rank order in which they wish their child to receive an offer of a place and invite parents to give their reasons for each preference.
4. The common application form will explain that the parent will receive no more than one offer of a school place. Furthermore, that places at any oversubscribed school will be offered on the basis of equal preference rank order and that where an offer is made it would be for the highest ranked school at which the LA as the admission authority, or on behalf of the admission authority of a Voluntary Aided school, Foundation School or Academy, was able to offer a place. Annex 2 lists those Governing Bodies/Trusts which are the Admission Authority for schools/Academies to which this Scheme applies.
5. The common application form will explain that where the LA could not offer a place at any of the preferred schools, the offer of a place will be made at the nearest school to the child's home that has a place available.
6. The common application form will specify a closing date and where it must be returned. Governing Bodies of Aided or Foundation Schools and the relevant Trust for Academies, as the Admission Authority, must notify the relevant LA of any application made direct to them in error whether or not the parent lives in County Durham.
7. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that a common application form is available on request from the LA and on its website. The facility to apply online will also be made available via the LA's website.

8. The common application form will include a supplementary section to be completed by parents who express a preference for a Voluntary Aided School to enable them to provide relevant additional information.

### **Processing of Applications**

9. Completed applications should be made to the LA by 31 October 2025.
10. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances will be accepted and treated as an on-time application as long as they are received before 23 January 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of very good reason include: when a single parent has been ill for some time or has been dealing with the death of a relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a County Durham property as the main property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered, and each case decided on its own merits. Parents must, however, provide clear evidence for the LA to consider as to why they could not apply during the preference period. The determination of the LA will be final.

### **Determining offers in response to the application form**

11. The LA will make the offer of a school place to the parent of every child living in County Durham transferring to secondary education in September 2026 who applies for a place at a maintained school/Academy.
12. The LA will determine the potential offer of a place for Community and Voluntary Controlled secondary schools in County Durham in its capacity as the Admission Authority **having no regard to order of preferences**. For Voluntary Aided schools, Foundation schools or Academies, or schools in another Local Authority area, the relevant Admission Authority will inform Durham LA of the potential offer of a place. Durham LA will then be responsible for making the offer of a place in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 15 of this Scheme.
13. By 21 November 2025, the LA will share the applications with the Admission Authority for each of the schools indicated on the applications.
14. By 23 January 2026, the Admission Authority for each school will provide the LA with the ranking of applications, in accordance with their admission criteria of all pupils who applied for a place at the school, indicating those who can be offered a place and those (if any) who cannot. The LA will then match this ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated.
15. By 30 January 2026, the LA will match the provisional offers of places against each parent's ranking and proceed as follows:

- Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at that school will be offered to the child.
  - Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school is the highest ranked.
  - Where none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the nearest suitable school with a place available.
16. No later than 30 January 2026 the LA will inform other LAs of places in County Durham schools/Academies to be offered to their residents and on 27 February 2026 the LA will inform its secondary/Academies schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools/Academies.
17. On 2 March 2026, the LA will communicate to all parents in County Durham to whom the offer of a place can be made, notifying them of the offer of a place at:
- (a) one of the preferences on the application; or
  - (b) the nearest suitable school with places available
18. The LA's communication will advise parents that they need only to contact the LA if they are not satisfied with the offer of a place, whereupon they will be informed that they have the right of appeal if they so wish. The communication will include contact details for the LA and those nominated Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools and Academies where they could not be offered a place, so that they can if they wish lodge an appeal with the Governing Body or Trust. The communication will also give parents the opportunity of having their child's name placed on the waiting list for a place at the preferred school(s). The communication will also state, where relevant, why a place could not be offered at a higher ranked school.
19. On 23 March 2026 the LA will reallocate any places that may have become available since 2 March 2026 strictly in accordance with the relevant published oversubscription criteria
20. From 24 March 2026, children's names will be placed on a waiting list for an oversubscribed school to be offered places if they become available after that date. The waiting lists for all schools/Academies maintained by the Local Authority will be for Year 7 only and any places which become available will be offered strictly in accordance with the published admission criteria of the appropriate admission authority. Waiting lists for Y7 will be maintained for the school year.

## **PART 2 - LATE APPLICATIONS**

21. Applications received after the closing date of 31 October 2025 and on or before 23 January 2026, will be considered and, as far as possible, will be offered a school place on 2 March 2026. Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however, applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date because of very exceptional circumstances will be accepted and treated as an on-time application provided they are received before 23 January 2026, the date the allocation procedures begin (see paragraph 10).
22. For applications received between 26 January 2026 and 23 March 2026 the LA will, on 24 March 2026, offer a place in accordance with parental preference, where possible, and if not possible, at the nearest school with places available. These will be considered equally along with all other applicants that are on the waiting lists for a higher preferred school because they did not receive their first, or in some cases their second and third preferences on 2 March 2026.
23. For applications received between 23 March 2026 (the reallocation day) and 31 August 2026 inclusive, offer/refusal communications will be sent out within 14 days of the LA receiving the application. Any parent directly approaching a school must be referred to the LA. The LA will offer a place at the school highest in the parent's order of rank that has a place available, or if this is not possible, at the nearest suitable school that has a place available. For those who do not receive a higher preferred school the waiting lists will continue to operate.

## **PART 3 - IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS**

24. Applications received on or after 1 September 2026 will be treated as in-year admissions.
26. For the first two weeks of the academic year 2026/27, transfers from one school to another for pupils who were offered a school place in the normal admissions round will be processed upon receipt of a request to transfer, without reference to the procedures outlined in paragraphs 26, 27, 28, and 29 of this Scheme. Specifically, the LA will, upon request, provide information about the places still available in all maintained schools within the area. All relevant admission authorities will consider any request that is made (referring to any waiting lists that are in operation) and then notify the LA, if appropriate, of the outcome. Parents whose applications are refused will be offered a right of appeal.
26. The common in-year application form will request details from the current school and parent including reason for transfer and will specify where it must be returned. Governing Bodies of Aided and Foundation Schools and Academies/UTC, as the Admissions Authority, must notify the relevant LA of any application made to them in error whether or not the parent lives in County Durham.

27. For parents of children who live in another Local Authority area who have applied for an in-year place in a County Durham School – the Home Authority (LA) must contact the Maintaining Authority (Durham) to ascertain the availability of a place. The Home Authority (LA) would then confirm the offer of a place to the parent, with a copy of the offer to the Maintaining Authority (Durham).
28. The LA will make an offer of a place in respect of completed in year application forms for children living in County Durham. For parents of children who have applied for an in-year school place in another LA area – the Home Authority (Durham) must contact the Maintaining Authority (Other LA) to confirm the availability of a place. The Home Authority (Durham) would then confirm the offer of a place to the parent, with a copy of the offer to the Maintaining Authority (Other LA).
29. Secondary In-Year Admissions will be administered by the council, who will send out in-year application forms and confirm an offer of a place to parents, school and, if appropriate, other Local Authority.
30. The LA will inform parents who have not been offered a place into the school of their choice that they have the right to appeal if they so wish. The letter will include contact details for the LA and those Voluntary Aided or Foundation schools or Academies, where they could not be offered a place, so they can if they wish lodge an appeal. Appeals for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools or Academies/UTC (where appropriate) must be submitted to the relevant Governing Body/Trust.
31. Parents may ask for their child's name to be kept on a waiting list, to be offered places if they become available at any school to which they have expressed a preference on the in-year Application Form. The waiting lists – unless Aided/Trust/Academy/UTC chose to maintain the waiting lists themselves - will be maintained by the LA and any places which become available will be offered strictly in accordance with the published admission criteria of the appropriate admission authority. Waiting lists maintained by the Local Authority will be maintained for the school year for Year 7 only. Any offer of a school place will always be made by the Local Authority.

#### **PART 4 - ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OUTSIDE THEIR NORMAL AGE GROUP**

32. Where a child has been educated out of their normal age group, the parent may again request admission out of the normal age group when they transfer to secondary school. It will be for the admission authority of that school to decide whether to admit the child out of their normal age group. The admission authority will decide based on the circumstances of each case and in the child's best interests and will bear in mind the age group the child has been educated in up to that point.

## SCHEDULE 2

### Timetable for Admissions to Secondary Schools/Academies September 2025

1 September 2025	Parent's Guide to School Admissions, Common Application Form and on-line portal are made available to parents
31 October 2025	Closing date for return of forms to the LA.
21 November 2025	LA shares applications with neighbouring LAs. Own admission authority schools can view applications on-line.
23 January 2026	The relevant Admission Authority for neighbouring LA schools provides the LA with the ranking of applicants. Own admission authority schools rank their applicants on-line.
30 January 2026	LA allocates places in accordance with relevant admission/oversubscription criteria and informs other LAs of places in County Durham to be offered to their residents.
2 March 2026	LA makes offer to parents and schools can view on-line the pupils to be offered places at their schools. Those parents not receiving a higher or any preferred school will have their child's name placed on those waiting list/s.
23 March 2026	Any places that become available since 3 March are reallocated to parents.
24 March 2026	Waiting lists begin to operate.



The Trusts of the Academies listed below are the Admissions Authorities to which this Scheme applies:

North Durham Academy  
The Academy at Shotton Hall  
Hermitage Academy  
Park View School  
Teesdale School  
King James 1 Academy  
Consett Academy  
Staindrop Academy  
St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy  
Framwellgate School, Durham  
St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre, Lanchester  
Woodham Academy  
Easington Academy  
Parkside Academy  
St Leonard's Catholic School  
Whitworth Park Academy  
Ferryhill School  
UTC South Durham  
Dene Academy  
Sedgefield Community College  
Tanfield School  
Seaham High School  
St. Bede's Comprehensive and Byron Sixth Form College  
Bishop Barrington School  
Durham Academy  
Wellfield School  
Durham Sixth Form Centre  
Greenfield Academy

### **In-Year Transfers Protocol between Secondary Schools and Academies – This protocol works in partnership with the Fair Access Protocol (FAP)**

The LA and Durham secondary schools have had an agreed protocol regarding in year transfer of pupils since September 2002. This is to ensure best advice is given to parents, careful consideration of the issues is given, and effective management of the process is undertaken.

The protocol requires that a LA/Head Teacher/Parent conference will be convened at the current school for such pupils by any party. This will be held within 15 working days of the concern arising. The purpose is to provide the parent with “Best Advice” including consideration of what added value there would be in effecting a transfer and focusing on resolving any underlying issues.

A leaflet for parents “Why Change Schools?” available from the School Places and Admissions Team, Children and Young People’s Services, education Development Centre, Enterprise Way, Spennymoor is designed to assist the parent in considering the best interests of the pupil and it sets out requirements about school attendance during the process of decision-making.

This in year transfer Protocol does not apply to children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan, as the statutory SEN process and requirements apply.

#### **In Year Secondary School Transfers - Funding**

The LA arranges for the transfer of funding (AWPU), for the remainder of the year, from the previous school to the receiving school, on a pro rata basis.

**LA/School Protocol agreed 2002 (reviewed annually at DASH)**

**Transfer between Local Secondary Schools including Academies  
LA/School Protocol**

- 1 Clarity regarding availability of places.
  - Head Teachers must always inform the LA about any potential student movement i.e. admissions or transfers both in and out-County. This will ensure the LA has accurate data regarding the availability of places.
  - The LA advises about admissions in accordance with the School Admission code.
- 2 More detail to be requested by the LA on the Transfer form from the current school and parent e.g.
  - Exclusions
  - Attendance
  - PSPs
  - Other agency involvement (tick list)
  - Court order/Bail?
  - Courses currently being followed and exam boards if applicable.
- 3 To ensure no young person goes missing from education the LA will issue the DCC In Year Admission Application Forms to parents. Those Academies that are their own admission authority may also request that parents complete a school transfer form to support the admission process
- 4 A “Why Change Schools?” information leaflet for parents has been produced by the LA and held in schools to be given to parents making enquiries. To include for example:
  - Issues re the best interest of child
  - Until transfer completed home school responsible. The pupil remains on roll and should be attending school.
- 5 An LA/Head Teacher/Parent Conference will be convened at the current school for those pupils if requested by any party. This will be held within 15 working days of concern arising. The purpose is to provide the parent with Best Advice including consideration of what added value there would be in effecting a transfer and focussing on resolving underlying issues.
- 6 In most cases pupils at risk of permanent exclusion will be discussed through the Behaviour and Inclusion Partnership Panel arrangements.
- 7 Pupils with an attendance record of less than 65% for 6 months or more prior to the transfer request and there are no genuine reasons for the absences (medical reasons etc.) may be required to complete a 3-week attendance

placement to ensure the young person has effectively transitioned before agreement on a formal transfer is made.

- 8 Where possible, pupils returning from Elective Home Education within a 6 month period, would be encouraged to return to their previous school where possible. Any in year transfer request would be managed through the in - year transfer protocol once on roll of their previous school.
- 9 In cases of continued difficulty the LA/schools will discuss whether any further action might be appropriate.

**ADMISSION POLICIES / OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR  
COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY  
SCHOOLS AND UNITS, INFANT, JUNIOR, PRIMARY AND  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## **ADMISSION TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY SCHOOLS AND UNITS**

**Priority will be given to children entitled to 15 hours per week and these places must be allocated first. Places are allocated for the 15 hours per week entitlement according to the oversubscription criteria listed below:**

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order\*.** A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- 2. Children who appear to the Admissions Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.**

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society.

- 3. Children In Need**

The Children Act 1989 defines a child 'in need' as:

- a) He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the Local Authority under Part 3 of the Act.
- b) His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services.
- c) He/she is disabled.

A maximum of two part-time nursery places are retained until the end of the Autumn half term in order to accommodate emergency referrals of children "in need" as defined in the requirements of the Children Act, 1989.

#### 4. **The Two Year Old Free Entitlement**

Where a child has been accessing the free entitlement for 2 year olds in a maintained nursery school or unit, for a minimum of 15 hours per week for two terms immediately prior to the child becoming eligible for free entitlement, they shall receive priority for admission to that maintained nursery school or unit in order to preserve continuity, providing that they also live within County Durham's administrative area.

#### 5. **Age**

The offer of a place will be prioritised according to date of birth. Normally, the earliest date your child can be accepted for Early Years Provision is the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, although some 2 year olds can access the free entitlement. Where applicants have the same date of birth, priority will be given to the earliest date of application.

#### 6. **Those children who are only entitled to the universal entitlement of 15 hours free early education per week**

Those children who are not eligible for the extended 30 hours offer should be offered the 15 hours universal entitlement for a minimum of three terms before they are due to enter a full-time school place in the Reception year. Maintained nurseries should plan for this provision to ensure those who are only entitled to 15 hours are offered a place.

#### 7. **Children Living in Other Authorities**

Although there are no catchment areas for places, preference will be given to children whose parents live within County Durham's administrative area. Only when all children living within the boundary of County Durham have been allocated a place, may a child living in a neighbouring area be offered a place.

#### **30 hours free early education per week, term time, from September 2017:**

This is for 3 & 4 year olds from working families that meet the eligibility criteria. The 30 hours free place will consist of the current 15 hours universal entitlement for all 3 & 4 year olds, which will be **extended** by an additional 15 free hours. The additional 15 free hours will be known as the '**extended entitlement**'.

The maintained nursery school or unit will undertake a validation check on the eligibility code and details provided by the parent on the application form. On confirmation the code is valid the following criteria will be applied to all applicants:

If there are more places available than applications, all children will be offered a place. Subsequent applicants will be offered places until the provision is full. Once all places have been allocated, further applications will be included on a waiting list and places will be allocated in accordance with the 30 hours oversubscription criteria.

If there are more applications than places the 30 hours oversubscription criteria will be applied as follows.

**30 Hours oversubscription criteria:**

Places will be allocated on a “first come, first served” basis on receipt of a verified code.



## **2026/27 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED INFANT, JUNIOR AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

If more children want a place than there are places available, we will offer places according to the following criteria, strictly in order of priority.

- 1. Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order\* including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.** A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
- 2. Medical Reasons**  
Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement.
- 3. Sibling Links**  
Children who have a sibling\*\* already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.
- 4. Distance**  
Children who live nearest the preferred school measured by the shortest walking route\*\*\*. This will be based on the child's address. Where the last place to be allocated would mean that a multiple birth sibling group i.e. twins, triplets, or other multiple birth sibling groups, would be split, the sibling group will be given priority over other children. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered and two applicants live equidistant from the school, the LA's system of random allocation will apply.

\* An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

\*\* Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, half - brothers, or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner. Some schools give priority to siblings of pupils attending another community and voluntary

controlled school with which they have close links (for example, schools on the same site). Where this is the case, details will be published in the Local Authority's Admissions Brochure.

\*\*\* In assessing home to school distance, the LA uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify and measure the shortest route utilising only the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN) and Urban Paths Network (UPN) which are national recognised datasets. The LA will not include any other routes or any other method of measurement. Routes are measured from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the building, to the nearest school site entrance. In all cases the GIS identifies the route to be measured by connecting in a straight line the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house to the closest point on the nearest route on the ITN/UPN.

\*\*\*\* In accordance with the co-ordinates of the Basic Land and Property Unit on the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

## **2026/27 OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THOSE ACADEMIES WHO USE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

When there are more requests for places than those available, the following criteria will be used to allocate places strictly in order of priority:

1. **Children who are 'looked after' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order\* including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.** A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. **Medical Reasons**  
Children with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement.
3. **Sibling Links**  
Children who have a sibling\*\* already attending the school and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.
4. **Applicants to their nearest School**  
Those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address measured by the shortest walking route\*\*\*
5. **All other applicants**

Tiebreaker

Where the school is oversubscribed within any of the above categories the following tiebreakers will be applied:

- (a) For those children who have applied for a place at the nearest school to their home address (category 4), priority will be given to those living closest to the nearest school measured by the shortest walking route;
- (b) For other children (category 5), priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school applied for. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered and two applicants live equidistant from the school, the LA's system of random allocation will apply.

In the unlikely event of the school being oversubscribed within categories 1, 2 or 3 tiebreaker (b) will apply.

*Footnote<sup>1</sup>: 'School' means any maintained secondary school or a DFE maintained Academy in County Durham. Distance will be measured by the shortest walking route. Those parents who live in County Durham and have children in year 6 in primary schools maintained by Durham County Council will be provided with information for them to find out which school is nearest to their home address according to the official measuring system. The same information will be provided for any other applicant on request.*

\* An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

\*\* Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, half - brothers, or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner. Some schools give priority to siblings of pupils attending another community and voluntary controlled school with which they have close links (for example, schools on the same site). Where this is the case, details will be published in the Local Authority's Admissions Brochure.

\*\*\* In assessing home to school distance, the LA uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify and measure the shortest route utilising only the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN) and Urban Paths Network (UPN) which are national recognised datasets. The LA will not include any other routes or any other method of measurement. Routes are measured from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the building, to the nearest school site entrance. In all cases the GIS identifies the route to be measured by connecting in a straight line the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house to the closest point on the nearest route on the ITN/UPN.

\*\*\*\* In accordance with the co-ordinates of the Basic Land and Property Unit on the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

## **2026/27 ADMISSION TO SIXTH FORMS – COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES WHO USE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY’S OVERSUBSCRIPTION CRITERIA**

### **Applications for Year 12**

Some County Durham secondary schools and academies offer sixth form of study for students. The majority of the sixth form students transfer from Year 11, but places are available for external students.

The entry requirements for sixth forms are largely dependent on the course of study that a student wishes to access. They are the same for internal and external students. Details of specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from the school. The availability of courses is dependent upon the number of applicants and the financial sustainability of the course. The Governing Body of the school determines this.

### **Entry requirements and oversubscription criteria:**

Priority will be given to:

1. Students who have attended the school in the previous academic year (during Year 11) and who satisfy the school’s entry requirements\* for the course available and then,
2. All other students of the relevant age who satisfy the school’s entry requirements\* for the course available.

Where the school is oversubscribed within category (1) the following will be applied, strictly in order of priority:

- a) **Children who are ‘looked after’ or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence/child arrangement, or special guardianship order\*\* including students who appear (to the Admissions Authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.** A looked after child is a child who is, at the time of making an application to a school, (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
- b) Students who will have a sibling\*\*\* at the secondary school during the coming academic year.
- c) All other students.
- d) Distance from home to school measured by the shortest walking route\*\*\*\*, with those living nearest the school receiving priority. Otherwise, if only one final place can be offered and two applicants live equidistant from the school, the LA’s system of random allocation will apply.

Where the school is oversubscribed within category (2) the above criteria will be applied, strictly in order of priority with the exception that, after b), the following will apply: all other students who previously attended in Year 11, a maintained school or academy with 11-16 provision only.

Applicants refused admission to a sixth form are entitled to an appeal to an independent appeals panel.

\*Details of the entry requirements are available from the individual Sixth Forms.

\*\* An adoption order is an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. A child arrangement order is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

\*\*\* Sibling is defined as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, half-brothers, or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters and children of the parent/carer's partner. Some schools give priority to siblings of pupils attending another community and voluntary controlled school with which they have close links (for example, schools on the same site). Where this is the case, details will be published in the Local Authority's Admissions Brochure.

\*\*\*\* In assessing home to school distance, the LA uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify and measure the shortest route utilising only the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network (ITN) and Urban Paths Network (UPN) which are national recognised datasets. The LA will not include any other routes or any other method of measurement. Routes are measured from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house, or in the case of a flat from the centre point\*\*\*\* of the building, to the nearest school site entrance. In all cases the GIS identifies the route to be measured by connecting in a straight line the centre point\*\*\*\* of the child's house to the closest point on the nearest route on the ITN/UPN.

\*\*\*\*\* In accordance with the co-ordinates of the Basic Land and Property Unit on the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

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## Appendix 4

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### Durham County Council Equality Impact Assessment

**NB:** The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires Durham County Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups. Assessing impact on equality and recording this is one of the key ways in which we can show due regard.

#### Section One: Description and Screening

<b>Service/Team or Section</b>	Education, School Places and Admissions
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Joanne Collins
<b>Title</b>	Senior School Places, Appeals and Transport Entitlement Officer
<b>MFTP Reference (if relevant)</b>	N/A
<b>Cabinet Date (if relevant)</b>	12 February 2025
<b>Start Date</b>	January 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	January 2026

#### Subject of the Impact Assessment

Please give a brief description of the policy, proposal, or practice as appropriate (a copy of the subject can be attached or insert a web-link):

School Admission Arrangements Academic Year 2026/27.

Who are the main stakeholders? (e.g. general public, staff, members, specific clients/service users):

General Public, Head Teachers and Governing Bodies/Academy Trusts of all schools/academies in County Durham, neighbouring Local Authorities, providers of Early Years Education.

## Screening

Is there any actual or potential negative or positive impact on the following protected characteristics?		
Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure	Positive Impact Indicate: Y = Yes, N = No, ? = unsure
Age	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Disability	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Marriage and civil partnership (workplace only)	N	N
Pregnancy and maternity	N	N
Race (ethnicity)	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Religion or Belief	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Sex (gender)	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Sexual orientation	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.
Transgender	N	The school admission arrangements comply with the Admissions Code of Practice and ensure fairness and equity.



Please provide **brief** details of any potential to cause adverse impact. Record full details and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

The main groups affected are children and their families living in County Durham. It is not expected that children and their families will be adversely affected.

How will this policy/proposal/practice promote our commitment to our legal responsibilities under the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between people from different groups?

The School Admissions code exists to ensure fairness and equity in school admissions arrangements. The oversubscription criteria comply with the Code and:

- Are not gender specific and apply equally to all male/female applicants
- Do not apply to pupils who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as they are automatically admitted to the school named in the EHCP, therefore they have priority for admission to school
- Are not age specific
- Ensure that all pupils regardless of race/ethnicity/religion or belief/sexual orientation are ranked according to the oversubscription criteria.

The number of school places and the co-ordination of admissions via the schemes do not impact on specific groups.

## Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your findings?

Please **outline** your data sets and/or proposed evidence sources, highlight any gaps and say whether or not you propose to carry out consultation. Record greater detail and analysis in the following section of this assessment.

The School Admissions Code exists to ensure fairness and equity in school admission arrangements. The policy and oversubscription criteria and co-ordinated admission schemes comply with the School Admissions Code.

## Screening Summary

On the basis of this screening is there:	Confirm which refers (Y/N)
Evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics which will proceed to full assessment?	N
No evidence of actual or potential impact on some/all of the protected characteristics?	Y

## Sign Off

Lead officer sign off:	Date: 11/01/2025
Service equality representative sign off:	Date:

If carrying out a full assessment, please proceed to section two.

If not proceeding to full assessment please return completed screenings to your service equality representative and forward a copy to [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)

If you are unsure of potential impact please contact the corporate research and equalities team for further advice at [equalities@durham.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@durham.gov.uk)