

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026

Middlesbrough Co-ordinated Admission Scheme 2026/27

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

(Applies to all schools in Middlesbrough - Community, Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies)

Each year all Local Authorities must formulate an admissions scheme in the relevant determination year to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools in their area. The scheme details the timetable and how applications are made by parents/guardians and processed by the Local Authority (LA).

All admission authorities (including Academies, Voluntary Aided (VA) and Foundation schools) have a duty to comply with the co-ordinated scheme. Relevant information must be provided to the LA by the dates agreed in the scheme.

(The admission policy, including oversubscription criteria, for Middlesbrough Council community schools is detailed in a separate document. Schools that are their own admission authorities such as VA, Academies and Foundation schools will have their own admission policies but will still adhere to the Admissions Scheme.)

1. Applying for a School Place

There will be online preference applications which will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the Reception class for primary school and the first year of secondary education (Year 7) in the determination year. Applications for entry into Reception class and Year 7 can also be made on paper forms if parents/guardians are unable to apply online.

Please note: A separate form and scheme are in operation for in-year school applications for all other year groups, including applications for both Reception class and Year 7 which are submitted on or after 1 September.

The forms 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/guardians resident in the LA area who wish to express a preference for their child:

- i. To be admitted to a school within the LA area (including Academies, VA and Foundation schools);
- ii. To be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including Academies, VA and Foundation schools).

During the main admission rounds, the application form will:

- i. Invite parents/guardians to express four preferences for the Year 7 intake or three preferences for the Reception class intake including, where relevant, any schools outside the LA's area, in rank order of preference;
- ii. Invite parents/guardians to give their reasons for each preference;
- iii. Specify a closing date (for the determination year) and where it must be returned;
- iv. Parents/guardians of summer born children wishing to defer entry to reception for one year must apply for reception at the usual time for their child's date of birth. Requests to defer must be received by the primary applications closing date. If a request is agreed by the preferred school(s), then the application for reception will be withdrawn before a place is offered. The parent/guardian will make an application for reception the following year to those schools that were in agreement, places will be allocated according to the schools oversubscription criteria and are not guaranteed.

The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that application forms are available on request from the LA.

All preferences expressed on the application forms are valid applications. The governing body of an Own Admission Authority school can require parents/guardians, who make a preference to their school, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application, for example Roman Catholic schools can ask for proof of baptism etc.

Where a school receives a supplementary form it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent/guardian has also completed either the Middlesbrough paper or online application or, if resident in another area, their home area's application form upon which the school is nominated. Supplementary forms should be returned directly to the school(s) to which the parent/guardian is applying. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents/guardians will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

2. Processing of Applications

Completed online or paper applications should be made by:

- i. For secondary schools, by the 31 October 2025
- ii. For primary schools, by the 15 January 2026

Online applications facilities will close at 23:59 hours on the above closing dates.

Secondary Admissions - Determining offers in response to applications.

The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission Authorities. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the application form where:

- i. It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority; or
- ii. It is acting on behalf of another admission authority, such as a Foundation or Academy school; or
- iii. An applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school; or
- iv. An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent/guardian has nominated.

By 17 November 2025 the LA will notify the schools who are their own admissions authority who process their own admissions applications, i.e. Academies, VA and Foundation schools, of every application that has been made for that school. Where parents/guardians have requested a place at a school outside of the LA area, the information will be forwarded to the relevant admission authority/authorities.

By 9 January 2026 – schools who process their own admissions applications, i.e. Academies, Foundation and VA schools, inform the LA of allocation of places for all applications received ranked in the priority order of their admission policy.

Between 12 January and 20 February 2026 – The LA compares lists and considers all preferences from the parent/guardian and if first preference is refused look to see where 2nd or 3rd or 4th preferences can be accommodated. Liaison will take place with VA, Academy, Foundation and other LAs until the allocation of places is resolved for each application, as required.

The LA will match ranked lists for all schools and:

- i. Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child; or
- ii. Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.

Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

On 1 March 2026 (or the next working day where 1 March falls on a weekend or bank holiday) letters will be posted second class to parents/guardians informing them which school has been allocated to their child. For online applicants, who requested an email when submitting their application, will automatically be issued an email on the 1 March 2026 (or the next working day where 1 March falls on a weekend or bank holiday). All online applicants can view the outcome of their application via the website on the above date. If unsuccessful at gaining a place at a preferred school, the allocation letter/email will also contain information on how to appeal against the refusal of a school place.

Primary Applications - Determining offers in response to applications.

The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission Authorities. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed where:

- i. It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority; or
- ii. It is acting on behalf of another admission authority, such as a Foundation or Academy school; or
- iii. An applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school; or
- iv. An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent/guardian has nominated.

By 30 January 2026 the LA will notify the schools who are their own admissions authority who process their own admissions applications, i.e. Academies, VA and Foundation schools, of every application that has been made for that school. Where parents/guardians have requested a place at a school outside of the LA area, the information will be forwarded to the relevant admission authority/authorities.

By 2 March 2026 – schools who process their own admissions applications, i.e. Academies, Foundation and VA schools, inform the LA of allocation of places for all applications received ranked in the priority order of their admission policy.

March 2026 - Liaison will take place with Academies, VA and Foundation schools and other LAs until the allocation of places is resolved for each application, as required.

By 27 March 2026 - the LA will match ranked lists for all schools and:

- i. Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child;
- ii. Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.

Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

On 16 April 2026 (or the next working day where 16 April falls on a weekend or bank holiday) - Letters posted second class to parents/guardians informing them which school has been allocated to their child. For online applicants, who requested an email when submitting their application, will automatically be issued an email on the 16 April 2026 (or the next working day where 16 April falls on a weekend or bank holiday). All online applicants can view the outcome of their application via the website on the above date.

If unsuccessful at gaining a place at a preferred school, the allocation letter/email will also contain information on how to appeal against the refusal of a school place.

3. Late Applications

The LA will accept applications which are received late only when there is evidence of an exceptional circumstance which prevented submission by the stated deadline and only if the application is received before the date the allocation procedures begin. These will then be treated in the same way as all other applications.

Examples of an exceptional circumstance may include when a single parent/guardian has been ill for some time, or a family has just moved in the area or returned from abroad. In the event of a late application not being accepted or receipt is after the date the allocation procedures begin, and the school(s) requested are oversubscribed, then places will be offered at the school nearest to the home address with places available.

Where families have moved to a new address after places have been allocated, preferences will only be agreed if places remain available in the preferred school. If the preferred school, including the admission zone school, is full, a place will be offered at the school closest to the home address with places available.

4. Waiting Lists

In accordance with 2.15 of the School Admissions Code 2021, each admission authority must maintain a clear, fair, and objective waiting list until at least 31 December of each school year of admission, stating in their arrangements that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Priority must not be given to children based on the date their application was received, or their name was added to the list. Looked after children or previously looked after children allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol must take precedence over those on a waiting list. Please refer to the individual school's admissions policy for further information.

Summary Timetable for the Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements 2026/27

Secondary Schools

8 September 2025	Send out application information. Online application website opens.
31 October 2025	Closing date for receipt of online and paper applications.
17 November 2025	Send application details to own admission authority schools and to other LAs as applicable.
9 January 2026	Due to the coordinated admissions processes, this is the latest date for parents/guardians to notify the LA of a new address for it be considered as part of the main allocation process.
9 January 2026	Own admission authority schools to provide the LA with ranked list of applicants.
12 January - 20 February 2026	LA will have compared all lists and allocated places in accordance with the highest expressed preference where possible. LA to inform other LAs of places to be offered to their residents.
1 March 2026 (or next working day where 1	NATIONAL OFFER DAY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA sends letters to parents/guardians informing them of the school allocated.
March falls on a weekend or bank holiday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online applicants, who requested an email when submitting their application, will automatically be issued an email. All online applicants can view the outcome of their application via the website. LA informs schools of final offers.
30 March 2026	Closing date for appeal forms.
May/June 2026	Appeals to be heard by Independent Panels.
Until at least 31 December 2026	Waiting lists are held by each admission authority.

Primary Schools

14 November 2025	Send out application information. Online application website opens.
15 January 2026	Closing date for receipt of online and paper applications. (Closing date for applications to defer entry to Reception for one year).
30 January 2026	Send application details to own admission authority schools and to other LAs as applicable.
2 March 2026	Due to the coordinated admissions processes, this is the latest date for parents/guardians to notify the LA of a new address for it be considered as part of the main allocation process.
2 March 2026	Own admission authority schools to provide the LA with ranked list of applicants.
March 2026	LA to exchange offer information with neighbouring LAs.
By 27 March 2026	The LA will have compared all lists and allocated places in accordance with the highest expressed preference where possible.
16 April 2026 (or next working day where 16 April falls on a weekend of bank holiday)	<p>NATIONAL OFFER DAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA sends letters to parents/guardians informing them of the school allocated. Online applicants, who requested an email when submitting their application, will automatically be issued an email. All online applicants can view the outcome of their application via the website. LA to inform schools of allocated pupils.
18 May 2026	Closing date for appeals.
June/July 2026	Appeals to be heard by Independent Panels.
Until at least 31 December 2026	Waiting lists are held by each admission authority.

Appeals (In accordance with the School Appeals Code)

Unsuccessful applications will be given the right of appeal.

- Appellants will be given a deadline of 20 school days from the date of notification that their application was unsuccessful to prepare and lodge their written appeal.
- Appellants will receive 10 school days' notice of their appeal hearing
- Appeal hearings will have reasonable deadlines for appellants to submit additional evidence, for admission authorities to submit their evidence, and for the clerk to send appeal papers to the panel and parties.
- Decision letters are sent within five school days of the hearing wherever possible.

For applications made in the normal admissions round, ie for Reception and Year 7 as timetabled above, appeals must be heard within 40 school days of the deadline for lodging appeals.

For 'late applications' for the normal admissions round, ie a determination letter is sent out after the National Offer dates, appeals should be heard within 40 school days from the deadline for lodging appeals where possible, or within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

For applications for in-year admissions, appeals must be heard within 30 school days of the appeal being lodged.

Any appeals submitted after the appropriate deadline must still be heard, appeals should be heard within 30 school days.