

Coordinated admission scheme for maintained schools, including academies 2025/26

Note: The status of some schools listed in this document may be subject to change as a consequence of academy conversion or school organisational changes.

Introduction

All Local authorities are required by the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 to have a scheme in place each year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools and academies (except special schools and nursery schools) within their area. The scheme has to comply with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Coordination schemes are intended to simplify the admissions process whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Coordination establishes a mechanism that ensures as far as is reasonably practicable that every parent of a child living in a local authority (LA) who has applied to a maintained school is sent a single offer of a school place by their LA.

Coordination schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools to set and apply their own admissions arrangements and oversubscription criteria, nor for academies to agree their own arrangements with the Secretary of State. Admission authorities do not need to determine the same or similar oversubscription criteria, but must ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with and do not undermine the coordination scheme for their area.

The following coordinated admission scheme for Northumberland County Council will apply to the admission arrangements for the school year beginning September 2025.

Interpretation and glossary

In this Scheme –

"The LA" is Northumberland County Council acting in its capacity as a local (education) authority.

"The LA area" means Northumberland.

"School" means a community, voluntary controlled, foundation or voluntary aided school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA.

"Academy" means a state funded non fee paying independent school set up under a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the proprietor of an Academy (most commonly and hereafter referred to as an Academy Trust). Academy Funding Agreements require Academies to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions, though the Secretary of State has the power to vary this requirement where there is a demonstrable need. Academies include free schools and studio schools.

"Admission authority" in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA and, in relation to a foundation or voluntary aided school or an academy, means the governing body of that school.

"The specified year" is the school year beginning in September 2025.

"Admission arrangements" are the determined arrangements which govern the procedures and decision making for the purpose of admitting pupils to a particular school or academy.

“Late application” means any application for a place in the first year of entry to the school that is received after the closing date for applications.

“Parent or carer” means any person who (as defined in the 1989 Children Act) holds parental responsibility for a child and with whom the child normally lives.

“Home authority” is the LA that a parent resides in.

The scheme

The scheme will apply to all first, primary, middle, secondary and high schools and academies in the LA area (except special schools and nursery schools) and shall take effect from 28 February 2024.

Under the coordinated scheme, Northumberland County Council will set and apply the oversubscription criteria for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the area. The governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies will set and apply their own oversubscription criteria.

The LA will work with all other admission authorities within Northumberland and with other relevant local authorities to ensure that a fair and transparent system for the allocation of places is achieved.

The normal admissions round

The scheme will apply to all children whose parents are seeking a school place for the school’s initial year of entry for the start of Autumn term 2025 (whether or not it is their age cohort). The initial years of entry are:

School type or name Initial year of entry

<i>First and primary schools</i>	<i>Reception</i>
<i>Middle schools</i>	<i>Year 5</i>
<i>Secondary schools</i>	<i>Year 7</i>
<i>High schools</i>	<i>Year 9</i>

There will be a common application form available for all applicants, which will be available online and as a paper version. Online applications are encouraged as parents receive an immediate response to their application and they can accept their offer online.

The common application form must be used by parents who live in Northumberland as a means of expressing preferences for a school place for their child. All preferences expressed on the form are valid applications and they should be ranked in order of preference. Reasons to support each preference can be included on the form.

The form will specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned to. Completed forms must be returned to the LA before the closing date. The form will be accompanied by an explanation of the coordinated admissions scheme. This will explain that:

- the parent/carers will receive one single offer of a school place
- all preferences will be treated equally
- a place will be offered at the highest ranked school for which the child is eligible for a place under the admission criteria
- if more than one school could offer a place, the parent/carers will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the preference order appearing on the form

- if a place is unable to be offered at a preferred school, a place will be offered at the nearest school with available places based on the straight line distance from home to school.

The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent resident in their area who has a child due to start primary education or is in their last year of first, primary or middle school is made aware of the procedures for applying for a school place and has access to a copy of the form and supporting guidance.

Verification of data

Parents may be asked to provide proof of address by the LA or by other admission authorities.

In some cases, for example where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a child's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances the address used for child benefit purposes will normally be used, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the benefit. If that is not available, then the address on the NHS medical card can be used.

Supplementary information

Admission authorities can require parents to provide additional information where it is required for the governing body to apply its oversubscription criteria. Any requested information should be returned by the dates stated in order to be considered as part of the application.

Submission dates

The application period will open from **12 September 2024**.

31 October 2024, midnight, is the deadline for parents to apply to the LA for a place in a middle, secondary or high school or academy.

15 January 2025, midnight, is the deadline for parents to apply to the LA for a place in a reception class.

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure that applications are returned directly to the home LA by the closing date.

Late applications

Any application for the normal admissions round received after the deadline will be deemed "late".

Late applications will be dealt with after all on-time applications have been processed and places allocated. Late applicants will not be made an offer on National Offer Day. They will be offered as part of the second waiting list process once offers have been accepted.

Only in exceptional limited circumstances will late applications be considered at the same time as applications submitted on time. These include:

- The illness/death of a close relative such that making an application during the application period was not possible.
- A move into Northumberland from outside the area after the deadline date. Confirmation of the new address must be provided (in the form of an exchange of contracts or a tenancy agreement).

- Where there has been a delay in the LA receiving the application due to an administrative error.
- Other circumstances to be considered and each case decided on its own merits.

Documentary evidence should be provided with the application to verify the circumstances which caused the application to be late. If evidence cannot be provided, the application will not be considered as an exception.

The LA will determine whether the late application is considered as an exception.

22 November 2024 is the deadline for asking for a late application for a place in a middle, secondary or high school or academy to be considered as an on time exception.

14 February 2025 is the deadline for asking for a late application for a reception place to be considered as an on time exception.

Changing preferences

No changes will be accepted to applications after the deadline date has passed, unless there is a genuine reason for the change, such as a change of address or siblings have changed schools. **The deadlines and evidence requirements are the same as for exceptional late applications, see above.** If these are not met, the request will not be considered as an exception.

Any request to change preferences will cancel out and replace the previous application. If submitted after the deadline date, and not agreed by the LA as an exception, this means the original application will be withdrawn by the LA, processed as late, and no offer will be made on National Offer Day. Places will be offered as part of the second waiting list process.

No form received

Where no form is submitted for a child known to the LA, a place will be offered at the nearest Northumberland school to the home address with a vacancy, measured in a straight line using an electronic (GIS) map measurement system. This may be a community, voluntary controlled, foundation or voluntary aided school or academy, if the admission authority agrees. However, places will not be offered on National Offer Day: they will be offered as part of the second waiting list process.

Processing applications

After the closing date the LA will forward details of relevant applications received on time to other admission authorities in its area and to other LAs if a preference is made for a school in another area. Late applications will be shared with other admission authorities after offer day.

Parental preferences will be ranked by every admission authority strictly according to the oversubscription criteria for the relevant school. The ranked lists will be returned to Northumberland LA by the specified date detailing how the oversubscription criteria have been applied to the list.

The order of school preference listed on the application form will not affect these rankings.

Determining offers

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

- it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or on behalf of another admission authority that has delegated its role to the LA, or
- an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
- an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA, using preference data and oversubscription criteria rankings (including those from own admission authority schools and academies), will allocate places according to each parent's preference ranking as follows:

- Where a parent's first preference can be met, a place will be allocated at that school. The LA will not consider any lower ranked preferences.
- Where a parent's first preference cannot be met, but a lower preference can, a place will be allocated at the lower preference school. Any higher preference applications will be placed on the waiting list for that school(s) and ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. Any preferences ranked lower than the preference offered will not be considered.
- Where none of the parent's preferences can be met, a place will be allocated at the nearest school with available places based on the straight line distance from home to school. The applications for preferred schools will be placed on the waiting lists for those schools and ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

Distance measurements

Distances are measured using the Council's electronic (GIS) map measuring system in a straight line distance from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

Offers

Parents will receive one offer of a school place. Parents who applied online can log in on National Offer Day to find out their allocated school.

Parents who submitted a paper application will be posted a letter to arrive on National Offer Day. Information will not be given out over the telephone.

If a parent was refused a place at a preferred school, the letter or email (depending on how parent applied for their place) will explain why the place was refused and that the parent has the right of appeal.

Responding to offers

Parents are required to respond to the LA regarding the offer of a school place to either accept or refuse it within two weeks of National Offer Day. If the parent does not confirm to the LA that they accept the place, the LA may remove the place and reallocate it to another child.

Parents should not refuse a place unless they are certain of a place at an alternative school. This does not remove the parent's right of appeal.

If a parent wishes their child to be considered for an alternative school(s) after offer day, a new application must be completed listing the new order of preferences. This will cancel out and replace the previous application.

Waiting Lists

Children will be kept on a waiting list for any school ranked higher on their form than the school at which they were offered a place, for example, where a parent has been allocated a place at their second preference school, they may be placed on the waiting list of their first preference school but not their third.

Where a parent has been offered a place at a school they did not nominate on their form, they will be placed on the waiting list of all the schools they did nominate, and considered for places at those schools if any become available.

Waiting lists will be kept by all admission authorities until at least **31 December 2025**. The waiting list will be maintained strictly in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and if a place becomes available this will be offered to the child ranked highest on the list. Places on waiting lists will change over time as new applications are received. When any place in a school is refused, the LA will reallocate that place to the child at the top of the waiting list for that school.

Appeals

All parents have the right of appeal if refused a place at a school. Appeals are coordinated by the relevant admission authority. Appeals will be heard by an independent appeals panel and if the panel uphold the appeal, the decision is legally binding on the admission authority and they must admit the child. Very few appeals are upheld.

Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry

Children are entitled to start school full time the September following their fourth birthday. This is when most children start school. However a parent does not have to send their child to school until they reach compulsory school age. A child will reach 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. Children must receive full time education from this point. For children under compulsory school age, once a school place has been offered and accepted, parents may decide that they would like their child to attend school part-time until later in the school year, or start full time, later in the school year, but not later than the start of the summer term. If you would like your child to attend school part time or start school later in the school year, you must contact the local authority and school following receipt of your offer letter.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be discussed with the head teacher of the school and made in writing to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Summer Born Children

The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August can also choose to defer entry as above but they can also request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.

Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request. The local authority will liaise with the school and the relevant admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the relevant admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.

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.

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

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 normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools. If a child who has not reached compulsory school age has been allocated a Reception place and their parent or carer wishes to delay their child's entry to school, the place will be held open. The place must be taken up in the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

Shared responsibility

The management of school applications may be severely delayed during the main admissions round where separated parents* of the child each submit an application for different schools or one parent does not agree with the application made by the other parent. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer of a school place per child can be made by the Local Authority. In this situation the Local Authority asks that parents and/or carers resolve matters between themselves before informing the Local Authority in writing of which application should be processed/their agreement to an application. In case of dispute between parents, where more than one parent has parental responsibility and they do not agree to an application being made to a particular school, a temporary school place will be offered until any dispute is resolved by both parents as a personal matter and this will be based on the address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term-time only.

Children from overseas

Children who hold a full British Citizen passport or children whose passport has been endorsed to show they have the right of abode in the UK are entitled to apply for a place at a maintained school. The passport or visa may be requested for inspection before an offer of a place can be made. The LA will allocate a place in advance for families of UK service personnel and Crown Servants with a confirmed posting to the area, where they are moving to the area outside of the normal admission round.

Applying for places in-year (outside of the normal admissions round)

Parents with children of school age who move into Northumberland and require a school place in-year (outside of the normal admissions round) should contact the Admissions Team if they require advice on schools with places.

Parents who want a place in a Northumberland school will need to complete the LA's in-year school application form and return it to the LA Admissions Team. Parents are allowed to name their preferred schools on the form.

Places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless house moves have been confirmed, for example through the exchange of contracts or the signing of a formal lease agreement. Documentary evidence to support the new address will be required.

In Northumberland, the local authority manage the in-year admissions for the majority of schools, however some academies allocate their own in-year admissions directly. Where this is the case, the LA will forward the application to the school and the school will inform the parent if they are able to offer a place. If no place is available at a preferred school, the LA will make Northumberland residents an offer of an alternative school.

Attendance at school following the offer of a school place

For admission to a school's normal point of entry, the child is expected to attend the allocated school within 10 school days of the start of the term (except where deferred entry to Reception has been agreed, in which case the child is expected to attend from the start of the term).

For in-year admissions, the child is expected to take up the offer and attend the allocated school within 10 school days of being made an offer, or the offer will be withdrawn.

Coordination timetable for admission to Reception in September 2025

DATE	EVENT
1 November 2024	Application process opens online for 2025/26
Midnight 15 January 2025	Closing date for all application forms to be received by the LA
14 February 2025	Last date for any late applications to be submitted and considered as Exceptions
5 February 2025	Applications for own admission authority schools and academies in Northumberland will be forwarded to those admission authorities and applications stating preferences for schools in other LAs will be forwarded to those LAs
2 March 2025	Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools to provide the LA with their ranked lists of applicants, including details of how the oversubscription criteria were applied
8 March 2025	The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of Northumberland schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas
22 March 2025	The LA will inform Northumberland schools of children to be offered places at their schools
16 April 2025	National offer day for places.
1 May 2025	Date for parents to refuse the offer
8 May 2025	Reallocate spaces that have become available since offer day (on-time applicants only - waiting list process) in criteria order.
29 May 2025 onwards	Places are allocated as and when they become available in priority order.
June/July	Appeals are heard

Coordination timetable for admission to middle, secondary and high schools in September 2024

DATE	EVENT
12 September 2024	Application process opens online for 2025/26
Midnight 31 October 2024	Closing date for all applications to be received by the LA
22 November 2024	Last date for any late applications to be submitted and be considered as exceptions
23 November 2024	Applications for own admission authority schools and academies in Northumberland will be forwarded to those admission authorities and applications stating preferences for schools in other LAs will be forwarded to those LAs
11 January 2025	Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools to provide the LA with their ranked lists of applicants, including details of how the oversubscription criteria were applied
25 January 2025	The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of Northumberland schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas.
28 February 2025	The LA will inform Northumberland schools of children to be offered places at their schools
1 March 2025	National Offers Day
16 March 2025	Date for parents to refuse offers of a place
20 March 2025	Reallocate spaces that have become available since offer day (on-time applicants only – first waiting list process).
18 April 2025 onwards	Places are allocated as and when they become available in priority order
May – July	Appeals are heard

All schools and academies to which this scheme applies:

1. All Northumberland County Council community and voluntary controlled schools

2. VA Middle Schools

N/A

3. Trusts

Ashington Learning Partnership Trust

Bothal Primary School

Central Primary School

4. Academies and Free Schools (first/primary)

Abbeyfields First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Bede Academy (South site), Emmanuel Schools Foundation

Belsay Primary School, Pele Trust

Bishop's Primary School (NCEA)

Blyth Malvins Close Academy, Wise Academies

Blyth Morpeth Road Academy, Wise Academies

Blyth Croftway Academy, Wise Academies

Broomley First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Cramlington Village Primary School

Darras Hall Primary School, Pele Trust

Haltwhistle Primary Academy, Wise Academies

Harbottle Church of England First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's C of E Primary School, Pele Trust

Meadowdale Academy (primary from September 2020)

Mickley First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Morpeth Stobhillgate First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Ovingham CE First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Pax Christi Catholic Partnership, Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Academy (Cramlington)

Ponteland Primary School, Pele Trust

Ponteland Community Primary School (previously Ponteland Middle), associate of Tyne Coast Academy Trust

Prudhoe Adderlane Academy, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Prudhoe Castle First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Prudhoe West Academy, Wise Academies

Richard Coates C of E Primary School, Pele Trust

Shaftoe Trust Primary School, Wise Academies

St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Roman Catholic First School

St Matthew's Roman Catholic Primary Academy, St Thomas More Partnership of Schools

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School

Thropton Village First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust,

Warkworth Church of England Primary School

Whitfield Church of England Primary School, The Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust

Whittonstall First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Wylam First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Academies (Middle)

Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Morpeth Chantry Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Morpeth Newminster Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust
Hexham Middle School, Hadrian Learning Trust
Highfield Middle School, Tyne Community Learning Trust
Ovingham Middle School, Tyne Community Learning Trust
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Middle School

Academies (secondary/high)

Ashington Academy, The North East Learning Trust
Bede Academy (North Site), Emmanuel Schools Foundation
Bedlington Academy, The North East Learning Trust
Berwick Academy
Cramlington Learning Village
NCEA Duke's Secondary School
Ponteland High School, Pele Trust
Prudhoe High School, Tyne Community Learning Trust
Queen Elizabeth High School, Hadrian Learning Trust
St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Pax Christi Catholic Partnership
The Blyth Academy, Northern Education Trust
The King Edward VI School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

5. VA and Foundation Schools

Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England Primary School
Bellingham Primary School
Bellingham Middle School and Sports College
Haydon Bridge High School
Broomhaugh Church of England First School
Chollerton Church of England First School
Corbridge St Helen's Church of England First School
Holy Island Church of England First School
Holy Trinity Church of England First School
Hugh Joicey Church of England First School
Humshaugh Church of England First School
Longhorsley Church of England First School
Morpeth All Saints Church of England First School
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School (Berwick)
St Robert's Roman Catholic First School
Tritlington Church of England First School
Wark Church of England First School
Whitley Chapel Church of England First School
Ellingham Church of England Primary School
Embleton Vincent Edwards' Church of England Primary School
Greenhead Church of England Primary School
Henshaw Church of England Primary School
Newbrough Church of England Primary School
Richard Coates Church of England School
St Aidan's Roman Catholic Primary School
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School
St Michael's Church of England Primary School
St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School (Alnwick)
Whalton Church of England Primary School