

Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in the area of South Tyneside Local Authority

Introduction

1. This Scheme is made by South Tyneside Council under the School Admissions (Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and applies to all Secondary Schools in South Tyneside.

Interpretation

2. **In this Scheme -**

"The LA" means South Tyneside Council acting in their capacity as Local Authority;

"The LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA is the Local Authority;

"Primary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996;

"Primary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996;

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

"Voluntary controlled school" means such of the schools, as are voluntary controlled schools, where the LA sets the admission criteria and offers the places;

"VA school" means such of the schools as are voluntary aided schools; where the governing board sets the admission criteria and offers the places;

"Trust School" means such of the schools as have trust status;

"Academy" means such of the schools as have academy status;

"Admission Authority" in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA, in relation to a VA and Trust school means the governing board of that school and in relation to an Academy means the Academy Trust of that school;

"The equal preference system" the scheme operated by South Tyneside Council whereby all preferences listed by parents/carers on the common application form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil may be offered a place at more than one school, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the one ranked highest on the common application form;

"The specified year" means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September 2026;

"Academic year" means a period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July.

"The determination year" means the academic year beginning two years before the admission year.

"Admission arrangements" means the arrangements for a particular school or schools, which govern the procedures and decision making for the purposes of admitting pupils to the school;

"Parent/Carer" means any person who holds parental responsibility, as defined under the 1989 Children Act, and with whom the child normally resides;

"Shortest distance" means the shortest distance measured as a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the school main entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.

"In Year" admission means any application for a place other than the normal year of entry.

"Home Local Authority" means the local authority in whose area the parents live.

"Eligible for a place" means that a child has been placed on a school's ranked list at such a point, which falls within the school's published admission number.

Commencement and extent

This scheme applies in relation to the admission arrangements for the schools for admission year 2026-2027 (the specified year).

The LA will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in Schedule 1 to this scheme, or provisions having the same effect.

The admission authority of each of the Voluntary Aided Schools, Trusts and Academies will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in the Schedule, so far as relevant to that school, or provisions having the same effect.

The Scheme

1. The Scheme shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
2. The scheme shall apply to every school in the LA area as identified in Appendix 1 and shall take effect from 1 August 2023.
3. The Scheme will also include applications from parents seeking admission to South Tyneside schools who live within the following neighbouring LA's:
 - Gateshead Local Authority
 - North Tyneside Local Authority
 - Sunderland Local Authority

We will also co-ordinate our admission process with any other Admission Authorities where relevant.

SCHEDULE 1

PART I-THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form.
2. The Common Application Form will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of secondary education in the specified year, and for applications made outside the normal year of entry i.e. 'In Year' admissions leading up to, and during, the academic year 2026/2027.
3. The Common Application Form must be used as a means of expressing up to 3 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 school within the LA area (including VA, Trust and Academy schools);
- b To be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including VA, Trust and Academy schools)

4. The Common Application Form will -

- a Allow parents to express up to 3 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 at the respective schools,
- b Specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned in accordance with paragraph 10.

5. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

- a That the Common Application Form is available on request from the LA and on-line at www.southtyneside.gov.uk/schooladmissions until the closing date; and,
- b That the Common Application Form is accompanied by a written explanation of the key features of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.

6. The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- a Every parent resident in the LA area who has a child in their last year of primary education has access to a copy of the Common Application Form (and a written explanation) either on-line or paper copy (on request only); and
- b Every parent whose application falls within the category of an 'In Year' transfer has access to a copy of the Common Application Form (and written explanation), on request, and understands the process.

Parents will be advised that they will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:

- (i) If more than one school is nominated and two or more preferences can be offered the parent will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the order appearing on the form (the first-mentioned being ranked the highest); and
- (ii) 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.

- (iii) If a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school.
7. The Common Application Form will include an extra section to be completed by parents who express a preference for a Voluntary Aided School to enable them to provide additional relevant information. No supplementary information forms will be used unless the information is insufficient for consideration of the application against the published admission criteria. Where admission authorities within South Tyneside use supplementary information forms the LA will seek to ensure that these only collect information, which is required by the published oversubscription criteria, in accordance with paragraphs 1.9 and 2.4 of the School Admissions Code.
 8. Where a school receives a supplementary information form from a South Tyneside resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a Common Application Form and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary information forms are received directly by Trust, Voluntary Aided Schools or Academies the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a Common Application Form has been received from the parent and, if not, the LA will contact the parent and ask them to complete a Common Application Form. Under the requirements of the scheme parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary information form where this is not strictly required for the governing board to apply their oversubscription criteria.
 9. Any school which operates criteria for selection by ability or aptitude must ensure that its arrangements for assessing ability or aptitude, to enable decisions to be made on nominations, conform to the timing requirements of the scheme as set out in Schedule 2. (N.B. no School in South Tyneside operates criteria for selection based on ability or aptitude)

Processing of Common Application Forms

10. It will be the responsibility of parents to ensure that Common Application Forms are received directly to the LA by the closing date of **4.30pm on Friday 31 October 2025** (National Closing Date). Common Application Forms may also be completed on-line by the closing date.

Determining offers in response to the Common Application Form

11. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the Common Application Forms. 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 Common Application Form where-
 - (a) It is acting in its capacity as an admission authority, or

- (b) An applicant is eligible for more than one place and is allocated a place at the highest ranked school, or
- (c) An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 18 of this Schedule.

12. Completed application forms must be received by the closing date of **4.30pm on Friday 31 October 2025** (National Closing Date).
13. Completed application forms, which are received after the closing date will be marked '**LATE**' and considered on an individual basis except that the procedure must not prevent the proper processing under the Scheme of application forms received on time.
14. The LA will process all application forms; any completed application forms must be treated as a confidential communication between the parent and the LA. All ranked applications received by the closing date will be considered before any ranked applications received after this closing date unless exceptional circumstances apply.
15. **By Friday 14 November 2025** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details (SEN, LAC or Late) and any supplementary information received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria. Where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will also similarly notify the relevant authority/authorities on the same day.
16. **By Monday 5 January 2026** the admission authority for each school will provide the LA with a list in rank order, 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.

The LA will also require additional names in criteria order of the next possible offers, up to 25% above the admission number of the school, so that schools will not need to be contacted by the LA at each iteration.

17. **By Wednesday 14 January 2026** the admission authority for neighbouring LA schools will produce a list of parental applicants and waiting lists (if appropriate).
18. **By Friday 23 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 and any lower offers will be disregarded.
 - Where none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists or the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured by the shortest distance using a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the school main entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.
 - The LA will allocate a school place to those pupils who have not submitted a Common Application Form after all other pupils who submitted a Common Application Form have been considered. The offer **may not** be made on **2 March 2026** (National Offer Day 1 March 2026). The LA will allocate a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists or the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured by the shortest distance using a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey coordinates for the parental home residence (including flats) to the school main entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.
- 19. Friday 20 February 2026** –By this date the LA informs its Secondary Schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools and informs other LAs of places in South Tyneside schools to be offered to their residents.
- 20. On Monday 2 March 2026** (National Offer Day 1 March 2026) parents will be notified by either via e-mail (on-line applications) or a letter posted 2nd class (paper applications) informing them of the school place allocated. This will give the following information
- The name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other higher ranked schools nominated on the Common Application Form;
 - Information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
 - Invite parents to contact the LA if they want to be considered for any places that might become available in schools that they ranked higher than the school they are offered, in the re- allocation process on **11 March 2025 i.e. waiting list**;
 - Contact details for the schools (in the case of nominated Academy, VA and Trust schools where they were not offered a place) so that

they can lodge an appeal, with the governing board, and the relevant LAs.

The information will not inform parents of places still available at other schools.

- 21. Wednesday 11 March 2026: (1)** The initial deadline for parents to accept or decline the place offered. If they do not respond by this date, the LA will continue to pursue parents for written confirmation of acceptance or to decline the place offered for oversubscribed schools by issuing a reminder letter. **(2)** The initial deadline for parents to request to place their child's name on a waiting list for any school they ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered.

WAITING LISTS

- 22.** Parents may ask for their children to be kept on a waiting list of children to be re-allocated places if they become available **after 2 March 2026** (National Offer Day 1 March 2026) any school they have ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their Common Application Form they may be placed on the list of all the schools they did nominate and can then be considered for places at those schools. If pupil numbers fall below the Published Admission Number (PAN) then children will be admitted from the waiting list according to the admission criteria regardless of when their application form was received. The LA will hold waiting lists for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and where requested for VA and Trust Schools. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be kept open until **31 December 2026**.
- 23. Monday 16 March 2026:** The LA re-allocates any places that may have become vacant since 2 March 2026, in accordance with the school admission criteria, which will include the following:
- Those who have not yet been offered any school place, for example, late applications from parents who have just moved into the area and have not been offered a school place.
 - Those who have not been offered a school place at any of the schools they nominated on the Common Application Form and the place that has become available is at a school originally nominated on the Common Application Form.
 - Those who have been offered a school place but who ranked the school at which a place has now become available higher on the Common Application Form.

Where there are more applicants than places available then the priorities used within the schools' admission criteria will also be applied to all applicants on the waiting list to determine the allocation of places.

24. Where a parent has been allocated a place at their second ranked school, they may be placed on a waiting list of their first ranked school but not their third and so on.
25. **Friday 31 March 2026** Where parents have not returned their acceptance slip for oversubscribed Community Schools the LA may withdraw the offer of the school place. Where places have been withdrawn pupils will be re- allocated a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy as measured by the shortest distance using a straight line, from the Ordnance Survey parental home residence point (including flats) to the school main entrance, using South Tyneside Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority. Places that become available will be re allocated in accordance with paragraph 23 of this schedule.

PART 2-LATE APPLICATIONS

26. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **4.30pm on Thursday 31 October 2025** (National Closing Date). Applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late *owing to exceptional circumstances* may be considered on time provided that they are received *before 5 January 2026*, the date the allocation procedures begin. An example of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances would be where a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a South Tyneside property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances may be considered, and each case will be decided on its own merits by each individual admission authority. The agreement to consider an application as on-time for exceptional reasons does not mean that a place will be offered. The application will be considered in accordance with the admission criteria along with other applications receive on time.

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 31 October 2025 (NATIONAL CLOSING DATE):

27. Once parents have submitted their Common Application Form they cannot change their preferences after the closing date without an exceptional reason, for example if the family has recently moved address, proof of ownership or tenancy of a South Tyneside property will be required. The deadline for considering such exceptional circumstances is **5 January 2026**.

LATE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 5 JANUARY 2026

28. Late applications received after 5 January 2026 will not be processed until all applications received by the closing date have been considered. All South Tyneside residents will be offered a school place; however, this offer may be made after **2 March 2026** (National Offer Day 1 March 2026).

NO COMMON APPLICATION FORM RECEIVED BY 2 MARCH 2026

29. Where no Common Application Form is submitted the child will, on 2 March 2026 (National Offer Day 1 March 2026), a place will be offered at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists or the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy. The offer will be made as places become available following the re-allocation of places and or the outcome from admission appeals. The LA should have the evidence available to establish which parents this situation applies to as a result of liaison with the Primary and Junior Schools.

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 2 MARCH 2026

30. Parents cannot change their original school preference(s) without an exceptional reason, for example if the family has recently moved address. Where the LA agrees to accept a change of preference application the original school preference will be cancelled, and a new application must be submitted which will be considered as 'Late'. Any place previously offered at a school in South Tyneside on 2 March 2026 will be withdrawn and the parent will be notified in writing of the outcome.

PART 3 - 'IN YEAR' ADMISSIONS

31. Applications for year groups other than "normal year of entry" (September entry for Year 7) will be treated as in-year admissions.
32. Parents will apply to the LA in which their preference schools are situated.
33. Common Application Forms are available from the School Admissions Team or on the LA website.
34. The LA will process all Common Application Forms and inform parents of the outcome of their application even if the school is Voluntary Aided or Academy.
35. The LA is unable to process applications for schools where the date that the place is required from, is more than 2 months from the date of the application (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
36. Children must be resident in the country or evidence provided of a return to the country before a Common Application Form can be considered (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
37. School places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless a house move has been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or a signed rental agreement. The admission authority reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support the claim to residence.

CHILDREN WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

38. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be referred to the Pupil Services Department. Pupil Services will work with the parents of the child to secure a place at a school where the specific needs of the child can be met. If the child is not currently attending a South Tyneside school Pupil Services will contact the LA where the child is currently attending (or previously attended) for details of the current Education, Health and Care Plan. Schools must admit such pupils whether they have places or not.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

39. All Schools (including Voluntary Aided) may be directed to admit a 'Looked After Child' even when the year group is full.

RESPONDING TO COMMON APPLICATION FORMS

40. If the application is for a Voluntary Aided School, Trust school or an Academy, the LA will refer the application to the Governing Board or Academy Trust of the school.
41. All admission authorities must respond to the LA within 3 working days of receiving the Common Application Form informing them of the decision.
42. If there is a place available a pupil **must** be admitted within 20 school days of the application being received by the LA.
43. Where a place is not available at the highest ranked school the LA will co-ordinate with the second and third preference schools.
44. If the pupil is not on the roll of a South Tyneside school and a place cannot be offered at any of the nominated schools, the parent should contact the school admissions team to discuss the availability of places at other schools in the area.
45. If there are more applications than places available the published oversubscription criteria must be applied to all of the applications.
46. Pupils can only be refused a place at a school if one of the statutory reasons in the School Admissions Code applies.
47. The LA will keep a track of any pupils who apply for 'In Year' admissions and intervene as appropriate to ensure that they are placed in a school without undue delay particularly vulnerable children i.e. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Service children. Processing of such applications may be referred through the Fair Access Protocol.

- 48.** Parents will be expected to contact the school offered to accept or decline the offer within 10 working days, failure to do so may result in the school place being withdrawn.

WAITING LISTS

- 49.** The LA will hold the waiting list for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and where requested for Voluntary Aided, Trust Schools and Academies.
- The waiting list for the normal year of entry, i.e. Year 7 for oversubscribed schools will be kept open until 31 December 2026.
 - Academies, Aided or Trust schools may hold their own waiting list for in year applications but this will be confirmed within their own admission arrangements.

PART 4 – ADMISSION OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL AGE GROUP

- 50.** It is the expectation of the LA that a child is placed within their normal age group and educated alongside his / her equivalent peers, in almost all cases. The LA will consider any requests for children to be educated outside of their normal age group on an individual basis. Please refer to the separate LA policy for guidance.

SCHEDULE 2

Timetable of Co-Ordinated Scheme

Friday 5 September 2025:	Common Application form made available to parents on-line or paper copy (on request only)
4.30pm on Friday 31 October 2025:	Common Application forms, together with any supplementary forms (as required) to be returned to the School Admissions Team at South Shields Town Hall or completed on-line (National Closing Date – 31 October 2023).
Friday 14 November 2025:	Details of applications to be sent to Academy, VA and Trust schools,
Friday 14 November 2025:	Exchange preference data with other LA's
Friday 28 November 2025:	Details of preferences received from other LA's to be sent to Academy, VA and Trust Schools
Monday 5 January 2026:	Academy, VA and Trust schools provide the LA with ranked list of applicants.
Wednesday 14 January 2026:	LA's exchange information with other LA's on offer or refusal of school places
Friday 23 January 2026:	The LA will match the ranked lists of all the schools and allocate places in accordance with paragraph 18 of Schedule 1.
Friday 20 February 2026:	By this date the LA will notify schools, which parents have been offered places at their schools, and other LA's will be notified of places in South Tyneside schools that will be offered to their residents.
Monday 2 March 2026:	Notifications sent to parents (National Offer Day 1 March 2026)

Wednesday 11 March 2026:	Initial date for offers to be accepted or declined by parents for oversubscribed schools.
Wednesday 11 March 2026:	Last date for parents to request to place their child's name on waiting list.
Monday 16 March 2026:	Any places that have become available are allocated to parents in priority order in accordance with paragraph 23 of Schedule 1.
Tuesday 17 March 2026:	Appeals forms to be sent out to parents where requested.
Friday 31 March 2026:	Where parents have not returned their acceptance slip for oversubscribed Community Schools the LA may withdraw the offer of the school place and places will be re-allocated in accordance with paragraph 25 of Schedule 1.
Friday 24 April 2026:	Deadline for the return of appeal forms.

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME – SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Admission Authorities in the Area of South Tyneside to which the scheme applies

The Scheme applies to the Academy Trust as the Admissions Authority for the following Academy:

Whitburn Church of England Academy	Whitburn Sunderland SR6 7EF
St Joseph's Catholic Academy	Mill Lane Hebburn NE31 2ET
St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic College	Temple Park Road South Shields NE34 0PH
Harton Academy	Lisle Road South Shields NE34 6DL

The Scheme applies to the Governing Board as the Admissions Authority for the following Trust School:

Jarrow School	Field Terrace Jarrow NE32 5PR
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Community Schools where the LA is the Admission Authority

Boldon School	New Road Boldon Colliery NE35 9DZ
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Hebburn Comprehensive School Campbell Park Road
Hebburn
NE31 2QU

Mortimer Community College Reading Road
South Shields
NE34 4UG