



South Tyneside Council

Proposed Admission Criteria for Community Secondary Schools 2026/2027

Where we receive more applications than places available at a school, the following admission criteria are used to decide on admissions to all Community Secondary Schools.

In accordance with the Education Act (1996), children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan are required to be admitted to the school named in the Plan. Thereafter, the following oversubscription criteria will apply.

Oversubscription Criteria

- (a) A 'Looked After Child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement, or special guardianship order (see Note 1 below), including children (who appear to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted (see note 2 below).
- (b) Parental home residence within the defined catchment area of the school.
- (c) Concurrent sibling link (an older brother or sister attending the school at the same time and residing at the same address, to include adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings and long term fostered children,).
- (d) 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.

The above distance measurement will also be used as a 'tie breaker' within each criterion, if necessary.

Note 1: 'Looked After Child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a LA, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a LA in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.

- An adoption order is an order made under Section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

- A 'child arrangement order' is defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.
- 'Special guardianship order' is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians (Section 14A of the Children Act 1989).

Note 2: 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.

If it becomes necessary to decide between applicants within the same criterion, the distance tiebreaker described above will be used.

Closing date

In determining admissions, priority will be given to those applications where the parental application is received by the published deadline date **4.30pm on Friday 31 October 2025 (National Closing Date)**.

Late Applications

If you return your application after the closing date your application will be classed as late unless exceptional circumstances exist. The Local Authority will consider your reasons and if they are exceptional will consider your application along with those received on time (if received by 5 January 2026). Each late application will be decided on its own merits. The agreement to consider a late application as on-time for exceptional reasons does not in itself mean that a place will be offered. The application will be considered in accordance with the admission criteria along with all other applications that were received on time. If your reasons are not exceptional then your application will not be processed until after Monday 2 March 2026 (National Offer Day 1 March 2026). You should be aware that this will reduce your chance of gaining a place at the school you want.

Offer Date

Parents will be notified on Monday 2 March 2026 (National Offer Day 1 March 2026), which school their child has been offered. If parents have applied online, notification will be via e-mail otherwise it will be by letter in second class post.

Equal Preference System

The Local Authority operates an equal preference system for processing applications. This means at the first stage there will be no distinction between first, second or third preference applications. Therefore, all applications will be considered equally against the admission criteria. If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parents' highest ranked preference will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

Waiting list

If you have been refused your preferred school(s), you will have the opportunity to place your child's name on a waiting list(s). You may wish to place your child's name on a waiting list for more than one school. Children are placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when their application was

received and within each criterion their place is ordered by shortest distance to the school measured 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.

If pupil numbers fall below the Published Admission Number (PAN) the place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. This means a child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another late application is received that falls within a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists for schools will be kept open until 31 December 2026.

Explanation of Oversubscription Criteria

A 'Looked After Child'

We give a 'Looked after Child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangement, or special guardianship order including children (who appear to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted priority in our oversubscription criteria. This means that when a place becomes available in the school year it can be offered to these children to ensure that they are quickly placed in an appropriate school. This is necessary as it is recognised that such children are a disadvantaged group who, because of frequent changes of school following their care placements, may have lower than average levels of attainment. It is also a statutory requirement that Admission Authorities give top priority to these children in their oversubscription criteria.

Catchment Areas

All Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in South Tyneside have a defined geographic area called a catchment area. Do not assume that you live within a schools' catchment area as some streets are split. To find out which catchment area you live in contact the School Admissions Team on telephone number 0191 424 7704.

Parental Home Residence

A pupil's home address is a residential property that is the child's only or main residence, and is either:

- Owned by the child's parent(s) or the person with parental responsibility for the child; or
- Leased to or rented by the child's parent(s) or the person with parental responsibility under a lease or written rental agreement of not less than six months duration.

Evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required, plus proof of permanent residence at the property concerned.

Shared Parental Responsibility

Where two adults have shared responsibility for a child, they should agree before submitting the application which school(s) to name as their preferred school(s) and the order of preferences. In cases of dispute, or when two applications are submitted, the Local Authority will process the application received from the adult with whom the child is living for most of the week. If parents fail to agree on preferred schools, and two applications are received for the same child from both parents, then the Local Authority may decide to put a hold on both applications reducing the chances of that child gaining a place at a school.

Sibling Link

If your child has a brother or sister residing at the same address (including adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings, long term fostered children) attending your preferred school in September 2026, we will consider this as a sibling link. However, no guarantee is given that siblings can transfer to the same school where the school is oversubscribed.

Distance from Parental Home Address

We will measure from the parental home address to the main school entrance, measured by straight line distance. The distance will be measured as 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.

Tiebreaker - Distance Measurement

Where there are not enough places to admit all the children falling within a criterion a distance measurement will also be used as a tiebreaker using the Local Authority's Geographic Information System (GIS). We will measure in 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.

Where two or more applicants meet the same admission criteria and the measured distance between home and school is the same to 3 decimal places, the tie break will be random allocation and will be by the drawing of lots to determine the rank order for each child. In order to ensure fairness, the School Admissions Team will administer the random allocation system overseen by an independent adjudicator in accordance with the random allocation procedure.

Random Allocation Procedure:

In the situation that two or more applications measure the same distance to the school, random allocation will be used. The use of this is rare but the situations that random allocation would be required are:

- Same cohort siblings living at the same address. This does not include twins or multiple births who are an exception to Infant Class Size regulation but does include same cohort siblings applying for places in Year 3 and above.
- Unrelated applicants who live equidistant from the school
- House of multiple occupation (where living accommodation is shared but not bedrooms. e.g. not a block of flats).
- Forces families applying with a Forces Post Office address and for admission purposes the unit address is used as there is no allocated housing order.

Each random allocation event is only valid for the allocation of the available school place. On any waiting list the remaining applicants will remain equally ranked and any further place offered will be the result of a further random allocation.

The random allocation will be overseen by a person who is not involved in the allocation process. The roles involved with the random allocation are:

- Independent Adjudicator (IA) – this is a person who ensures the process is carried out in a fair and transparent way. The IA must be independent of the school for which the allocation is to be made and must not be a member of the Admissions Team.
- Admissions Officer (AO) – this is an officer from the Admissions Team who is responsible for carrying out the administration of the random allocation procedure and recording the results, under the scrutiny of the IA.

- Person who makes the draw (P) – this must be a person independent of the school for which the allocation is to be made and must be a person who is not a member of the Admissions Team.