



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

For all schools, parents/guardians 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/guardians to give their reasons for each preference. This form can be obtained from the Local Authority (LA) School Admissions Team and Hartlepool Borough Council's website. Parents/guardians can also apply through the on-line admissions application system accessed via Hartlepool Borough Council's 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 is able to offer a place.

The LA must inform other admission authorities of any application made for their schools and pass on any relevant supporting information, excluding parental preference of rank order 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/guardians 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, a child's details will be placed on a waiting list. 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. Waiting lists for Community Schools are maintained by the LA's Admissions Team for the full academic year. At the end of the academic year, the waiting list will automatically expire. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to request their child's name is placed on a waiting list for the following/future year on an academic year basis. For own admission authority schools, please refer to the school's admissions policy, as schools are not obliged to hold waiting lists indefinitely.

Parents/guardians 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 the date the allocation procedures begin. 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 date the allocation procedures begin, and the school(s) requested are oversubscribed, 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. LAs must develop a co-ordinated admission scheme by 1 January 2024 and implement the scheme on 1 September 2024.

This Scheme is made by Hartlepool Borough Council (Hartlepool 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 and in year admissions.

## Interpretation

### 1. In this Scheme -

"The LA" means Hartlepool Borough Council acting in its capacity as local education authority.

"The LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA are the local education authority.

"School" means a Community, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation, or Voluntary Aided school or an Academy/Free School.

"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/Free School.

"Parent" means the 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 2025.
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 (PAF) supplied by the LA for the purpose of enabling parents living in the Borough of Hartlepool to express up to three preferences for their child to be admitted to a primary, infant and, where appropriate junior school in Hartlepool or to a school or schools in another LA area for the academic year 2025/26.
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 primary school and Academy/Free School within the LA area (including Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools).
  - (b) to be admitted to a maintained primary school and Academy/Free School located in another LA's area (including Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools).
3. The common application form will:
  - invite parents to express three preferences in rank order of preference including any schools outside the LA's area;
  - allow parents to explain the reasons for their preferences;
  - specify the closing date and where it must be returned;
  - include a supplementary section, as part of the application form, to be completed by parents/guardians who express a preference for an own admission authority school to enable them to provide any relevant additional information.
4. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that a common application form is available on request from the LA and from its website, in line with the timetable attached at **Schedule 2**. The facility to apply on-line will also be made available via the LA's website.
5. Governing Bodies of Aided Schools or the relevant Trust for Academies, as the Admissions Authority, must notify the relevant LA immediately of any application made direct to them in error.

### Processing of Application Forms

6. Completed application forms should be made to the LA by 15 January 2025. Where a preference has been received for a Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Foundation or Academy/Free School, the relevant supplementary information should be provided by the parent at the same time.
7. Completed application forms which are received for very good reason after the closing date will be accepted and treated as on time applications provided they are received before 7 March 2025, 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 property within the Borough of Hartlepool as the main property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances will be considered and each case decided on its own merits. Parents/guardians must, however, provide clear evidence for the LA to consider as to why they could not submit an application during the preference period. The determination of the LA will be final.

8. In the event that an application is received after the allocation process begins, the admission authorities will be unable to accept the application irrespective of exceptional circumstances. Such an application will be considered after all allocations of places where a parent has expressed a preference.

### Determining Offers in Response to the Application

9. The LA will make the offer of a school place to the parent/guardian of every child living within the Borough of Hartlepool, commencing primary education in September 2025 who applies for a place at a maintained school/Academy/Free School.
10. The LA will determine the offer of a potential place for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hartlepool in its capacity as the Admission Authority **having no regard to order of preferences**. For Voluntary Aided Schools, Academies/Free Schools or schools in another Local Authority area, the relevant Admission Authority will inform the LA of the potential offer of a place\*. Hartlepool LA will then be responsible for making the offer of a place in accordance with this Scheme.
11. By 7 February 2025, the LA will notify other LAs if a school in their area has been listed as a preference on the common application form. Information of the application will be forwarded electronically to the relevant LA for consideration.
12. By 7 February 2025, the LA will provide the Admission Authority for each of the Hartlepool schools indicated on the common application form with an electronic list of preferences, **excluding parental preference information\***.
13. By 28 February 2025, the LA will publish their appeals timetable on their website.
14. By 7 March 2025, 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\*. The LA will then match this ranked list against the ranked list of the other schools nominated.
15. By 17 March 2025, the LA will match the provisional offers of places against each parent's ranking and proceed as follows:
  - Where 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 none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the nearest school with a place available.
16. No later than 17 March 2025, the LA will inform other LAs of places in Hartlepool schools/Academies/Free Schools to be offered to their residents and on 16 April 2025 (or next working day) the LA will inform its schools/Academies/Free Schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools/Academies/Free Schools.
17. On 16 April 2025 (or next working day), the LA will communicate to all parents/guardians residing within the Borough of Hartlepool to whom the offer of a place can be made, notifying them of the offer of a place at:

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\* Unless a local agreement exists for the LA to undertake this function on behalf of an own admission authority.

- (a) One of the preferences on the common application form; or
- (b) The nearest school with a place available

If the application was submitted online, the applicant will be able to view the outcome via the LA's website on 16 April 2025 (or next working day). If requested at the time of application, an e-mail will be automatically sent on 16 April 2025 (or next working day). If an on-line applicant is unsuccessful at gaining a place at a preferred school, an allocation letter will also be posted second class on the offer day (or the next working day if the offer day falls on a weekend) to the child's home address. This letter will include information about how to accept/decline a school place, waiting lists and how to appeal against the refusal of a school place.

Parents/guardians who applied on a paper application form will be sent an allocation letter by second class post on 16 April 2025 (or next working day) to the child's home address. This letter will include information about how to accept/decline a school place, waiting lists and how to appeal against the refusal of a school place.

18. The LA's communication will inform applicants that if they are not satisfied with the offer of a place they have the right of appeal if they so wish. Allocation letters will include contact details for the LA and those nominated own admission authority school 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 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. Parents will also receive details on what to do if they wish their child to be considered for any places that might become available in schools they ranked higher than the school they are offered, in the reallocation process set out below.

### **Re-allocation of Places/Bulk Round 2**

20. From 5 May 2025 (or next working day), the admission authority will re-allocate any places that may have become vacant since the 16 April 2025 (or next working day) offer date. Consideration will be given to all applicants including:
  - those who have not been offered any school place because their applications were late ie after 7 March 2025 (see paragraph 7 and 8);
  - those who have been offered a school place but who now wish to apply for a place at an alternative school;
  - those who have placed their details on a waiting list.
21. Places will be re-allocated by applying the admission authority oversubscription criteria. From 5 May 2025 (or next working day) the LA will liaise with the governing body for Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies/Free Schools regarding further applicants so that they can be ranked using the admission authority's oversubscription criteria.

### **Waiting Lists**

22. All waiting lists must be compiled in accordance with the relevant admission authority's admission criteria and places offered accordingly.

**PART 2 – LATE APPLICATIONS**

23. Applications received after the closing date of 15 January 2025 and prior to 7 March 2025 will be considered and, as far as possible, offered a school place on 16 April 2025 (or next working day). Applications received by the closing date take priority over late applications, however applications which are received for very good reason after the closing date will be accepted and treated as on time applications provided they are received before 7 March 2025, the date the allocation procedures begin (see paragraph 7).
24. For applications received between 8 March 2025 and 4 May 2025 inclusive, the LA will, on 5 May 2025, 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 other applicants that are on the waiting lists.
25. For applications received between 16 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 inclusive, offer/refusal communications will be sent out within 14 days of the LA receiving the application form. Any parent/guardian 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 nearest school that has a place available. For those who do not receive a higher preferred school the waiting lists will continue to operate.
26. Applications received on or after the beginning of the 2025/26 academic year will be processed in line with the In-Year Admissions Scheme.

**PART 3 – NO APPLICATION RECEIVED**

27. Where no application form is submitted, the LA will write to the parent/guardian on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025 (or next working day) advising parent to contact the Admissions Team to pursue a school place.

**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 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 on the basis of 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 2025 has been received by 15 January 2025 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 PRIMARY CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME**

1 September 2024	Composite prospectus made available for parents.
7 November 2024	Parents Guide to School Admissions and Common Application Form are made available to parents. On-line application site available.
15 January 2025	Closing date for return of application forms or submission of online application to the LA, including relevant supplementary information.
7 February 2025	LA to notify other LAs of any preferences which have been expressed for schools in their area.
7 February 2025	LA to send electronic list of preferences to Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academy/Free School of every preference which has been received for their school, including all relevant details and any supplementary information which schools require to apply their over-subscription criteria*.
By 28 February 2025	Publish appeals timetable on the LA's website.
6 March 2025	Due to the coordinated admissions processes, this is the latest date for parents to notify the LA of a new address for it be considered in the 'bulk round' of the primary allocation process.
7 March 2025	All admission authorities* and the relevant admission authority for neighbouring LA schools provide the LA with ranked list of applicants.
15 March 2025	LA allocates places in accordance with relevant admission/oversubscription criteria and informs other LAs of places in Hartlepool to be offered to their residents.
16 April 2025	LA makes offer to parents/guardians and informs schools of the pupils offered places at their schools.
5 May 2025	Waiting lists in operation as admissions authorities re-allocate any places that may have become vacant since the 16 April offer date.
15 May 2025	Administrative deadline for parents to lodge an appeal.
June/July 2025	Appeal hearings arranged.

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\* Unless a local agreement exists for the LA to undertake this function on behalf of an own admission authority.

**ANNEX 1**

The Local Authority, to which this Scheme applies, is the admission authority for the Community Schools listed below:

Clavering  
Fens  
Golden Flatts  
Kingsley  
Lynnfield  
Rift House  
Throston

The Trusts of the Academies/Free Schools listed below are Admission Authorities to which this Scheme applies:

Barnard Grove  
Brougham  
Eldon Grove  
Eskdale  
Grange  
Greatham C of E  
Hart  
Holy Trinity C of E  
Jesmond Gardens  
Rossmere  
Sacred Heart  
St Aidan's CE (Aided) Memorial  
St Bega's  
St Cuthbert's  
St Helen's  
St John Vianney  
St Joseph's  
St Peters Elwick C of E  
St Teresa's  
Stranton  
Ward Jackson C of E  
West Park  
West View