

Co-ordinated scheme 2025-2026

Admissions to primary and secondary schools 2025-2026

Staffordshire County Council's School Admissions and Transport Service (SA&TS) will coordinate all admissions at all maintained schools in Staffordshire, including all voluntary aided and foundation as well as academy schools in respect of applications for school places at the normal age of entry.

Staffordshire County Council is the relevant admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools within the county of Staffordshire.

The individual governing body is the relevant admissions authority for foundation, voluntary aided, trust and academy trust for academy schools within Staffordshire.

In accordance with regulations, admissions to middle schools at the normal age of entry will be coordinated in accordance with the primary school timetable.

The scheme

1. This scheme meets the requirement for a coordinated admission scheme under The School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England)) Regulations 2012 and applies to applications made by Staffordshire parents for all maintained schools and academies at the normal age of entry (except special schools and nurseries).
2. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable,
 1. each parent who applies for a school place at the normal age of entry receives only one single offer of a school place under the

scheme, whether that be at a school within the county or one maintained by another authority, and

2. a child is granted admission to whichever of the schools that is ranked highest on that application wherever possible.
3. Parents of children resident in the county of Staffordshire must make an application for the normal age of entry through Staffordshire County Council to apply for any school within Staffordshire or in another authority.

Applying for school places at the normal point of entry

4. Staffordshire County Council's School Admissions and Transport Service will provide a common application form to enable parents to apply for any school within the County or in another local authority. Parents will also be able to apply online.
5. Staffordshire parents will be able to name up to three school preferences, rank them in order of preference and have the opportunity to give reasons for their preferences. Parents must name all schools at which they wish to be considered for a place in order of preference, including any maintained foundation, trust, voluntary aided or any schools outside of Staffordshire including academies.
6. Any Staffordshire school that receives an application directly must ensure that it is forwarded to the School Admissions and Transport Service.

Applying for school places in-year

7. An application form can be obtained from any of the following sources;
 - From [Staffordshire County Council's website](#)
 - Customer Contact Centre Service ([0300 111 8007](#))
 - Child's current school or preferred school (if in Staffordshire)

8. The application form will enable parents to apply for a school of their preference, and to provide their name and address and the name, address and date of birth of the child and also to include any documentary evidence in support of the application. The application form will also allow the parents to give reasons for the preference. Parents must apply directly to all schools for which they wish to be considered for a place, including any maintained foundation, voluntary aided, academy or any schools outside the county of Staffordshire.
9. Any Staffordshire school that receives an application directly must ensure that the local authority is notified of the application and subsequent outcome.

Supplementary application forms

10. Where an in-year application is made for a school for which the governing body are the admission authority, the application must be forwarded together with supporting information provided by the parent, to the governing body. The governing body of a foundation, voluntary aided or academy school may require parents who make an application to provide supplementary information in order to apply their own admissions policy.
11. Parents are under no obligation to forward supplementary information, unless it is required to enable the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.
12. Where supplementary information is required for applications at the normal point of entry it must be returned to the School Admissions and Transport Service along with a valid application so that all information can then be passed to the relevant admissions authority.
13. For applications made for the normal point of entry, where documentary evidence in support of the application is received or a school receives supplementary information then it will not be regarded as a valid application, unless the parent has also completed an application with Staffordshire County Council.

14. Where documentary evidence in support of the application or supplementary information is received directly by a foundation, voluntary aided or academy school for the normal age of entry, the school must inform the School Admissions and Transport Service immediately so that it can verify whether an application has been received and if this is not the case then, the parent can be contacted and requested to complete an application.

Closing date for return of applications – normal age of entry

15. All secondary school applications should be submitted by the national closing date of **31 October 2024**.
16. All primary school applications should be submitted by the national closing date of **15 January 2025**.

Variations for schools in the three-tier system – normal age of entry

17. Children admitted to middle schools in year 5 technically form part of the primary coordinated scheme.
18. Non Staffordshire year 6 children attending a Staffordshire middle school will only receive information about the secondary transfer process if parents specifically request it.
19. Non Staffordshire year 8 children attending a Staffordshire middle school must apply for school places through their home local authority.

Processing applications – point age of entry

20. By **08 November 2024** for secondary applications and **28 January 2025** for primary applications, the School Admissions and Transport Service will have forwarded and received all details of appropriate applications to and from other local authorities and will merge this information into the admissions database.

21. By **26 November 2024** for secondary applications and **25 February 2025** for primary applications the School Admissions and Transport Service will have forwarded all details of appropriate applications (and accompanying supplementary application forms where provided) to academy, trust, aided and foundation schools in Staffordshire. The School Admissions and Transport Service will then draw up preference lists for all community and voluntary controlled schools by applying the county council's oversubscription criteria.
22. Each school which is its own admission authority will apply their oversubscription criteria to all applications and by the **10 December 2024** (secondary schools) and **7 March 2025** (primary schools) will forward a list of all applicants to the School Admissions and Transport Service indicating the rank order in which all children meet the school's oversubscription criteria along with an indication of which oversubscription criteria apply to each child.
23. The School Admissions and Transport Service compares the ranked lists from all schools. After applying the oversubscription criteria for each stated preference, where a child qualifies for a place at more than one school, the School Admissions and Transport Service will allocate a place at the parent's highest ranked preference. The child would then be removed from the other school's lists and if there were other children awaiting places at that school the list would be adjusted accordingly taking the next applicant in the order of the oversubscription criteria.
24. By **6 January 2025** (secondary schools) and **14 March 2025** (primary schools) the initial results of places in Staffordshire schools will be known. These will be shared with other local authorities and exchanged for details of Staffordshire pupils gaining places at out of county schools.
25. These results are then compared to rankings and a list of provisional offers will be produced.

26. Local authorities will then repeat the process set out in 23 to 25 and exchange final results on **12 February 2025** (secondary schools) and **28 March 2025** (primary schools).

Decisions

27. On **3 March 2025** the School Admissions and Transport Service will notify all Staffordshire parents who have applied for a secondary school at the normal age of entry of the outcome of their preference and make a single offer of a school place.
28. All Staffordshire parents who have applied for a place in a primary, infant/junior, first or middle school at the normal age of entry will be notified on **16 April 2025**.
29. Offers of school places being made to Staffordshire children for the normal age of entry on behalf of a voluntary aided school, a foundation or academy school or a school in another authority will be sent by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of the relevant admission authority.
30. Children resident in other local authorities who have made preferences for schools within Staffordshire for the normal age of entry will be notified of the outcome of their school allocated by their home local authority.
31. Where a Staffordshire child (without an EHCP) does not qualify for admission to any of their preferred schools and is also not on the roll of a school within a reasonable distance of the home address, an alternative school will be offered in conjunction with the relevant admission authority.
32. Where refusals are made for Staffordshire schools, parents will be given information about the appeal process.
33. Where refusals are made on behalf of other local authorities further information will be provided to parents to enable them to appeal, should they wish to do so.

Waiting lists and late applications

34. Staffordshire County Council as the admissions authority shall maintain a waiting list for the normal age of entry for at least 1 term in the academic year of admission, for every oversubscribed community or voluntary controlled school, according to the published admission arrangements.
35. Academies, voluntary aided and foundation schools are responsible for deciding whether to operate a waiting list and how their waiting list will operate.
36. The waiting lists will be clear, fair and objective and will not give priority to any child based on the date that their application was received or the date that the child's name was added to the waiting list.
37. It must be noted, that children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or those that are allocated to a school in accordance with the fair access protocol must take precedence over other children on the waiting list.
38. There will be a 2 week period after national offer dates whereby available places will not be allocated from community and voluntary controlled school waiting lists or to applications that were received very close to or after the national offer date.

Acceptance of school place

39. Parents will have at least two weeks after the date of offer to notify the authority as to whether or not he/she wishes to accept the place offered where relevant to the individual school admission arrangements.

Change of preference

40. During the admission process the order of school preference may be changed by parents in writing up to the closing date. After this date, any change of preferences received will be dealt with in line with the

late application policy relevant to the individual school admission arrangements.

41. Parents wishing to change their preferences to include schools not previously named will need to make a late application, which will be administered in line with information provided in the individual school's admission arrangements.
42. Parents wishing to change their preferences after the notification date will need to make a late application which will then be administered in line with information provided in the individual school's admission arrangements.

Failure to express a preference (children eligible for secondary school place)

43. Where a Staffordshire parent does not make an application for any school and the child is known to the School Admissions and Transport Service, the child may be allocated an alternative school place if there is one available within a reasonable distance of the home address (providing the child has no EHCP). Transport assistance will not necessarily be provided. In the case where the nearest school with a space available is its own admissions authority the offer will be made in consultation with and on behalf of the allocated school.

Processing applications – in-year admissions

44. The process for in year transfers for Staffordshire schools is not coordinated. In line with the School Admissions Code, parents are able to contact the School Admissions and Transport Service for information about places available and then make applications directly to schools.
45. Application forms for in year places are available from the county council along with guidance on completing them. Academies and other schools which are their own admission authority may also have their own forms which can be obtained from the school.

46. Completed application forms should be returned directly to the preferred school. The school must notify the local authority of both the application and the outcome of the application within 15 school days, including sending through a copy of the decision letter and application where the application has been refused.
47. All decisions on applications will be made in line with the determined admission arrangements and will be subject to scrutiny to determine whether or not they meet the criteria for consideration under the [fair access protocol](#). A copy of this protocol is published on the local authority's website.
48. When determining school place applications outside the normal admissions round, admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for special educational needs.
49. Where a child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools there is no need for an admission authority to comply with parental preference for a period of two years from the last exclusion. The twice excluded rule does not apply to children who were below compulsory school age at the time of the exclusion, children who have been re-instated following a permanent exclusion (or would have been had it been practicable to do so), and children with special educational needs statements. There is an expectation that the PAN at the normal age of entry will apply as the year group works through the school wherever possible.
50. When it is not possible to offer a place, parents **must** be advised of their right of appeal under the School Admissions Appeals Code. Schools should confirm that this has been done in their notification to the local authority by sending a copy of the formal decision to parents with the application.
51. For unsuccessful applications for year groups at community and voluntary controlled schools where a waiting list is in operation, the

School Admissions and Transport Team will add unsuccessful applicants to the waiting list. Academies and other schools which are their own admission authority may have their own waiting list policy. Schools **must not** offer places to applicants in excess of the published admission number where a waiting list is in operation without consulting with the School Admissions and Transport Team.

52. Where a refusal means that a child does not have a school place, the School Admissions Team will contact parents to discuss options for securing a place. This may involve approaching other schools in the area that have places on parents behalf to offer them an alternative school.
53. The School Admissions and Transport Service are available to both schools and parents as a source of advice on the admissions process.

Timetable for coordinated admission scheme for normal age entry

Action	Secondary	Primary and Middle
Closing date - all applications to be submitted to School Admissions and Transport Service	31 October 2024	15 January 2025
Applications sent to and received from other Local Authorities.	8 November 2024	28 January 2025
Application details and supporting documentation sent to academies, aided and foundation schools.	26 November 2024	25 February 2025
Academies, Aided and Foundation schools forward lists of all preferences ranked in accordance with criteria to School Admissions and Transport Service.	10 December 2024	7 March 2025
Provisional offers shared between Local Authorities.	6 January 2025	14 March 2025
Final offers exchanged with other Local Authorities.	12 February 2025	28 March 2025

Timetable for coordinated admission scheme for normal age entry

Action	Secondary	Primary and Middle
Parents notified of outcomes.	3 March 2025	16 April 2025
Places offered to children who have made late applications that can not be considered within above timescales and to those included on oversubscribed waiting lists.	2 weeks of above	2 weeks of above